

Cultural Experience Tourism Among the Chơ Ro People: Insights from Bà Rịa–Vũng Tàu Province, Vietnam

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the current status and development potential of cultural experience tourism among the Chơ Ro ethnic community in Bà Rịa–Vũng Tàu Province, Vietnam, with a focus on enhancing cultural preservation and sustainable economic growth.

Design/methodology/approach: A mixed-methods approach was adopted, integrating quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative component involved a survey of 360 tourists who had participated in Chơ Ro cultural experiences, measuring satisfaction, revisit intention, and willingness to recommend. The qualitative component comprised in-depth interviews with 18 representatives from tourism businesses and restaurants offering products and services derived from Chơ Ro cultural heritage.

Findings: Survey results indicate high tourist satisfaction, with 40% reporting being “very satisfied” and 35% “satisfied.” Additionally, 70% expressed an intention to revisit, and 80% were willing to recommend the experience. Notable tourism assets include traditional stilt-house architecture, indigenous survival skills, ethnic attire, weaving, folk games, performing arts, and traditional cuisine. However, infrastructure limitations, service quality gaps, and insufficient local tourism skills remain challenges.

Practical implications: Recommendations include upgrading transportation infrastructure, enhancing tourism service points, training local communities in hospitality and communication, and developing innovative cultural products to diversify offerings.

Originality/value: This research provides empirical evidence on the market potential of Chơ Ro experiential tourism and offers strategic directions for preserving ethnic cultural heritage while promoting sustainable tourism development in Vietnam.

Keywords: Tourism, experiential, culture, Cho Ro, Ba Ria - Vung Tau, Vietnam.

1. INTRODUCTION

Cultural experience tourism has emerged as a significant trend in the global tourism industry, driven by travelers’ growing desire to engage with the distinctive cultural values of ethnic minority communities. This form of tourism not only provides visitors with novel and immersive experiences but also functions as a catalyst for the preservation and sustainable development of traditional cultural heritage.

Bà Rịa–Vũng Tàu Province, widely recognized for its pristine beaches, Binh Chau Hot Springs, and other natural attractions, is also home to the Chơ Ro ethnic group—a minority community with a rich and distinctive cultural identity. Despite its diverse cultural assets, including traditional architecture, indigenous crafts, performing arts, and unique culinary practices, the potential of Chơ Ro culture has not yet been fully harnessed or transformed into distinctive tourism products. Establishing a cultural experience tourism model centered on the Chơ Ro community offers the dual benefits of fostering sustainable economic growth and safeguarding cultural heritage in the face of modernization pressures.

Moreover, cultural experience tourism holds the capacity to contribute directly to social development within the Chơ Ro community by generating employment opportunities, facilitating vocational training, and improving household incomes. These socio-economic benefits can enhance community resilience, reduce the vulnerability of marginalized groups, and promote inclusive, equitable development.

Against this backdrop, assessing the potential and formulating strategic measures for developing Chơ Ro cultural experience tourism in Bà Rịa–Vũng Tàu is both timely and essential. The present study aims to examine the current state and future prospects of this tourism model, offering evidence-based recommendations to enhance its quality, effectiveness, and sustainability.

While existing literature underscores the role of ethnic cultural tourism in heritage preservation and socio-economic advancement, no prior research has explicitly focused on the Chơ Ro community within the diverse tourism landscape of Bà Rịa–Vũng Tàu. This study seeks to address that gap by:

1. Positioning research on ethnic cultural tourism in Vietnam within a broader theoretical framework encompassing sustainable development, heritage tourism, cultural interaction, and anti-commodification strategies.
 2. Clarifying the role and position of the Chơ Ro community within the province's tourism ecosystem.
 3. Identifying theoretical and practical challenges, including the need for mechanisms that both utilize and protect cultural heritage while avoiding “staged authenticity” and market-driven distortions.
- By doing so, this paper establishes a foundation for further empirical research—particularly through mixed-methods approaches—aimed at designing and implementing a viable model for Chơ Ro cultural experience tourism that aligns with both community needs and principles of sustainable tourism development.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 National Context – Ethnic Cultural Potential in Tourism

Vietnam is a multi-ethnic country with 54 officially recognized ethnic groups, each possessing its own distinctive cultural identity, encompassing traditional festivals, handicrafts, belief systems, music, and architecture. Previous studies have emphasized that ethnic minority communities constitute valuable cultural tourism resources that, if appropriately managed, can promote heritage tourism and foster sustainable local economic development (Communist Review; Social Space Journal).

For example, research in Tuyên Quang Province (northern Vietnam) has demonstrated that cultural tourism not only supports the preservation of traditional customs but also generates employment and increases incomes for ethnic minority communities (The Shillonga Journal of Education and Humanities; EJAHSS).

Similarly, in An Giang Province, initiatives integrating community-based tourism with traditional festivals—such as the Dù Kê performance of the Khmer people—have enhanced tourist attraction and raised community awareness about safeguarding and transmitting cultural heritage (Nhanquyen.vietnam.vn).

However, not all projects have proven sustainable. A study on the Dzao community in Sa Pa (northwest Vietnam) warned of the risk of **cultural alienation**, whereby ethnic groups are marginalized from decision-making regarding tourism values and products, ultimately threatening cultural integrity (Taylor & Francis Online).

International literature, including studies from China, also reveals that well-managed **ethnic tourism** can serve as an authentic medium for cultural experiences. Conversely, without adequate regulation, such practices risk commodifying and diluting original cultural values (MDPI).

2.2 Provincial Context – Bà Rịa-Vũng Tàu and the Chơ Ro People

Bà Rịa-Vũng Tàu is renowned for its pristine beaches, colonial architecture, and iconic tourist landmarks such as the Christ of Vũng Tàu statue and the White Palace. The province has also outlined a strategy for developing “high-quality tourism” by 2030 (Wikipedia).

The province is home to nearly 9,000 ethnic minority households, comprising over 26,000 individuals from 36 ethnic groups. Among these, the Chơ Ro—approximately 500 people residing mainly in Tân Thuận Hamlet, Đất Đỏ District—represent a Mon-Khmer ethnic group primarily settled in Đồng Nai, Bình Dương, Bình Phước, and Bà Rịa-Vũng Tàu. Their cultural heritage includes the Yang Pa festival dedicated to the Rice God (Vietnam News; Wikipedia).

Despite their rich and distinctive culture, the Chơ Ro's cultural assets have not yet been fully developed into specialized tourism products, leaving substantial potential untapped.

2.3. Proposed Theoretical Framework

- **Ethnic Cultural Tourism:** Tourism emphasizing authentic, intimate cultural experiences that allow visitors to gain deep insights into local communities, while avoiding superficial “spectacle tourism” and cultural distortion (MDPI).
- **Community-Based Tourism & Sustainable Development:** Prioritizing empowerment of local communities in product design and decision-making, ensuring equitable benefit distribution, and promoting effective cultural preservation (Nhanquyen.vietnam.vn; Taylor & Francis Online).
- **Cultural Alienation Risk:** Recognizing that exclusion of ethnic communities from tourism governance can result in loss of cultural agency and degradation of heritage (Taylor & Francis Online).

This review affirms that **ethnic cultural experience tourism** can serve as a powerful mechanism for safeguarding cultural identity while fostering socio-economic growth. However, its success hinges on

community-centered planning, collaborative partnerships, and careful avoidance of cultural commodification.

The Chợ Ro community in Bà Rịa–Vũng Tàu holds substantial but underutilized potential. Research aimed at developing a tailored model for Chợ Ro cultural experience tourism would contribute significantly to both theoretical discourse and practical applications, supporting the diversification and sustainability of the province’s tourism sector.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-method research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively assess the current status and development potential of Cho Ro cultural experience tourism in Bà Rịa – Vũng Tàu Province. This methodological triangulation ensured the collection of robust, multi-dimensional data, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings.

3.1 Quantitative Approach

A structured survey was administered to a sample of 360 tourists who had participated in Cho Ro cultural tourism activities. The questionnaire was designed to measure levels of satisfaction with tourism products, service quality, supporting infrastructure, and tourists’ behavioral intentions, including their likelihood of returning or recommending the experience. The survey items were adapted from validated tourism satisfaction scales and contextualized for the cultural tourism setting. Quantitative data obtained from the survey were statistically analyzed to identify trends, patterns, and correlations that reflect the current performance of Cho Ro cultural tourism.

3.2 Qualitative Approach

To gain deeper insights into the integration of Cho Ro cultural elements into tourism products, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 18 stakeholders, including representatives from local tourism businesses and restaurants. The interviews explored the incorporation of cultural assets—such as traditional stilt-house architecture, indigenous cuisine, weaving crafts, ethnic attire, and cultural festivals—into tourism offerings, as well as challenges in their preservation and promotion. Thematic analysis was applied to identify recurring themes, opportunities, and constraints in developing Cho Ro cultural experience tourism.

3.3 Literature Review and Document Analysis

Relevant academic literature, official reports, and previous studies on cultural experience tourism and Cho Ro culture were systematically reviewed. This analysis provided a theoretical framework for the study, enabled benchmarking with similar tourism models, and informed the interpretation of empirical findings.

3.4 Field Observation

Complementing the survey and interviews, field trips were undertaken to Cho Ro villages and cultural sites. Direct observations were documented on tourism infrastructure, community participation, and the authenticity of cultural experiences. These observations provided a first-hand and objective assessment of both the strengths and limitations of the current tourism model.

By combining quantitative measurement, qualitative exploration, literature synthesis, and field observation, this study produced a holistic and evidence-based evaluation of the potential for developing Cho Ro cultural experience tourism in Bà Rịa – Vũng Tàu.

4. Research Findings

4.1. Businesses Providing Cho Ro Cultural Experience Services

This study draws upon qualitative and quantitative insights collected from 18 local establishments—including restaurants, tourism sites, and cultural service providers—that are actively engaged in promoting Cho Ro cultural experiences in Ba Ria – Vung Tau. Among the respondents, 35.3% identified as members of the Cho Ro ethnic group, thereby offering valuable insider perspectives on the intersection of cultural preservation and tourism development.



The findings reveal a pronounced commitment among local enterprises to safeguarding traditional culinary heritage. Notably, 76.4% of business representatives emphasized the necessity of maintaining authentic cooking techniques, while 58.8% reported the regular

use of locally sourced ingredients, and a further 29.4% did so occasionally. These practices underscore sustained efforts to preserve and showcase the distinct culinary identity of the Cho Ro community.

Introducing customers to Cho Ro culture emerged as a meaningful objective for most respondents, with 52.9% regarding it as “highly meaningful” and 35.3% as “meaningful.” Many establishments have invested in the creation of immersive cultural environments through traditional architectural design, interior décor, music, and service styles that reflect Cho Ro traditions. Exemplary initiatives include those implemented by Binon Cocoa Farm, Dat Rong Dinh Gia Trang, Buon Go Rin, and, most prominently, the Cho Ro Culinary Culture Cooperative (HTX Văn hóa ẩm thực Chợ Ro). The latter distinguishes itself not only through its culinary services but also through the integration of research, training, and product development, representing a comprehensive and sustainable model of cultural preservation and promotion.

Despite these positive developments, the organization of cultural activities—such as traditional performances, guided heritage tours, or interactive demonstrations—remains limited. Only 11.8% of enterprises reported hosting such events on a regular basis, 23.5% on an occasional basis, and 52.9% rarely, indicating a significant gap in current tourism practices. In contrast, restaurant services remain the dominant focus due to their ease of implementation and direct economic returns. However, perceptions of their broader cultural and economic impact vary: 11.8% of respondents viewed the benefits as substantial, 23.5% as moderate, and 41.2% as minimal.

Perceptions of sustainable tourism were overwhelmingly positive, with 47.1% of respondents describing its impact on the Cho Ro community as “very positive” and 52.9% as “positive.” Cultural authenticity was unanimously recognized as a central draw for visitors, with 52.9% rating it as “very important” and 47.1% as “important.” Business strategies frequently targeted the enhancement of sensory and experiential dimensions of tourism; 11.8% of enterprises reported a high level of focus on such strategies, while 58.8% were moderately engaged. Nearly half of the businesses (47.1%) reported the consistent application of cultural preservation principles in their operations, reaffirming the role of tourism as a mechanism for heritage conservation.

The research also identified a strong consensus on the necessity of institutional support. Over half of respondents (52.9%) deemed policy assistance from government authorities “necessary,” and 41.2% considered it “very necessary.” The development of training programs and high-quality tourism products was regarded as equally critical, with 52.9% describing these interventions as “very necessary” and 47.1% as “necessary.”

Finally, the survey captured a range of proposals to further develop Cho Ro culinary and cultural tourism. Suggested initiatives included the creation of large-scale cultural spaces, the establishment of collaborative networks among restaurants, the diversification of menus, and the integration of digital technologies for cultural promotion. Such measures are anticipated to enhance operational effectiveness, expand market reach, and generate greater economic and socio-cultural benefits for the Cho Ro community.

4.2. Tourist Satisfaction Survey Results

4.2.1. Visitor Demographics and Their Evaluation of Services



Research findings on Cho Ro cultural tourism in Ba Ria – Vung Tau Province indicate a growing appeal among a young and dynamic demographic. Statistical analysis shows that the majority of participants fall within the 18–39 age range, with the 25–39 group representing 45% and the 18–24 group accounting for 30%. This demographic pattern underscores the strong resonance of Cho Ro cultural experiences with younger travelers who demonstrate openness

to cultural immersion and exploration.

The visitor profile is predominantly composed of domestic tourists, particularly from the Southeast and North Central regions of Vietnam, which together constitute approximately 70% of the total. Although smaller in proportion, international visitors and tourists from other Vietnamese regions contribute to the cultural and experiential diversity of the market.

In terms of occupation, the survey revealed that students and university-aged youth comprise 30% of participants, followed by civil servants (25%) and business professionals (20%). Other professional groups, including teachers, artists, and freelancers, further diversify the participant base, suggesting a broad appeal that transcends occupational boundaries.

A significant finding concerns the influence of digital media in shaping tourist behavior. Over 70% of respondents reported discovering and selecting Cho Ro cultural tourism experiences via the Internet and social media platforms. This highlights the strategic importance of digital communication in promoting cultural tourism and shaping consumer decision-making.

With regard to travel patterns, the majority of participants engaged in Cho Ro tourism as part of group travel with friends or family (60%), while 25% joined organized tours operated by professional travel agencies. This suggests that both informal and formal travel arrangements are relevant to the sector's development.

Infrastructure-related factors also emerged as key determinants of visitor satisfaction. Notably, 65% of respondents expressed satisfaction with road conditions, and 60% rated transportation services positively. These findings underscore the critical role of logistical accessibility and convenience in fostering positive tourism experiences and sustaining visitor interest.

4.2.2. Tourist Interest in Cultural Experience Tourism

Although Cho Ro cultural tourism in Ba Ria - Vung Tau has not yet reached the level of development observed in other well-established cultural tourism destinations, empirical evidence indicates a high degree of visitor satisfaction and appreciation. A survey conducted with 360 tourists who had participated in Cho Ro cultural activities revealed that 40% reported being "very satisfied," while an additional 35% expressed general satisfaction. These figures suggest that the current range of services meets, and in many cases exceeds, visitor expectations, offering not only leisure but also meaningful cultural value.

Significantly, 70% of respondents expressed their intention to return, reflecting not only a positive evaluation of the experience but also a degree of trust and emotional attachment to the destination. Even more noteworthy, 80% indicated that they would recommend the experience to others, a strong indicator of destination loyalty and word-of-mouth advocacy—both of which are critical metrics for the success and sustainability of cultural tourism.

These findings affirm the attractiveness and growth potential of Cho Ro cultural tourism while simultaneously providing a compelling rationale for continued investment in its development. To maximize this potential, it is essential to maintain the authenticity of the cultural offerings while systematically improving infrastructure, visitor services, and community-based participation.

Furthermore, the positive reception from visitors highlights the important role of cultural tourism in safeguarding and promoting the unique heritage of the Cho Ro people in a sustainable manner. As both satisfaction and demand continue to increase, Ba Ria - Vung Tau is well-positioned to strengthen its reputation as a prominent destination for ethnic cultural experiences in Vietnam.

4.3. Assessment of the Potential for Cho Ro Cultural Experience Tourism

4.3.1. Traditional Stilt-House Architecture of the Cho Ro People

The traditional stilt houses of the Cho Ro people in Ba Ria - Vung Tau constitute a distinctive and invaluable component of their cultural heritage, attracting considerable interest from visitors and researchers alike. Constructed primarily from locally sourced natural materials—such as bamboo, rattan, trung quan leaves, and cogon grass—these structures are elevated on stilts and accessed via a central staircase leading to the main living area.

The spatial organization of the interior reflects the Cho Ro's communal lifestyle. At the center lies the hearth, which functions as both a cooking area and a focal point for family gatherings, meals, and shared daily activities. Along the interior walls, tools for farming, hunting, and foraging are neatly arranged, symbolizing the integration of subsistence practices into domestic life. In the surrounding outdoor space, visitors often encounter rice-pounding mortars, pestles, and wooden buffalo-drawn carts used for transporting food and goods—further illustrating the close relationship between architecture, livelihood, and the natural environment.

The architectural form of these houses embodies the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the Cho Ro in adapting available resources to meet both functional and cultural needs. Their aesthetic appeal lies not in opulence but in simplicity and authenticity, reflecting the historically nomadic lifestyle and shifting cultivation practices of the community.

Moreover, spiritual beliefs are deeply embedded in architectural choices. The Cho Ro regard the number five as symbolic of human existence, a belief that has influenced the design of many houses in a pentagonal form. Slanted eaves extending outward serve both functional and symbolic purposes—providing shelter for harvested goods and signifying abundance. Numbers seven and above are associated with dragons,

deities, the sky, and the Mother Ocean, representing power and the spiritual realm, thus integrating cosmological concepts into the physical dwelling.

Consequently, Cho Ro stilt houses function not merely as physical shelters but as tangible manifestations of cultural identity, spiritual belief, and ecological adaptation. This unique combination of material culture and intangible heritage has generated increasing interest among cultural tourists, who seek immersive experiences that allow them to explore and engage with the Cho Ro's traditional way of life.

4.3.2. The Cuisine of the Cho Ro People

The cuisine of the Cho Ro ethnic group constitutes a vital dimension of community-based cultural tourism in Bà Rịa-Vũng Tàu Province, Vietnam. Beyond its distinctive flavors, Cho Ro gastronomy embodies cultural symbolism, environmental knowledge, and social cohesion. Each dish serves as a tangible narrative of the community's traditions, its symbiotic relationship with nature, and the rhythms of daily life.



A signature culinary specialty is piêng glao—bamboo-tube rice—prepared using both plain and glutinous rice. Freshly harvested bamboo tubes are filled with rice, sealed, and roasted over an open flame. This meticulous process yields a delicately aromatic and flavorful dish in which the natural scent of bamboo permeates each grain. Piêng glao exemplifies the Cho Ro people's capacity to harmonize culinary practice with ecological resources.

Grilled meats also feature prominently in Cho Ro cuisine. Cuts of pork, chicken, or wild game are marinated in indigenous spices and grilled slowly over charcoal embers, producing a distinctive smoky aroma and savory taste. While seemingly simple, this culinary tradition reflects generations of accumulated knowledge in flavor balancing, food preservation, and resource utilization.

Equally distinctive are the Cho Ro soups, including pai vih—a thick, earthy broth of local vegetables and herbs—and pai oal, a roasted-rice soup with a rich, nutty fragrance. These dishes, often cooked in clay pots or over wood fires, highlight the community's seasonal foraging practices and expertise in extracting natural flavors from native ingredients.

The Cho Ro culinary repertoire extends beyond food to include cultural customs integral to communal identity. Practices such as smoking traditional hand-rolled tobacco, chewing betel leaves, and sharing ruou cần—fermented rice wine drunk communally through long bamboo straws—are embedded in social gatherings, ritual events, and seasonal festivals. These customs function as vehicles for reinforcing kinship ties, transmitting intangible heritage, and maintaining cultural continuity.

For visitors, engaging with Cho Ro cuisine transcends the act of dining; it constitutes an immersive cultural encounter. Participation in the preparation, tasting, and sharing of traditional dishes offers experiential insight into Cho Ro heritage, values, and social life. Such interactions not only enhance the authenticity of cultural tourism experiences but also foster cross-cultural appreciation and respect, thereby contributing to the sustainable preservation of ethnic minority traditions in southern Vietnam.

4.3.3. The Folk Art of the Cho Ro People



The folk art of the Cho Ro people in Ba Ria - Vung Tau constitutes the spiritual essence of their cultural identity and serves as a compelling attraction for tourists in search of authentic cultural experiences. Deeply embedded in the community's spiritual life and everyday traditions, these artistic practices embody the historical narratives, collective memory, and worldview of the Cho Ro people.

Central to this cultural expression is the use of traditional musical instruments, including bamboo zithers, flutes, calabash horns (camvuôt), mouth harps, Goong choloq, gongs, and chiêng (ceremonial drums). These instruments are integral to festivals, rituals, and community events, producing distinctive timbres that enrich the cultural landscape. Their sounds evoke a sense of sacredness and solemnity, particularly during harvest celebrations, ancestral worship, and other ritual observances.

Beyond music, Cho Ro folk art encompasses a diverse repertoire of oral and performing traditions. Folk tales, transmitted across generations through oral storytelling, convey moral teachings and encapsulate the community's historical experiences and social values. Lullabies, characterized by gentle melodies and poetic lyricism, foster emotional and cognitive development in children, while call-and-response chants, often imbued with humor and wit, facilitate social interaction and strengthen communal bonds.

Performative storytelling (*diễn xướng*) integrates singing and dance to depict scenes from daily life, often infused with symbolic meaning. Traditional dances—such as the rice planting dance, rice winnowing dance, and rice pounding dance—not only recreate agricultural activities with vivid realism but also infuse community gatherings with joy, vitality, and collective participation.

These artistic practices transcend their role as entertainment; they function as vital instruments for cultural preservation, intergenerational transmission, and identity reinforcement. They embody a living heritage that continues to inspire pride, unity, and resilience within the Cho Ro community.

In the context of cultural tourism, Cho Ro folk art offers immersive and interactive experiences that appeal to visitors seeking participatory engagement with local traditions. By integrating music, dance, and storytelling into tourism activities, these artistic forms significantly contribute to the growth of experiential tourism in Ba Ria - Vung Tau. This not only enhances cultural appreciation among visitors but also generates socio-economic benefits, thereby reinforcing the sustainable development of both the community and its intangible heritage.

4.3.4. Festivals of the Cho Ro People in Ba Ria - Vung Tau

For the Cho Ro people, festivals represent a cultural event of profound spiritual and social significance, comparable to the Lunar New Year in other Vietnamese communities. These occasions serve as sacred and joyous milestones, bringing the entire community together after months of agricultural labor. Beyond their celebratory nature, the festivals are deeply symbolic expressions of gratitude, respect, and cultural identity.

Central to these gatherings is the collective act of honoring spirits and ancestral deities, alongside demonstrations of filial piety toward elders. They also function as vibrant showcases of traditional knowledge and skills, including the presentation of agricultural harvests, preparation of indigenous cakes, crafting of handmade tools, and performance of folk arts. The participation of young people is actively encouraged, creating an environment for intergenerational learning and cultural continuity. Through this process, festivals become a living medium of intangible heritage transmission.

In accordance with their polytheistic belief system, the Cho Ro community observes two principal spiritual ceremonies each year. The first is the Yang Vry ritual, typically conducted in the third lunar month. Its scale varies according to the village's economic conditions, with cycles ranging from annual observance to intervals of two to seven years. The ceremony honors deities and natural forces believed to safeguard health, prosperity, and social harmony.

The second is the Yang Va ritual, held annually in the tenth lunar month. The central symbol of this ceremony is the *hoa nêu*—a ceremonial ornament crafted from rice stalks. This object embodies themes of prosperity, gratitude, and hope for abundant harvests. Positioned at the village shrine, the *hoa nêu* becomes the focal point for offerings, reflecting the Cho Ro cosmological belief in the interdependence of humans and the spiritual realm.

Both ceremonies aim to secure peace, protection, health, and blessings from the spiritual world. Through ritualistic chants, symbolic offerings, and communal feasts, the Cho Ro reaffirm their religious values while reinforcing communal solidarity.

For cultural tourists, participation in or observation of these events provides a unique opportunity to engage with the Cho Ro worldview, particularly their respect for nature and their integrated cultural-spiritual value system. If promoted with cultural sensitivity and authenticity, these festivals possess substantial potential as distinctive cultural tourism experiences, contributing simultaneously to heritage preservation and sustainable community development.

4.3.5. Traditional Crafts of the Cho Ro People in Ba Ria - Vung Tau

The Cho Ro people have preserved a rich spectrum of traditional livelihoods that reflect both their adaptation to the natural environment and their enduring cultural heritage. Core subsistence activities include farming and animal husbandry, complemented by the foraging of natural resources such as bamboo shoots, wild honey, and freshwater species like shrimp and fish. These occupations not only secure the community's economic sustenance but also play a crucial role in maintaining and transmitting the cultural values, skills, and ecological knowledge embedded in Cho Ro traditions.

Alongside agricultural and pastoral practices, the Cho Ro are renowned for their mastery of handwoven basketry—an artisanal craft deeply interwoven with their daily life and cultural expression. The production of woven goods, including handbags, hats, table mats, and an array of household utensils, exemplifies the community's refined technical expertise and aesthetic sensibilities. Each piece embodies meticulous craftsmanship, from material selection to the intricate patterns that carry symbolic and functional

significance. Beyond their practical utility, these artifacts serve as tangible markers of ethnic identity, a testament to cultural continuity, and a source of communal pride that reinforces the Cho Ro's distinct place within Vietnam's cultural mosaic.

4.4. Solutions to Enhance Cho Ro Cultural Experience Tourism

To effectively promote tourism in areas inhabited by the Cho Ro communities, it is essential to adopt a comprehensive set of strategic solutions that simultaneously enhance the visitor experience and foster sustainable economic development for local residents.

A foremost priority is the improvement of transportation infrastructure. Upgrading road networks, enhancing signage, and ensuring travel safety will significantly increase accessibility to key tourist attractions and traditional Cho Ro cultural festivals. Improved connectivity not only facilitates higher visitor turnout but also supports the long-term viability of local attractions, particularly traditional craft markets and eco-tourism sites situated near Cho Ro residential areas.

The establishment of distinctive, culturally inspired check-in landmarks represents another critical measure. These sites should be thoughtfully designed to capture the unique cultural and natural heritage of the Cho Ro people, incorporating elements such as forests, mountains, and waterfalls that are linked to Cho Ro folklore. Integrating storytelling and symbolic cultural motifs into these locations will enrich the tourist experience and deepen cultural engagement.

Equally important is the enhancement of tourism service quality. Investments in accommodation facilities—including hotels, guesthouses, and homestays—will ensure comfort, safety, and convenience for visitors. Local restaurants should uphold high standards of food safety while preserving and showcasing indigenous culinary traditions. Moreover, embedding Cho Ro cultural customs, folk games, performances, and interactive heritage experiences into tourism offerings will create authentic, memorable, and culturally meaningful encounters for visitors.

Capacity building within local communities is vital for ensuring both service excellence and cultural preservation. Training programs in tourism management, hospitality, traditional arts, and Cho Ro handicraft production will enhance professional skills, strengthen cultural transmission, and empower community members to actively participate in the tourism value chain.

Furthermore, strategic tourism promotion requires the deployment of diverse communication channels. Digital platforms such as websites and social media, combined with promotional videos and printed brochures, will broaden outreach, increase awareness, and stimulate interest in Cho Ro cultural tourism. Collectively, these integrated strategies have the potential to significantly elevate the Cho Ro tourism brand, generate sustainable livelihoods, and reinforce cultural resilience. Achieving this vision will require close collaboration among local authorities, tourism enterprises, and community stakeholders to ensure that tourism growth in Bà Rịa – Vũng Tàu aligns with both economic and cultural sustainability objectives.

5. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In **Bà Rịa – Vũng Tàu Province**, the development of Cho Ro cultural experience tourism has attracted considerable attention and investment from both local enterprises and governmental authorities. Tourism products—including restaurants, hotels, and cultural attractions—have been strategically designed to embody the distinctive cultural identity of the Cho Ro people, often incorporating folklore narratives and traditional values. Such initiatives not only contribute to regional economic growth but also play a pivotal role in safeguarding and promoting the community's cultural heritage.

The research findings underscore that Cho Ro cultural tourism holds profound socio-economic and cultural significance for both the community and the broader region. Economically, it stimulates local development by fostering the creation of tourism products with unique cultural characteristics. Culturally, it serves as an effective mechanism for heritage preservation, particularly through the maintenance of traditional culinary practices and the use of locally sourced ingredients. These practices not only revitalize Cho Ro cuisine but also showcase it to a global audience, thereby strengthening cultural visibility and pride.

Unlike previous studies—which primarily concentrated on cultural expressions or historical contributions—this research emphasizes a **sustainable development paradigm** that integrates Cho Ro cultural identity into the tourism sector. Earlier works, such as those by Huynh Van Toi, Lam Nhan, and Phan Dinh Dung (2013) on traditional festivals and crafts; Tran Tan Vinh (1999, 2023) and Dao Quoc Trung (2021) on cultural heritage and historical legacies; and Pham Diem (2023) on folk performance arts, have laid an important scholarly foundation. Building on these contributions, the present study

advances the discourse by focusing on sustainability-oriented strategies and the innovation of culturally distinctive tourism products.

From a practical perspective, the findings call for **strengthened collaboration** between tourism enterprises and the Cho Ro community to ensure active participation and equitable distribution of benefits. This involves the establishment of **fair and sustainable partnership frameworks**, enabling local residents to share meaningfully in tourism's economic gains.

Nevertheless, the implementation of such models is not without challenges. Issues such as negotiation complexities, conflicting stakeholder interests, and the need for coordinated action across political, economic, and social sectors can hinder progress. Addressing these constraints demands transparent governance, robust planning, and well-defined implementation mechanisms to guarantee that benefits are distributed fairly and inclusively.

To ensure the long-term sustainability of Cho Ro cultural tourism, future research should focus on three interrelated priorities. First, the development of **modern management models** is essential to enhance operational efficiency, resource management, and service quality while mitigating potential risks. Second, promoting **community participation** is critical—local residents should be empowered to engage in tourism-related activities ranging from service provision to cultural conservation. Finally, greater attention should be given to **strategies for safeguarding and enriching the Cho Ro's unique cultural values** through tourism, thereby strengthening the resilience and longevity of the ethnic tourism sector.

6. CONCLUSIONS

In Ba Ria – Vung Tau Province, Vietnam, Cho Ro cultural experience tourism has yielded both positive and sustainable outcomes for the local community. Findings from this study indicate that the model not only contributes substantially to local economic growth but also plays a pivotal role in preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of the Cho Ro ethnic group.

A central factor underpinning the success of this tourism model is the active participation and integration of the local community in its planning and operation. Such engagement not only enhances household incomes and living standards but also provides younger generations with valuable opportunities to learn, practice, and transmit traditional cultural knowledge. This dual economic–cultural benefit underscores the model's potential as a sustainable development pathway.

To ensure its continued viability and expansion, targeted strategies are required. First, tourism management systems must be strengthened to balance visitor demand with the preservation of cultural integrity and environmental sustainability. Second, investment in human resource development is essential, with tailored training programs for local guides, artisans, and hospitality workers to improve service quality while maintaining cultural authenticity. Third, supportive policy frameworks should be enacted and implemented by local government authorities, with a focus on infrastructure enhancement, financial incentives for cultural preservation initiatives, and marketing strategies that promote the Cho Ro cultural experience to both domestic and international tourists.

Beyond economic contributions, Cho Ro cultural experience tourism generates employment opportunities, addresses local social welfare needs, and enriches both the human capital and cultural identity of the community. With sustained investment and collaborative partnerships among stakeholders—including local government, tourism enterprises, cultural institutions, and the Cho Ro people themselves—this model has the potential to serve as a leading example of inclusive, community-based, and culturally grounded tourism development in Vietnam.

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APPENDIX

Form 1: Statistical Table of Enterprises That Have Used or Are Currently Using Cho Ro Cultural Products

No.	Question	Percentage
1	This food is the business of	
	A. Belongs to a Cho Ro person?	35.30%
	B. Maintaining traditional cooking methods: important/very important	76.40%
2	How often do you use of local ingredients in dishes:	
	A. Always	58.80%
	B. Frequently	29.40%
	C. Occasionally	11.80%
3	Significance of introducing Cho Ro culture to customers	
	A. Very meaningful	52.90%
	B. Meaningful	35.30%
4	Organization of cultural activities, performances, or guided tours	
	A. Frequently	11.80%
	B. Occasionally	23.50%
	C. Rarely	52.90%
5	Economic benefits of restaurant business for the Cho Ro community	
	A. Very much	11.80%
	B. Much	23.50%
	C. Little	23.50%
	D. None	41.20%
6	Impact of sustainable tourism on the life of the Cho Ro community	
	A. Very positive	47.10%
	B. Positive	52.90%
7	Importance of authenticity in attracting tourists	
	A. Very important	52.90%
	B. Important	47.10%
8	Strategy focused on enhancing tourist experiences through cultural activities	
	A. Highly focused	11.80%
	B. Focused	58.80%
9	Application of principles of cultural preservation and promotion in business activities	
	A. Always	23.50%
	B. Frequently	29.40%
	C. Occasionally	47.10%

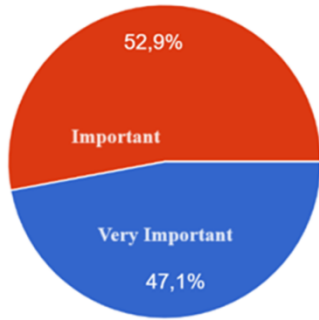
10	Importance of government support policies for sustaining and developing the business	
	A. Very necessary	41.20%
	B. Necessary	52.90%
11	Preserving and developing high-quality tourism products	
	A. Very necessary	52.90%
	B. Necessary	47.10%
12	Promoting cooperation between government and Cho Ro people in sustainable tourism development	
	A. Very much	17.60%
	B. Much	35.30%
	C. Little	23.50%

Form 2: Statistical Table of Tourists Who Have Experienced Cho Ro Cultural Products

No.	Data Category	Statistical Information
I	Visitor Demographics	
1	Tourist age group (18-24 years old)	30%
2	Tourist age group (25-39 years old)	45%
3	Region of origin (Southeast & North Central Vietnam)	70%
4	Occupation - Students	30%
5	Occupation - Government employees	25%
6	Occupation - Businesspeople	20%
7	Source of travel information (Internet and social media)	70%
II	Travel Type & Infrastructure	
1	Type of travel (With friends/family)	60%
2	Type of travel (Professional tour company)	25%
3	Positive evaluation of road infrastructure	65%
4	Positive evaluation of transportation quality	60%
III	Satisfaction and Feedback on Cho Ro Cultural Tourism Experience	
1	Tourists very satisfied with the experience	40%
2	Tourists satisfied with the experience	35%
3	Tourists intend to return	70%
4	Tourists willing to recommend to others	80%

Chart: Survey Results from Enterprises

Do you think the authenticity of the culinary and cultural products your restaurant offers is an important factor in attracting tourists?



Does your sensory strategy focus on enhancing the visitor experience through cultural activities?



Do you apply the principles of preserving and promoting traditional cultural values in your business activities?

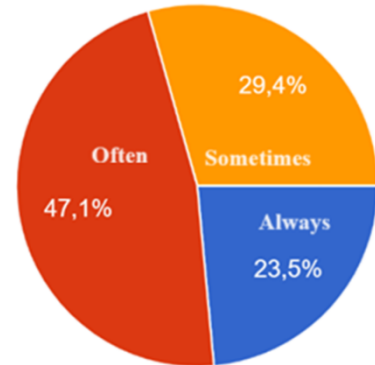


Chart: Survey Results on Customer Satisfaction

