The Management Innovation of Local Economy to Enhance the Value Added of Creative and Experiential Community-Based Agro-tourism: GI Durian in Ban Naiwongtai District, Ranong Province

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Abstract

The growth of durian agrotourism has a significant impact on the well-being of rural communities or farmers. From old to new agrotourism in Ban Nai Wong Tai District, management innovation research to boost durian growth was investigated. A quantitative approach was used by purposively selecting 210 participants using a non-probability sampling (convenience sampling) technique. The data were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings revealed that the farm owners in charge of the agrotourism durian operations went through various stages of management innovation to add value to the community-based agrotourism. The control and management, community, organisation, and management, coordination and cooperation with stakeholders, and power distribution, control, and ownership with which farmers participate in counseling effect the farmers' decision to manage innovation in the development of durian agrotourism. The findings of this study suggest that policymakers in emerging economies should promote management innovation aspects to increase the value added of creative and experimental community-based agrotourism in emerging economies, particularly Thailand.

Keywords: Management innovation, Community-based agrotourism, Durian, Thailand.

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1970s, community engagement development has received significant attention in research because of its acceptance by key international organizations such as the 'World Bank', the 'United Nations', and the 'US Agency for International Development' (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2012). Implementers who are involved in development process have found that community engagement can help to enact sustainable development principles and bring about positive changes in the lives of residents (Dodds, Ali, & Galaski, 2018). Local communities and their skills and needs have been focused on tourist literature (Nick, Anuwat, & Varaphorn, 2014), because tourism is marked as a community development and environmental strategy. It is also highlighted by leading environmental and not for profit organisations (NGOs), as evidenced by Agenda 21 (David, 2000), Conservation International (2009), the Global Environmental Facility and the World Bank (Taylor, Markandya, & Pedroso, 2005). The development of

agritourism is important for rural development and poverty alleviation in developing countries. The expansion of agrotourism in underdeveloped economies, particularly in South Asian economies, is slower than in developed economies (Bhatta, Itagaki, & Ohe, 2019; Bhatta & Ohe, 2019; Bhatta, Ohe, & Ciani, 2020; Ohe, 2020).

Today, many businesses value innovation. Innovation, defined as "a novel way of doing something within a given context" (Laura Jane & Weaver, 2010, p. 527), creates new possibilities through effective management, with added value during the commercialization and implementation stages (Backhaus & Schumpeter, 2003; Frehse, Peters, & Buhalis, 2009). Organisations innovate when they question long-held assumptions and way of thinking, resulting in significant breakthroughs or small adjustments of existing product or service (Sakdiyakorn & Sivarak, 2016). Furthermore, innovation introduces new market possibilities and participants while also acting as a stabilizing force for businesses. As with any other industry, innovation is critical in agrotourism and can be observed pragmatically by "creativity, problem-solving and new ways of thinking" (Gianna, 2008). The innovation concept in agrotourism is increasing, as is the emphasis on agrotourism's sustainability. As with the non-agricultural economy, innovations in agrotourism are believed to spur sustainable rural development through agricultural farm modernisation (Roman, Roman, & Prus, 2020). This also necessitates the establishment of distinct agrotourism products, the incorporation of necessary support, and product promotion. Agrotourism initiatives that are innovative involve technology development, resources procurement, and firm infrastructure (Shumaev, Morkovin, Nikonorova, Nezamaikin, & Yurzinova, 2018). Agrotourism innovation is important for the development of tourist destinations and tourism firms' competitiveness (Roman et al., 2020).

So far, only a few studies have described and identified the elements that support community-based agrotourism and other forms of community tourism (Fesenmaier, Wilson, Fesenmaier, & Van Es, 2001; Saufi, O'Brien, &

Wilkins, 2014; Zielinski, Kim, Botero, & Yanes, 2020). Even though there has been no single set of relevant indicators that applies to all potential tourist destinations (Etsuko, 2008; Tideswell & Faulkner, 1997), some argue that there are several important situations that either promote or impede tourism activities (Yanes, Zielinski, Diaz Cano, & Kim, 2019; Zielinski et al., 2020). Such situations are usually multidimensional and highly complex in nature, entailing a plethora of intertwined innovation facets that are either imposed externally or internally. Individuals from the most developed economies are typically better equipped than those from the least developed economies to engage in innovative management activities in community-based agrotourism. The question of how to expand the agrotourism sector in underdeveloped economies has gained increased attention, even though the sector is still in its infancy (Bhatta, 2021; Routry & Malkanthi, 2011). As such, the aim of the current research is to conduct a review of the existing literature on agrotourism from the perspective of management innovation, which have not been adequately addressed in the agrotourism literature, and to investigate the potential implications for the development of agrotourism in underdeveloped economies, particularly Thailand.

Literature Review

For the last half-century, researchers worldwide have produced a massive amount of scholarly research and academic writing on innovation. Although much of recent studies have concentrated on different facets of technological innovation (Birkinshaw, Hamel, & Mol, 2008). However, in recent years, there has been a shift toward investigating various types of innovation, such as strategic innovation (Markides, 1997), service innovation (Miles, 1995), and process innovation (Pesano, 1997), with the goal of better understanding how they contribute to long-term business success and how they are managed. This paper focuses on a largely unexplored type of innovation known as 'management innovation,' and more

specifically, the processes by which it emerges. However, we define management innovation rather narrowly - precisely, the development and implementation of management practices, processes, structures, or approaches that are novel and are more likely to advance organisational objectives. Management innovation is used to describe novel and improved techniques of organizing internal cooperation and business operations at work. Originally, Schumpetter (2010) used the phrase "managerial innovation" to explain "management innovation" (Arcodia, Mei, & Ruhanen, 2012). On the other hand, Monfort-Mir and Camisón (2012) adopted the phrase "organization innovation" and stated that management or organisation innovation is "based on the introduction of new systems and management methods, and new types of work organization and business models" and entails improvements or changes in human resource management (Monfort-Mir & Camisón, 2012; Kerdpitak, 2022). However, when stakeholders are involved in the implementation and planning of destinations, collaborative networking among them has become widely recognized for its utility in fostering innovation. The 'actor-network theory' postulates that this network of associates aids in

shaping, diverting, and consolidating hazy initial thoughts into innovation. Network collaboration is also critical for sustainable development at the community level (Sakdiyakorn & Sivarak, 2016). Multi-stakeholders having vested interests in assisting one another in achieving a strategic objective come together through network collaboration (Muna, 2011). Tourists, academics, business owners, local government officials, and residents are typically included among these stakeholders in agrotourism management (Albarti & Guisti, 2012). Businesses dealing in a competitive marketplace are under increasing pressure to launch new products or services and provide better quality to maintain their competitive edge. As a result, firms are working harder to innovate (Divisekera & Nguyen, 2018; Kerdpitak et al.,2022). Using this method of evaluating the literature widen the scope to include more relevant studies, providing a more complete picture of the available data. It is envisaged that understanding management innovation would aid in the development of policies and practices when it comes to establishing and implementing community based agrotourism projects.
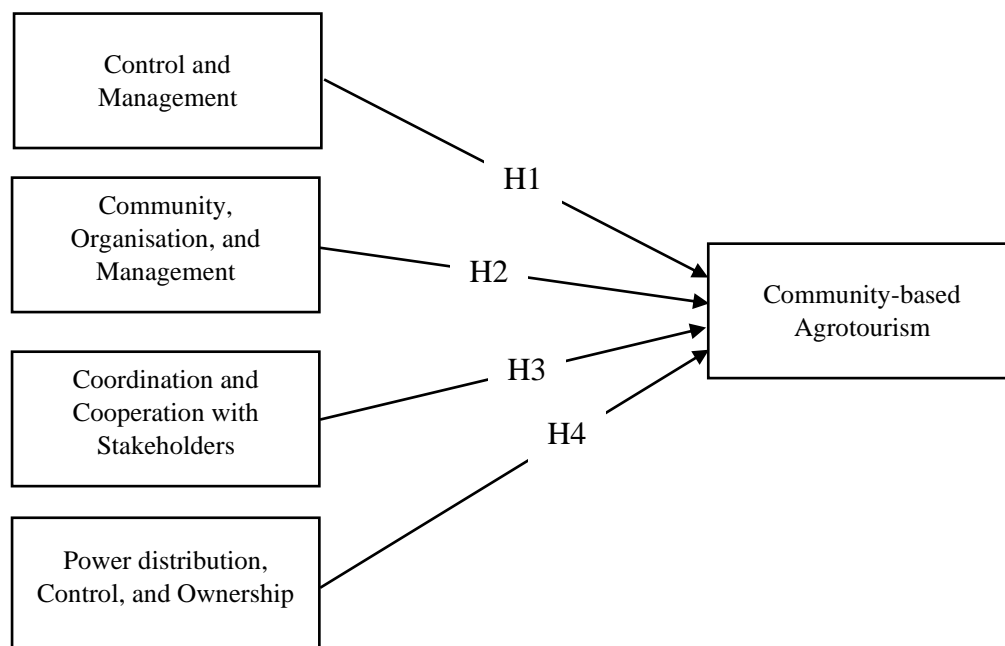

Figure 1 *Theoretical Framework*

Materials and Methods

Measures

The study's independent variable is management innovation, which we measured with four aspects (control and management, community, organisation, and management, coordination and cooperation with stakeholders, and power distribution, control, and ownership). The scale of control and management has five items, while community, organisation, and management scale have six. There are three items on the scale of coordination and cooperation with stakeholders. Furthermore, there are three items on the power distribution, control, and ownership scale. Similarly, the scale of community-based agrotourism with four items. All these scale were adapted from Zielinski, Jeong, and Milanés (2021) and Novelli, Klatte, and Dolezal (2017) and modified with the help of two research experts for our study context. The negative worded items were reverse coded to suit the context.

Sampling and Procedure

The agrotourism sector was chosen as the research population in this study. The research was carried out in Nai Wong Tai, which is a district with durian producers that are being promoted as agrotourism with the concept of durian production in Ranong Province, Thailand. This research was carried out in July 2021. In this study, the population consisted of farmers who managed the agrotourism durian operations. The non-probability sampling technique (convenience sampling) was used to collect data from the respondents. The sample size for this research was 150 participants.

Structured questionnaires were used to collect data in this study, which were provided to participants. The participants chosen were those who were more conversant with and knowledgeable about the durian Agrotourism, including the Chairman, chairperson, and farmers of Nai Wong Tai district, Ranong Province, Thailand. We distributed 210 questionnaires and received 160 with a response rate of 76.19 percent. We discarded the questionnaires with incomplete information, resulting in a final sample size of 150 for the analysis.

Results

Data Analysis

Smart PLS 3.0 (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015), a statistical tool, was used in this research to analyse the data using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). The analysis technique was chosen based on the characteristics of the data/sample. Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2011) proposed utilizing smart PLS to forecast the effects of dependent variable. Smart PLS is comprised of measurement model and structural model analysis, which are used to investigate the correlations between exogenous and endogenous latent constructs. The data were first checked for missing values, outliers, and normality using Hair (2010), Hair et al. (2021), and Tabachnick, Fidell, and Ullman (2007). There were no missing values or outliers in our data. We also looked at skewness and kurtosis to see if the data was normal. Table 1 displays the mean, standard deviation, and correlation values.

Table 1 *Descriptive Statistics (mean, standard deviation, correlation, and skewness and kurtosis)*

Variable	Mean	S.D	CM	COM	CCS	PCO	CAT	Skewness	Kurtosis
CM	3.849	0.614	1					0.892	1.410
COM	3.479	0.528	0.428	1				1.287	0.946
CCS	3.798	0.573	0.439	0.513	1			0.927	1.232
PCO	3.460	0.497	0.571	0.417	0.628	1		-1.276	1.972
CAT	3.786	0.629	0.497	0.435	0.487	0.542	1	1.421	1.418

Note(s): ** Correlation significant at 0.01 level e.g., two-tailed.

Measurement Model Assessment

This research examined the outer model technique to determine the constructs'

composite reliability (CR), validity and reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). Composite reliability was used to assess constructs' reliability. Composite reliability results for control and management (0.841), community, organisation, and management (0.897), coordination and cooperation with stakeholders (0.860), power distribution, control, and ownership (0.837), and community-based agrotourism (0.821). Composite reliability value ought to be greater than .70 (Hair, Hollingsworth, Randolph, & Chong, 2017), and this research investigation determined that the values were within an acceptable range. Furthermore, we analyzed convergent validity to derive the values of average variance extracted (AVE), which were all higher than the .50 cutoff value (the AVE values for control and management, community, organisation, and management, coordination and cooperation with stakeholders, power distribution, control, and ownership, and impacts of tourism were 0.611, 0.642, 0.643, 0.673, and 0.669, respectively) (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2021; Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). Additionally, we analyzed the variance inflation factor (VIF) to determine the extent to which the data are multicollinear. West, Aiken, and Reno (1991) stated that VIF values should be less than 10, and the current research found that all VIF values were within the prescribed range, indicating that there was no evidence of multicollinearity among the variables. Table 2 shows the results of the study.

Table 2 *Findings of Measurement Model*

Construct	Item	Loading	Composite Reliability	AVE	Collinearity
Control and management					
	CM1	0.701	0.860	0.639	1.542
	CM2	0.687			1.842
	CM3	0.692			2.476
	CM4	0.724			1.100
	CM5	0.762			1.764
Community, organisation, and management					
	COM1	0.743	0.897	0.624	2.612
	COM2	0.738			1.498
	COM3	0.718			1.335
	COM4	0.673			2.478
	COM5	0.718			2.728
	COM6	0.729			2.792
Coordination and cooperation with stakeholders					
	CCS1	0.798	0.860	0.648	2.749
	CCS2	0.765			1.189
	CCS3	0.744			1.887
Power distribution, control, and ownership					
	PCO1	0.780	0.837	0.617	2.827
	PCO2	0.760			1.768
	PCO3	0.784			1.569
Community-based agrotourism					
	CAT1	0.764	0.821	0.676	2.189
	CAT2	0.746			1.128
	CAT3	0.788			2.495
	CAT4	0.741			2.782

Note: CM = Control and Management, COM = Community, Organization, and Management, CCS = Coordination and Cooperation with stakeholders, PCO = Power distribution, control and Ownership, and CAT = Community-based Agrotourism.

Furthermore, to determine discriminant validity, we used the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios (Henseler et al., 2015). The values of HTMT obtained are less than the .85 cutoff value as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 *Discriminant validity through Hetrotrait-Monotrait ratio*

Variables	COM	CAT	PCO	HP	CCS	CM
COM						
CAT	0.534	0.489				
PCO	0.298	0.618	0.624			
CCS	0.672	0.642	0.479	0.427		
CM	0.468	0.573	0.508	0.500	0.567	

Note: COM = Community, Organization, and Management, CAT = Community-based Agrotourism, PCO = Power distribution, control and Ownership, CCS = Coordination and Cooperation with stakeholders, and CM = Control and Management.

Structural Model Assessment

Once the psychometric parameters of our measuring model were determined, we continued to examine the structural models. The significance and magnitude of the path coefficients were used to evaluate the structural model. We used a bootstrapping approach with a 5000-resample size. Table 4 summarizes the results of the hypotheses testing. As anticipated, control and management has a substantial impact on community-based agrotourism ($\beta = 0.220$, t = 3.210, and p <0.05), hence supporting hypothesis 1. Similarly, community, organisation, and management has a significant impact on community-based agrotourism ($\beta = 0.199$, t = 2.731, and p <0.05), thus supporting hypothesis 2. In addition, coordination and cooperation with stakeholders has a significant effect on community-based agrotourism ($\beta = 0.257$, t = 4.118, and p <0.05), thus lending support for hypothesis 3. Furthermore, power distribution, control, and ownership has a significant influence on community-based agrotourism ($\beta = 0.310$, t = 5.087, and p <0.05), indicating support for hypothesis 4. The process of managing innovation in the growth of agrotourism selecting durian involves numerous phases, including those of control and management, community, organisation, and management,

coordination and cooperation with stakeholders, and power distribution, control, and ownership. Additionally, implementers analyze the type of innovation and the elements that contribute to farmer's acceptance of innovation. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R2) should be greater than 0.1 (Chin, 1998). The current study found that control and management, community, organisation, and management, coordination and cooperation with stakeholders, power distribution, control, and ownership account for 47.9 percent of the variance in community-based agrotourism. Lastly, we computed the Stoner-Geisser (Q2) (Geisser, 1975; Stone, 1974) and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) to test model fit in PLS. The measure of Q2 indicates how well the model and its predicted parameters reproduce the observed values. Value higher than zero imply predictive relevance. The Q2 for latent variables was measured and found to be 0.283 for community-based agrotourism, which is above zero demonstrating a higher predictive relevance. The model's composite standardized root mean square residual value was .031, which was less than the .07 (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). Table 4 summarizes the results of structural model.

Table 4 *Findings of Direct Relationships*

H	Paths	Beta	S.D	t-value	Decision
H1	CM -> CAT	0.220	0.149	3.210	Supported
H2	COM -> CAT	0.199	0.127	2.731	Supported
H3	CCS -> CAT	0.257	0.159	4.118	Supported
H4	PCO -> CAT	0.310	0.172	5.087	Supported

Note: CM = Control and Management, COM = Community, Organization, and Management, CCS = Coordination and Cooperation with stakeholders, PCO = Power distribution, control and Ownership, and CAT = Community-based Agrotourism.

Discussion Implications and Limitations

Community-based agrotourism has long been regarded as a potential avenue for urban and rural development. Notwithstanding the prospects of agrotourism providing economic and other advantages for communities,

numerous efforts have failed to offer economic viability and empowerment (Santilli & Goodwin, 2009). However, many of the efforts failed due to unrecognized unfavorable aspects (Zielinski et al., 2020), as not every place is suitable for agrotourism development (Seif & Spenceley, 2003). To maximize agrotourism's benefits, each area must be evaluated in relation to its setting and community capacity to develop and administer agrotourism management. Numerous agrotourism-based models fail to consider this (Hall, 2008) as they were not designed with knowledge derived from a broader range of actual practice scenarios (Gianna, 2005). Until now, only a few empirical studies have described and identified the elements that promote agrotourism and other forms of community-based agrotourism. While major agrotourism players with greater inventive capabilities may add to the sharing of knowledge within the sector, most of the small players that drive the agrotourism sector continue to have limited understanding on innovation. To bridge that knowledge gap, the current study advocates for additional research on management innovation among small and underserved agrotourism operators at the level of community. The study of agrotourism was selected as it is an important and rapidly growing aspects of the agrotourism sector (Butler, Poria, & Airey, 2003; Suppakorn, 2009), particularly in the underdeveloped economies that are infused with continuous growth (Olsen, 2010). When this sector is converted into agrotourism experience, it provides an important income source and may help communities thrive economically and reduce poverty. The present study aims to investigate what differentiates a community based agrotourism farmers destination from others. However, with a particular emphasis on management innovation, the current study contends that specific prerequisites and important factors of management innovation help the agrotourism community in differentiating itself from its competitors. However, as the market expanded and more foreigners visited, merchants were given with community English training to improve their communications skills to better deal with tourists. Such training programs are consistent with the aim of innovation management, which is to effect change or improvement in human resource management (Monfort-Mir & Camisón, 2012).

According to durian consumption trends, the agrotourism business appears to be emerging. This type of agrotourism industry is initially focused on foreign tourists. To take advantage of these opportunities, pertinent public entities must develop an integrated agrotourism plan that is consistent across all marketers. Innovative product ideas should be planned and encouraged while also meeting the desire of consumers, which has been evolving at a breakneck pace. Innovative product ideas ought to be developed and encouraged while also meeting the needs of tourists, who are changing at an alarming rate. The authorities must be cognizant of demand growth and decline while also harmonizing the market's volume and value to achieve growth. Moreover, the growth and trading of durian must be viewed as a symbol of a shift in agri-foods product trading patterns. As a result, government entities may be able to capitalize on such trends to create a comprehensive agrotourism trade promotion strategy. The plan's goal must be to create a desired agrotourism ecosystem that supports and adds value to community-based agrotourism. The present study was conducted using the research technique described in the preceding literature, which has a few limitations. This research was cross sectional and survey based. Future studies may establish longitudinal study models for better results. Future studies may conduct qualitative or mix method research to confirm the research findings and to analyze whether such studies can be used to develop meaningful management policies and strategic suggestions to ensure that agrotourism is properly tuned for real-world practice. The study's sample size was insufficient to generalize the study's findings. Future studies may expand the sample size and include other Thai provinces to better generalize the research findings. Future studies may incorporate other factors (such as government role, financial resources) as an intervening variable to better understand the relationship.

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