

UTILIZING THE ARTISTIC VALUE OF DON CA TAI TU
IN SOUTHERN VIETNAM TO PROMOTE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT:
A CASE STUDY OF CAN THO CITY, VIETNAM

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Abstract – *This study aims to identify solutions for the conservation and effective exploitation of the artistic value of Southern Vietnamese Đờn ca tài tử in tourism development in Can Tho City. The research employs a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods, including a survey of 120 tourists, in-depth interviews with four cultural and tourism experts, and seven artisans, along with the synthesis and analysis of secondary data. The findings reveal several limitations: (1) the age and performance styles of the artisans do not align well with tourists' preferences; (2) the duration and venues of performances are not optimized; (3) the performance content lacks diversity, leading to monotony; (4) many organizations overly emphasize commercial aspects, neglecting the preservation of cultural values. Based on these findings, the study proposes solutions such as enhancing the quality of artisans and innovating performance formats, developing diverse program content that meets tourists' needs, orienting performances to be integrated with characteristic cultural space, and balancing economic exploitation with cultural preservation. This research contributes to the theoretical foundation regarding the relationship between traditional art and tourism development, while also providing practical implications for cultural and tourism managers in maximizing the value of intangible*

cultural heritage.

Keywords: *cultural tourism, Đờn ca tài tử, intangible cultural heritage, tourism product development.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Can Tho City, the center of the Mekong Delta region in Vietnam, has recently made significant progress in tourism development, offering a diverse range of forms, including MICE tourism, ecotourism, cultural-historical tourism, and community-based tourism. Among the various cultural resources, the use of intangible cultural heritage, most notably the art form of Southern Vietnamese Đờn ca tài tử (DCTT), recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2013, plays a significant role in diversifying tourism services and reinforcing the unique cultural identity of the destination. Since the 1990s, Southern provinces, including Can Tho, have integrated various models of DCTT art into tourism activities, such as performances on tourist boats at Ninh Kieu wharf and shows at community sightseeing spots, thereby contributing to the preservation and promotion of traditional cultural values [1]. However, in recent years, the exploitation of DCTT art for tourism in Can Tho has faced numerous challenges, including a decline in the scale of activities, a lack of innovation in performance formats, the predominance of elderly artisans, and a decrease in appeal to tourists, especially young and international visitors.

In the context of globalization and the growing emphasis on sustainable tourism development, the preservation and promotion of intangible cultural heritage have become a strategic focus in many countries, including Vietnam. In Can

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Tho City, DCTT possesses great potential to be integrated into tourism products, contributing to the creation of cultural identity and differentiation in tourism experiences. Despite its cultural significance, the exploitation of DCTT in tourism activities remains limited and lacks innovation. Tourists' perceptions, levels of interest, and the factors influencing the effectiveness of DCTT integration into tourism have not been systematically studied. These gaps pose challenges to both the preservation of the art form and the diversification of tourism offerings in Can Tho.

This study aims to clarify the current status of DCTT in Can Tho tourism, analyze tourists' awareness and interest in this art form, and identify the key factors affecting its effective utilization. Based on these insights, the study proposes possible solutions to exploit the artistic value of DCTT in tourism sustainably and creatively. The goal is to contribute to the development of distinctive tourism products, enhance the cultural value of local experiences, and ensure the long-term preservation of this intangible heritage. The research focuses specifically on DCTT activities in Can Tho City, within the broader scope of sustainable cultural tourism development. The findings of this study are expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions, supporting the implementation of the Vietnam Tourism Development Strategy to 2030 nationally [2] and in Can Tho City in particular, especially in preserving and effectively leveraging the artistic value of Southern Vietnamese DCTT as part of local tourism development.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Overview of research

DCTT is a traditional musical art form originating in Southern Vietnam, deeply embedded in the daily lives and cultural identity of local communities. Recognized by UNESCO in 2013 as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, DCTT is valued for its improvisational performance style, flexible structure, and strong communal expression [3]. Studies by Nguyen Chinh [1] and Nguyen My Liem [4] emphasized

the unique musical characteristics of DCTT, particularly its integration of ritual, entertainment, and artistic refinement. The authors agree that DCTT represents a living cultural heritage, sustained through intergenerational transmission and collective participation, especially in rural and riverine societies.

In recent decades, there has been growing academic interest in integrating DCTT into tourism development as part of broader cultural tourism strategies in southern Vietnam. Research by Phan Vo Thu Tam [2] and Huynh Cong Tin [5] highlighted various models, such as performances on tourist boats, at cultural villages, and in community-based tourism settings that have helped preserve the art form while enhancing visitor experiences. These studies suggested that DCTT can contribute to place branding, cultural enrichment, and visitor satisfaction. However, Dang Hoanh Loan [6] pointed out existing challenges, including the limited professionalization of performers, a lack of innovative formats, and insufficient marketing strategies. The current literature also revealed a gap in systematic assessments of tourists' perceptions, as well as empirical data on the economic impact of DCTT-based tourism activities.

According to Mai My Duyen [7], DCTT is a means of entertainment and a tool for community cohesion, conveying moral values and local cultural identity [7]. However, in the context of rapid modernization and social transformation, this art form is facing the risk of fading away due to the lack of appropriate performance spaces and the increasingly limited generational continuity. Based on a specific case study in Long An Province, Do Quoc Dung [8] pointed out that despite the locality's great potential in terms of artisans and the presence of numerous DCTT clubs, preservation and promotion efforts remain largely spontaneous, lacking in planning and stable support mechanisms. The studies highlighted that preserving and developing DCTT is an urgent cultural requirement and a crucial strategy for leveraging local cultural values in sustainable development in the Southwestern region in gen-

eral and in each locality in particular [7, 8].

Artistic heritage mobilized for tourism development has been investigated. For example, Ngo Thi Sam Dung [9] analyzed Bai Choi as a distinctive form of intangible cultural heritage in Central Vietnam, emphasizing the vital role of community participation in its preservation and promotion. Bai Choi is a symbol of regional cultural identity that should be effectively integrated into local cultural and tourism activities to promote sustainable development [9]. Richards [10] reviewed recent developments in cultural tourism, noting its expansion from traditional activities to more immersive, experience-based forms influenced by globalization and technology. The author highlighted a shift in tourist behavior toward authentic, participatory experiences. Besides, the need for sustainable tourism models that prioritize cultural preservation and community involvement was also emphasized. These studies provide useful frameworks and lessons that can be adapted to the case of this study, underscoring the importance of community engagement, authenticity, and sustainable strategies in leveraging artistic heritage for tourism development and offering valuable insights that can inform the preservation and promotion of DCTT in contemporary cultural tourism contexts.

Although existing literature has laid a strong foundation on DCTT and heritage-based tourism, there remains a lack of integrated studies: (1) comprehensively assessing tourists' perceptions of DCTT, (2) evaluating factors influencing its effective exploitation, and (3) proposing practical, culturally grounded solutions tailored to a specific local context. This study addresses these gaps by focusing on Can Tho City as a representative urban center in the Mekong Delta. It draws upon interdisciplinary insights from heritage studies, tourism planning, and cultural economics to contribute both theoretical enrichment and policy-relevant recommendations for sustainable cultural tourism development.

B. Theoretical framework

The concept of exploiting Đờn ca tài tử in tourism development

The exploitation of DCTT in tourism development refers to the utilization of DCTT as an integral part of tourism products to serve visitors. This exploitation not only generates economic value for the tourism industry, organizations, and individuals involved in leveraging DCTT for tourism development but also contributes to the preservation and promotion of DCTT in the Southern provinces of Vietnam [3].

The connotation of exploiting Đờn ca tài tử in tourism development

The connotation of exploiting DCTT in tourism development involves harnessing the cultural and artistic values of DCTT to support tourism growth and enhance visitor experiences. More specifically, it entails leveraging the appeal and attractiveness of the DCTT art form by integrating DCTT programs into tourism itineraries and destinations, thereby offering tourists immersive experiences and appreciation of Southern Vietnamese DCTT art [3].

Evaluation criteria for exploiting Đờn ca tài tử in tourism development

Hoang Trong Tuan [11] synthesized a set of 13 evaluation criteria for assessing the exploitation of cultural tourism resources both globally and domestically, including attractiveness (value, uniqueness, appeal), geographical location (distance to provincial/city administrative centers), accessibility (transport infrastructure, means of transportation, travel time), tourism infrastructure and facilities, resource concentration, connectivity (linkages between similar and different resource points), carrying capacity, seasonality and duration of exploitation, safety, sustainability in the face of tourism activities, conservation efforts, potential tourists' needs and preferences, and community participation.

Dinh Trong Thu et al. [12] in their study on exploiting cultural resources for sustainable tourism development in the Northwest region, selected five criteria to evaluate the exploitation of cultural tourism resources: attractiveness and

appeal of cultural resources, exploitability of cultural resources, potential tourists’ needs and preferences, community involvement in resource exploitation for tourism development, conservation, maintenance, and development of cultural resources. Each tourism resource has its specific evaluation criteria to ensure suitability according to its exploitation conditions and characteristics. Within the scope of this research, drawing on criteria compiled by Hoang Trong Tuan [11] and Dinh Trong Thu et al. [12], the following evaluation criteria were selected for exploiting DCTT in tourism development: attractiveness and appeal of DCTT, exploitability of DCTT, potential tourists’ needs and preferences regarding DCTT, community participation in exploiting DCTT for tourism, and conservation, maintenance, and development of DCTT.

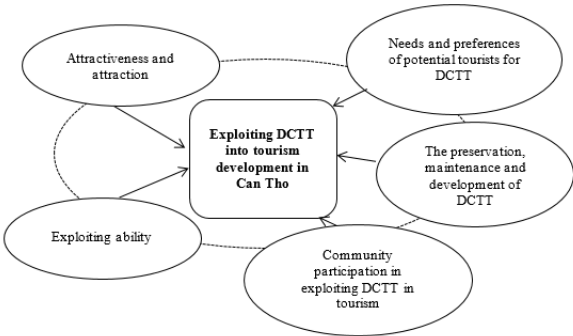


Fig. 1: Criteria for evaluating the exploitation of DCTT in tourism development

Source: Authors, 2024

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research site

The study was conducted in Can Tho City from June to October 2024. As the economic and cultural nucleus of the Mekong Delta region, Can Tho City was purposefully selected as the research site due to its significant efforts in integrating DCTT, an intangible cultural heritage recognized by UNESCO, into local tourism development strategies [3]. The city’s proactive policy orientation, the vitality of its DCTT practitioner

community, and its steadily growing and diverse tourist population position it as a representative and contextually rich case study for exploring the dynamics of cultural tourism development in southern Vietnam [3, 13].

B. Research participants and sample

A total of 11 participants were selected using purposive sampling, ensuring they possessed relevant expertise or lived experience in DCTT and tourism development. The expert and local tourism manager group consisted of four individuals (three males and one female), mostly aged between 30 and 50 years, with one participant over 50. All were currently employed at the Department of Culture, Sports, and Tourism of Can Tho City or affiliated public service units. Two held Master’s degrees and two held Bachelor’s degrees. In terms of professional experience, three participants worked in the field of cultural and tourism management for 5 to 10 years, while one had more than 10 years of experience. The DCTT artisan group consisted of seven individuals (five males and two females), six of whom were over 60 years old and one under 60. Two of the performers had more than 30 years of experience; four performers had over 20 years; and one had performed for approximately 11 years. All artisans had experience performing for tourists; five did so regularly, while two performed occasionally. The demographic characteristics of the surveyed tourists are presented in Table 1.

C. Data collection

The study utilized both secondary and primary data sources. Secondary data were collected from academic journals, books, government reports, policy documents, statistical yearbooks, newspapers, and reputable online databases. These materials were systematically categorized by topic, synthesized, statistically summarized, and comparatively evaluated to provide contextual grounding for the primary research. Primary data included in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted in person with selected experts, local tourism managers, and DCTT artisans. With

participant consent, the interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and thematically analyzed. Additionally, a structured questionnaire was administered to tourists, incorporating multiple-choice and Likert-scale items designed to assess their perceptions, awareness, and preferences regarding the integration of DCTT into tourism experiences.

D. Data analysis

Qualitative data obtained from in-depth interviews were processed using content analysis techniques. Interview transcripts were coded and categorized according to emerging themes, focusing on perceptions of cultural value, integration practices, and challenges in promoting DCTT through tourism. This approach enabled the identification of recurring patterns and valuable insights related to cultural preservation and tourism product development. A tourist survey was conducted using convenience sampling with a minimum sample size of 120 tourists determined based on Hair et al.'s [14] formula for quantitative analysis to ensure reliability and representativeness. With $N = (\text{number of observed variables} * 5) + 20\%$ (number of observed variables * 5), the formula results in: $N = 20 * 5 + 0.2 * 100 = 120$ samples. Quantitative data from tourist surveys was cleaned to remove incomplete or inconsistent responses, resulting in 117 valid cases. The data were entered into SPSS version 22.0 for statistical analysis [15]. Descriptive statistics, including means, frequencies, and percentages, were employed to summarize tourists' perceptions. A 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree) was used to measure levels of agreement across 20 observed variables concerning the role of DCTT in the tourism experience [16].

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The current status of Đờn ca tài tử's performance in tourism development

Table 2 presents tourists' evaluations of various aspects of DCTT performance programs.

Table 1: Statistics on the characteristics of the survey sample

Characteristics	Expression	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	40	34.2
	Female	77	65.8
Age	Under 30 years old	30	25.6
	18 – under 40 years old	46	39.3
	40 – under 50 years old	24	20.5
	Over 50 years old	17	14.5
Occupation	Farmer	08	6.8
	Worker	15	12.8
	civil servants, public officials	26	22.2
	Teacher	10	8.5
	Businessmen	30	25.6
	Business employees	20	17.1
	Others	8	6.8
Educational/ professional qualifications	Under high school	08	6.8
	Elementary occupations	12	10.3
	Intermediate level	28	23.9
	College	21	17.9
	Bachelor	43	36.8
Average income/month	Master's degree or above	5	4.3
	Under 3 million VND	09	7.7
	3 – under 5 million VND	20	17.1
	5 – under 8 million VND	56	47.9
	8 – 12 million VND	24	20.5
Address	Over 12 million VND	08	6.8
	North	13	11.1
	Central region	53	45.3
	Southern	51	43.6
Frequency of traveling	Few	39	33.3
	Sometimes	60	51.3
	Usually	18	15.4
Preference for experiencing DCTT during travel	Strongly disagree	05	4.3
	Disagree	17	14.5
	Neutral	18	15.4
	Agree	49	41.9
	Strongly agree	28	23.9

Source: Authors' data analysis results, September 2024

The data reveals a generally low level of satisfaction across multiple dimensions. In terms of performance frequency, a significant majority of respondents, 62.4% considered the frequency of DCTT shows to be low, while only 12.0% rated it as high. Regarding the suitability of performance venues, 52.1% of tourists expressed dissatisfaction, highlighting the need for more appropriate and immersive performance spaces.

Tourists were also critical of the content of DCTT programs, with 63.2% indicating that the performances lacked diversity and were repetitive, and only 18.4% rated the content as fresh and engaging. Performer-related factors were even more concerning; 82.9% of respondents felt that the performers, mostly elderly, lacked broad appeal, suggesting a disconnect with younger or international audiences. Similarly,

Table 2: Table of tourists’ evaluations of DCTT performance program

Evaluation aspect	Low (%)	Medium (%)	High (%)
Frequency of DCTT performances	62.4	25.6	12.0
Performance space and venue suitability	52.1	23.9	24.0
Content diversity and freshness of DCTT performances	63.2	18.4	18.4
Performer appeal (age, attractiveness)	82.9	8.6	8.5
Artistic characteristics of the DCTT art form	78.6	10.9	10.5
Other factors (novelty, interaction, knowledge sharing, etc.)	55.6	24.0	20.4

Source: Authors’ data analysis results, September 2024

78.6% found the artistic presentation of DCTT to be monotonous and lacking in expressiveness.

Other qualitative aspects, such as novelty, audience interaction, and knowledge sharing, were also seen as inadequate by over half of the respondents, 55.6%, with only 20.4% considering these aspects to be strong.

These evaluations indicate the necessity for comprehensive innovation in how DCTT is presented to tourists. Enhancing venue design, diversifying content, rejuvenating the performing ensemble, and improving interaction and audience engagement critically improve the appeal and cultural value of DCTT in tourism contexts.

According to the assessments of DCTT artists, despite positive signs such as increasing participation of younger performers and artisans maintaining traditional folk artistic identities, DCTT performances currently face the risk of commercialization. The art form is increasingly influenced by market forces, with performers no longer regarded as inspiring artists but rather as ‘service providers’ fulfilling commercial demands. Additionally, the lack of selective and sometimes inappropriate performance venues further diminishes the aesthetic value of this art form.

From the experts’ viewpoint, the number of tourist attractions and tourism-related services (such as restaurants, eateries, cruises, tourist areas, and others) offering DCTT performances to visitors has increased compared to the past

[17]. The growth in the number of tourist sites offering DCTT performances is an encouraging sign, reflecting the interest of tourism service providers in this art form. However, numerous shortcomings remain, especially the short duration of performances (15–30 minutes), which are often integrated into other artistic programs, limiting DCTT’s opportunity to fully express its cultural value and artistic depth. Furthermore, performers’ willingness to perform on pragmatic requests for livelihood purposes has led to distortions in performance and the risk of losing the original value of DCTT.

The above results indicate that, although DCTT has been incorporated as a cultural tourism product, the current organizational approach remains fragmented, lacking strategic planning, and does not sufficiently emphasize the heritage value. The lack of coordination in planning performance spaces, the insufficiently trained performing troupe, and the limited strategies for engaging tourists constitute significant barriers. Moreover, the pressure of commercialization is gradually eroding the artistic integrity and distinctive folk characteristics of DCTT.

Based on the findings, the study reveals that while DCTT has been increasingly integrated into tourism activities, reflecting initial efforts to valorize intangible cultural heritage, its current implementation faces notable limitations. Strengths include the growing involvement of young performers and recognition of its cultural value, suggesting potential for sustainable development. However, key challenges persist: tourists report low performance frequency, repetitive content, limited interactivity, and inadequate venues; artists express concern over commercialization and loss of artistic identity; and experts highlight short performance durations and lack of strategic organization. To address these issues, the study recommends a comprehensive approach involving content innovation, performer training, improved performance spaces, and digital engagement strategies. Maintaining the authenticity of DCTT also requires coordinated collaboration among cultural authorities, tourism stakeholders,

and local artisans to balance heritage preservation with tourism development.

B. The attractiveness and appeal of Đờn ca tài tử to tourists

The evaluation results from tourists are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: The results summarize visitors’ assessments of the attractiveness of DCTT

Evaluation aspect	Medium	Standard deviation
The content of DCTT songs is attractive to tourists	2.197	0.930
Artisans performing DCTT (performance style, appearance, dress...) create attraction for tourists	2.274	0.897
DCTT brings excitement to visitors	3.359	1.148
DCTT makes visitors feel that it is a unique feature of tourism in Can Tho	3.427	1.248
DCTT has contributed to attracting tourists to Can Tho	3.342	1.288
Venues for organizing DCTT performances to serve tourists are suitable	2.197	1.281
The duration of organizing the DCTT performance to serve tourists is reasonable	2.667	1.075
Average for the group of aspects (scales) assessing the attractiveness and attraction of the art of DCTT to tourists	2.780	

Source: Authors’ data analysis results, September 2024

From the tourists’ perspective, a survey based on a 5-point Likert scale indicates that the overall evaluation of the attractiveness of DCTT remains relatively low. Among the seven criteria surveyed, the mean scores ranged only from 2.197 to 3.427 (on a 5-point scale). The criteria receiving low ratings included performance content (2.197), performers/artists (2.274), suitability of the performance venue (2.197), and timing of the performances (2.667). Only three aspects garnered more positive evaluations: the enjoyment experienced while listening to DCTT (3.359), recognition of DCTT as a cultural hallmark of Can Tho (3.427), and the contribution of DCTT to attracting tourists (3.342). These results suggest that tourists have not fully perceived the appeal of DCTT within their tourism experience. The primary reasons identified include repetitive and conventional content, aging performers with limited investment in their image, inappropriate performance spaces lacking interactivity, short performance durations, and insufficient emotional engagement or guidance for the audience.

Experts, managers, and artisans generally agree that DCTT has inherent artistic appeal for tourists. They believe that the appeal and attractiveness of DCTT lie in its artistic value to the listener, rather than in the performers’ attire, appearance, or performance style [17]. They even argue that traditional clothing (such as the ao ba ba and khan dong) best reflects the authentic spirit and artistry of DCTT [18]. In their view, DCTT is fundamentally about singing and instrumental performance, and should not be influenced by performative or theatrical elements from the artisans or actor musicians [18]. However, this appeal is declining due to several issues. First, performers’ style and attire need modernization to meet tourist expectations, though some artisans prioritize preserving traditional authenticity over appearance. Next, the performance content is often repetitive and lacks innovation, causing tourist boredom. Besides, current staged venues diminish the folk, communal nature of DCTT. There is a shared call to create more intimate and interactive spaces that foster closer engagement between performers and audiences, preserving the art’s original spirit.

The above results reflect a clear discrepancy between the intrinsic potential of DCTT and its current exploitation in tourism activities. Although recognized as a unique art form embodying the profound cultural identity of Southern Vietnam, DCTT has yet to be effectively leveraged to create a strong impression on tourists. Most issues stem from the stereotyped organization of performances, lack of innovative investment in presentation, and absence of strategies aligned with the trends of experiential and interactive tourism.

The study highlights a disconnect between the cultural value of DCTT and its current effectiveness in tourism. Although recognized by tourists as a cultural symbol of Can Tho and a potential tourism attraction, DCTT performances received low ratings in terms of content, performer appeal, venue suitability, and timing. These limitations are attributed to repetitive content, an aging performer base, a lack of interactivity, and brief,

poorly organized shows. Experts and practitioners also emphasize the diminishing authenticity of DCTT due to over-staged formats and insufficient innovation. To enhance its tourism value, the study recommends diversifying performance formats, training younger performers, improving venue design, promoting interactive experiences, and applying digital tools for engagement. A co-ordinated strategy is essential to preserve DCTT’s cultural integrity while strengthening its role in sustainable tourism development.

C. The potential for exploiting *Đờn ca tài tử* in tourism development

The results of visitors’ evaluation are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary results of tourists’ assessments on the ability to exploit the value of DCTT artistic heritage to serve tourism

Evaluation aspect	Medium	Standard deviation
Can Tho City has many suitable locations for DCTT art performances to serve tourists.	2.880	1.138
Can Tho city has a rich team of artisans/amateurs to perform DCTT art for tourists.	3.624	1.150
DCTT in Can Tho city has rich and diverse song content to serve tourists.	2.291	1.138
Average for the group of aspects (scale) of the ability to exploit the value of DCTT artistic heritage in tourism	2.932	

Source: Authors’ data analysis results, September 2024

From the tourists’ perspective, survey results across three aspects generally indicate a fairly positive evaluation of the potential for exploiting DCTT in tourism services in Can Tho City. Specifically, the capability to organize performances at suitable venues received a moderate rating (average score of 2.880/5), suggesting that tourists recognize the potential of diverse performance spaces available locally. The amateur artist/performer workforce serving tourists was rated relatively high (average score of 3.624/5), indicating tourists’ confidence in the current performing troupe. However, the performance received a low rating (only 2.291/5), reflecting monotony, repetitiveness, and lack of appeal in the existing repertoire.

The majority of assessments of experts, managers, and artisans acknowledge that Can Tho possesses favorable conditions for exploiting DCTT in tourism. They believe that ‘the potential for integrating DCTT into tourism activities in Can Tho is relatively promising. There are many suitable venues to serve tourists, such as Tan Loc Island, Con Son Island, or cruise boats like the Ninh Kieu and Can Tho cruises’ [17]. In terms of content, DCTT songs can be enriched by encouraging veteran artisans to create new compositions or to borrow and learn songs from other provinces in the Southern region [18]. Regarding the pool of artisans/actors performing for tourists, both their number and quality are reportedly on the rise [17]. This positive trend is driven by strong efforts in recent years to promote DCTT training and transmission in Can Tho. Young enthusiasts are increasingly motivated to study and practice DCTT as more performance platforms and DCTT competitions have been organized in recent years [18].

From both tourists’ and experts’ perspectives, it can be affirmed that Can Tho holds great potential to develop DCTT as a distinctive cultural-tourism product. The factors of ‘timing, location, and human resources’ are all present: the abundant riverine environment is well-suited for folk art performances; there is a plentiful and increasingly rejuvenated community of artisans; and the spirit of preservation and promotion is emphasized through regular apprenticeship programs and annual competitions. However, the core issue lies in the artistic content. Both tourists and experts agree that current DCTT performances are repetitive, lack creativity, and fail to truly captivate modern tourists who continuously seek novelty, emotional resonance, and cultural depth. Without innovation in content, even with favorable venues and skilled performers, the appeal of DCTT will remain limited.

The study highlights the strong potential of DCTT to become a unique cultural tourism product in Can Tho, supported by favorable performance venues and a growing, increasingly youthful performer base. Tourists rated the per-

former quality and venue suitability relatively positively, reflecting confidence in these aspects. However, both tourists and experts identified the performance content as a major weakness due to its repetitiveness and lack of creativity, leading to limited engagement and appeal. The research emphasizes that without innovation in repertoire and performance style, DCTT’s tourism value will remain underdeveloped. Therefore, the study recommends revitalizing content through storytelling and interactive elements and fostering collaboration among cultural authorities, tourism providers, and local artisans to preserve authenticity while enhancing the tourist experience.

D. The needs and preferences of potential tourists regarding Đờn ca tài tử

The visitors’ evaluation results are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5: Summary of tourist assessment results on the needs and preferences of potential tourists for the art of DCTT

Evaluation aspect	Medium	Standard deviation
The number of tourists who love the art of DCTT is large.	3.265	1.335
Tourists expect DCTT art to regularly innovate and refresh its content and performance style to become more attractive.	3.615	1.401
Average for the group of aspects (scales) of needs and interests of potential visitors towards DCTT art.	3.440	

Source: Authors’ data analysis results, September 2024

Survey results indicate that the majority of tourists provide positive assessments regarding the needs and preferences of potential visitors toward the art of DCTT. Tourists’ level of appreciation for DCTT is relatively high, with an average score of 3.265 out of 5, demonstrating that DCTT holds considerable appeal within the cultural tourism landscape of Can Tho. The demand for innovation and renewal in DCTT’s content and performance style received an even higher average score of 3.615 out of 5, reflecting tourists’ clear desire for diversified and creative programs to enhance their experience. These

findings confirm that DCTT can become an attractive cultural-tourism product, provided that its forms of expression are innovated to better align with modern tourists’ tastes.

In-depth interviews and surveys with cultural-tourism experts, managers, and artisans reveal that the number of tourists interested in DCTT is increasing, especially among middle-aged and elderly segments, particularly from the Southern regions [17]. Younger tourists and those from other regions (Central and Northern Vietnam) show less interest in DCTT, influenced by modern music preferences and cultural background differences [18]. All surveyed groups agree that DCTT programs serving tourists require regular renewal to avoid monotony and boredom [18].

The study highlights DCTT as a culturally significant art form with strong potential for tourism development in Can Tho. Tourists, particularly older visitors from Southern Vietnam, show relatively high appreciation for DCTT, while also expressing a clear desire for innovation in performance content and style. However, interest varies across age groups and regions, with younger tourists and those from Central and Northern Vietnam showing less engagement. Both tourists and cultural-tourism stakeholders agree on the need for regular renewal of DCTT programs to prevent monotony. To address these challenges, the study suggests developing tailored performances for different tourist segments, incorporating interactive and creative elements, enhancing communication through digital tools, and supporting the training of young performers. These strategies aim to balance cultural preservation with contemporary appeal, ensuring DCTT remains relevant in the evolving tourism landscape. Based on the assessment of experts, cultural and tourism managers, and DCTT artisans, there are distinctions in the level of preference for DCTT art among tourists of Can Tho City, regarding location (North, Central, South) and the age of tourists. These differences were investigated based on data collected from tourists, and the results are summarized in Table 6.

Statistical analysis reveals that while tourists’

Table 6: Results of testing the difference

Visitor characteristics	Levene test		Anova/Welch statistical analysis	
	Levene statistical value	Test significance level	F	Test significance level
Regions	0.104	0.901	1.780	0.173
Age	5.145	0.002	2.983	0.039

Source: Authors’ data analysis results, September 2024

appreciation for DCTT does not significantly differ by region of origin (ANOVA Sig = 0.173 > 0.05), it varies notably by age group (Welch’s test Sig = 0.039 < 0.05), with individuals aged 50 and above showing significantly higher levels of appreciation compared to those under 30. Although DCTT holds cross-regional appeal, its reception is influenced by generational preferences. The relatively low interest among younger tourists highlights a critical gap in engagement strategies. To address this, the study recommends a differentiated approach to program design based on demographic characteristics. Traditional and contemplative performances should be tailored to older audiences, while younger visitors may respond more positively to modernized, interactive, or outdoor presentations integrated with experiential activities. Such segmentation, combined with content innovation and selective modernization, can enhance the accessibility and relevance of DCTT, allowing it to meet diverse tourist expectations while maintaining its cultural authenticity.

E. Community participation in the development of *Đền ca tài tử* for tourism

The visitors’ evaluation results are summarized in Table 7.

Survey results on tourists’ perceptions regarding the level of local community participation in the development of DCTT heritage for tourism in Can Tho generally show positive evaluations, with average scores across various factors being relatively high. Concerning local authorities, tourists acknowledged the support and facilitation provided by local government with an average score of 3.154/5, indicating a clear recognition of the coordinating role and promotion of cultural tourism policies by state agencies. The rating of

Table 7: Summary of tourist assessment results on community participation in exploiting the value of DCTT artistic heritage in tourism

Evaluation aspect	Medium	Standard deviation
Local authorities pay attention, support, and create conditions for the exploitation of DCTT to serve tourism development in Can Tho.	3.154	1.222
Tourism businesses actively participate in exploiting of DCTT to serve tourism development in Can Tho.	3.539	1.186
Artisans/amateurs actively participate in exploiting of DCTT to serve tourism development in Can Tho.	3.846	0.610
Other stakeholders such as fruit garden owners, restaurants, and DCTT clubs actively participate in exploiting of DCTT to serve tourism development in Can Tho.	4.333	0.587
Average for the group of aspects (scale) of community participation in exploiting DCTT in tourism.	3.718	

Source: Authors’ data analysis results, September 2024

3.539/5 reflects a fairly active involvement of tourism enterprises in organizing and integrating DCTT into tourism products. Regarding DCTT artisans and performers, with an average score of 3.846/5, tourists highly appreciate the dedication and presence of artisans in tourism-serving programs. Other stakeholders (tourism site owners, restaurants, DCTT clubs, etc.) received the highest rating, averaging 4.333/5, demonstrating the active and effective participation of informal community forces that play a crucial role in linking cultural products with tourism spaces.

Most experts, cultural and tourism managers, as well as DCTT artisans interviewed, highly appreciate the support, encouragement, and favorable conditions provided by local authorities ranging from the provincial level to district and commune/ward levels [17]. In recent years, local governments have made significant efforts to facilitate, support, and promote the integration of DCTT into tourism activities in Can Tho [18]. Likewise, the interviewees commend the

dedication and efforts of DCTT artisans and actors in bringing this traditional art form into tourism, even though the income they earn from performing for tourists is minimal and insufficient to support themselves or their families [17]. Their continued preservation of the art of DCTT comes from their passion and love for this art. However, challenges remain, particularly concerning the profit-oriented practices of several tourism enterprises, which often compromise the quality and integrity of performances by reducing duration, increasing associated costs, or canceling shows when economic returns are deemed insufficient. These actions risk commodifying DCTT and limiting its cultural transmission. To address these tensions, the study recommends establishing clear contractual frameworks between businesses and performers, enhancing institutional support for artisans, and fostering co-management models that align economic and cultural objectives. These measures are essential for preserving the authenticity of DCTT while ensuring its sustainable integration into the tourism landscape.

F. The preservation, maintenance, and development of *Đờn ca tài tử* art

The results of visitors’ evaluation are summarized in Table 8.

Survey results from tourists in Can Tho show a generally positive evaluation of efforts to preserve, maintain, and develop Southern DCTT art. Tourists particularly appreciate the role of local authorities (with an average score of 4.239/5) in implementing policies and investments for DCTT conservation, as well as the dedication of artisans and local communities, especially amateur performers, in keeping the tradition alive. However, tourism businesses and service providers are rated poorly due to their limited engagement and a tendency to prioritize profit over cultural values. Many lack proper support policies for artisans, threatening the sustainability of DCTT in a commercial tourism context. In-depth interviews with cultural experts, tourism managers, and DCTT artists also affirm the positive role of

Table 8: Summary of visitors’ assessment results on the conservation, maintenance, and development of DCTT

Evaluation aspect	Medium	Standard deviation
Local authorities pay attention, support, and create conditions for the preservation, maintenance, and development of DCTT art.	4.239	0.611
Tourism companies pay attention and pay worthy remunerations to artisans/amateurs participating in DCTT performances to serve tourists.	2.342	0.853
Artisans/amateurs wish to preserve, maintain, and develop DCTT art.	4.385	0.797
The local community is interested in and supports the preservation, maintenance, and development of DCTT art.	3.786	0.945
Average for the group of aspects (scales) of preserving, maintaining, and developing the art of DCTT.	3.688	

Source: Authors’ data analysis results, September 2024

Can Tho’s government. Businesses create opportunities for artisans by organizing performances at tourist sites, most prioritize short-term economic gains, resulting in shallow, low-quality presentations and a lack of strategic collaboration with DCTT clubs [17]. In addition, local cultural agencies, departments, and organizations such as the Can Tho City Cultural Center, Tay Do theater, and the cultural centers of districts like Ninh Kieu and Cai Rang, have also actively organized and participated in initiatives to pass down DCTT skills and ignite passion for the art among younger generations [18]. These efforts have helped create favorable conditions for DCTT clubs to operate and for the movement to grow and flourish. Moreover, insufficient support in terms of remuneration and performance conditions threatens the long-term vitality of the art form. To address these challenges, the study recommends establishing long-term cooperative frameworks between businesses and cultural actors, implementing equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms, and promoting responsible tourism practices that value both cultural sustainability and economic viability. Such integrated efforts are essential to ensuring DCTT’s meaningful presence within Can Tho’s evolving tourism landscape.

From both sources of evaluation, tourists and experts, it is evident that the preservation, maintenance, and development of DCTT art in Can Tho have been well supported by local authorities and the artisan community. However, significant challenges remain in sustainably integrating this cultural element into the tourism landscape.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusion

Through practical surveys, in-depth interviews, and evaluative analyses involving key stakeholders, this study reveals that the exploitation of the artistic heritage value of DCTT for tourism development in the city is progressing with notable strengths and certain limitations. Relevant parties, including local authorities, artisans, tourism enterprises, and service providers, have actively participated in and supported the integration of DCTT into tourism products and services, enriching local tourism offerings and fostering the preservation of this distinctive folk-art form. However, challenges remain, including monotonous performance content, unappealing organizational formats, an aging artisan workforce, low incomes for performers, and an imbalance between heritage conservation and commercial exploitation. Notably, tourism businesses have yet to fully embrace the conservation of DCTT as a parallel responsibility alongside sustainable tourism development, which complicates the long-term sustainability of performance activities. Based on these findings, the study proposes key solutions such as mitigating commercialization pressures while preserving artistic value; enhancing the appeal and attractiveness of DCTT in tourism, sustainable exploitation and development of DCTT art, ensuring the capacity to attract and maintain tourist interest, strengthening community participation in the development of DCTT, improving the effectiveness of DCTT preservation linked to tourism development and overcoming barriers in developing DCTT for tourism purposes. Theoretically, this research contributes to clarifying the interactive

relationship between heritage conservation and exploitation within a commercialized tourism environment, refining the theoretical model of the tourism value chain linked to intangible cultural heritage, and emphasizing the critical role of multi-stakeholder collaboration among government, artisan communities, enterprises, and tourists in cultural heritage governance. The findings bear significance not only for the development of cultural tourism in Can Tho but also serve as a representative case applicable to other localities in the Mekong Delta region, while providing a foundation for international comparative studies on heritage management and cultural tourism in the context of globalization and the commercialization of traditional culture.

B. Recommendations

The study proposes five key groups of recommendations to enhance the sustainable integration of DCTT into tourism development. First, in terms of policy and heritage management, it advocates comprehensive policies that balance preservation with tourism use, while promoting multi-stakeholder coordination. Second, regarding human resource development, it recommends rejuvenating the artisan workforce through training programs and innovating performance content to align with tourist expectations. Third, for tourism product development, the focus is on creating integrated tour packages featuring DCTT and implementing market segmentation strategies supported by digital media promotion. Fourth, in terms of organizational mechanisms, the study emphasizes the need to build professional and stable performance models, supported by infrastructure investment and artisan-inclusive business partnerships. Lastly, for community engagement, it encourages greater artistic autonomy, integration of performances into local festivals, and diverse forms of community-based preservation to strengthen cultural identity and visitor engagement.

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