

EXPLORING the Agritourism Destinations: A Multiple Case Study on the Hindrances of Agritourism Growth in Davao REGION

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ABSTRACT

Agritourism fights poverty and boosts rural development; however, significant challenges, including poor infrastructure, lower-skilled farmers, and limited basic services, hinder this development. With that, this study explores the service offerings of agritourism destinations in Region XI. It investigated the factors and experiences that hinder agritourism growth, as well as the coping mechanisms used to address them. This qualitative, multiple-case study was conducted in the Davao region, gathering data from five cases: floriculture, vineyards, livestock raising, sloping agricultural land technology, and demonstration and farm tours. Moreover, this study employed a purposive maximum variation sampling technique and interviewed 23 participants, comprising farm owners, managers, supervisors, and farmers. The data were analyzed using descriptive case, within-case, thematic, and cross-case analyses. The following themes that emerged were diverse agritourism offerings, experiential hands-on learning, distinct offerings and landscape, lack of manpower, changing weather conditions, laborious responsibilities, lack of funding, communication barrier, delegation of tasks, consistent monitoring and evaluation, responsive work ethics, learning more technical skills, and strengthening interpersonal communication skills. Furthermore, there were themes that varied from the various cases in this study; hence, these agritourism sites experienced hindrances in their growth that require strengthened regional agricultural programs and interventions.

KEYWORDS: *Agritourism, Agriculture, Tourism Industry, Floriculture, Vineyards, Livestock Raising, Sloping Agricultural Land Technology, Demonstration and Farm Tours, Business, Management, Davao Region*

INTRODUCTION

Agritourism continues to grow worldwide; thus, 736 million farmers in developing countries still earn less than \$1.90 per day and live in extreme poverty (World Bank, 2018). In connection to that, agritourism may fight poverty and may boost rural development; however, due to the significant challenges, including poor infrastructure, lower-skilled farmers, and basic services hindering such development (Bhatta et al, 2019).

Unlike advanced nations like Japan and Italy, Sri Lanka struggles to provide comprehensive agritourism experiences due to limited resources, information gaps, and concerns about cultural impact, as noted by Malkanthi et al. (2015). Correspondingly, Nepal highlights its economic hardships and a lack of government support that hinders farmers from obtaining training abroad (Ohe, 2017; Khanal & Mishra, 2014; Ministry of Finance, 2018; Bhatta & Ohe, 2020). Meanwhile, the Philippines recently witnessed a decrease in reliance on agriculture due to challenges in administration, policy, regulations, and product development (Villalobos, 2020).

In Mindanao, agribusiness through farm tourism is growing and developing, paving the way for additional income. Davao Region is gearing towards tourism development, emphasizing various programs that may provide employment opportunities for people (National Economic and Development Authority, 2020). In Davao City, the Infrastructure Development and Capacity Building Project for 2015-2045 aims to increase the economic viability of the city and the region by strengthening the “Islands to Highlands” tourism program and highlighting the city's and region's land and marine natural resources (IM4Davao 2045, 2015).

The current research landscape in agritourism lacks multiple case studies that address services, as well as studies that delve more deeply into the services and hindrances faced by farmers. Additionally, there is limited information on agricultural knowledge sharing in the context of agritourism, warranting further investigation given the potential benefits of educating diverse stakeholders through this platform (Bhatta et al., 2019). Another notable gap, as Bhatta and Ohe (2020) also emphasized, pertains to the geographical perspective, with a predominant focus on developed nations such as the United States and Europe, leaving a research void on agritourism in developing countries. Moreover, understanding the hindrances to agritourism is crucial to assessing the industry's growth. The motivations and attributes of farmers have been explored quantitatively, focusing on identity, quality tourism, tourism linkages, creative

tourism, and innovation in agritourism.

Due to the scarcity of corpora, this case study will help explore the emerging agritourism landscape in Davao Region, focusing on the services and hindrances of agritourism destinations, as well as the strategies they use to address these challenges. Multiple case studies are the most appropriate approach for gaining insights into the challenges faced by agritourism destinations in Davao Region. This approach enables the researcher to delve into the situations of various informants, exploring their services, factors, experiences, and circumstances that hinder the growth of their business. Ultimately, it offers valuable insights by highlighting both the commonalities and distinctions among them. The researcher will disseminate the results of this study in local and international research forums or conferences. In addition, the findings will be published in a refereed journal, and a copy of the study will be provided in the University of the Immaculate Conception library. Moreover, a copy will also be available to the regional tourism office of Davao to provide first-hand data on agritourism destinations in the region.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to understand the service offerings and the factors that hinder the growth of agritourism businesses, as experienced by owners and farmers. Moreover, this will investigate the coping mechanisms they have integrated into the agritourism landscape. Furthermore, this also explains the similarities and differences of each case.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This research was anchored in theories that comprehensively examine the hindrances to agritourism destinations in the region and the various agritourism landscapes the industry can offer. Specifically, this was anchored to the Knowledge Management Theory, Risk and Crisis Management Theory, Resource Base Theory, and Diamond Model. The first theory delves into Tom Davenport's Knowledge Management Theory (1994). This theory acknowledges the importance of sharing in fostering learning. As noted by Burnett (2003) and cited by Magdato, Jr. and Baconguis (2021), sharing is a form of idea exchange that may lead to the commonality of knowledge, attitudes, and practices. Another theory that was anchored is the Risk and Crisis Management Theory by Fearn-Banks (2016), which emphasizes the importance of preparing for potential

predicaments and responding to and recovering from the various crises the organization may encounter. Moreover, another theory used in this study is Penrose's Resource-Based Theory (1959). This theory accentuates the firm's effective management of its resources, its diversification strategy, and its productive opportunities. Furthermore, this study may also be posted on the sustainable tourism development model, specifically the Diamond Model of Adillon (2019). This model is designed as a sustainable tourism development tool for Destination Management Organizations (DMOs). Its primary purpose is to assist DMOs in making informed decisions, especially those involving unpopular measures such as restricting visitor numbers to support sustainable tourism development. The model emphasizes the use of objective arguments and criteria rather than personal intuitions or political interests in decision-making.

METHODS

Research Design. In undertaking this qualitative research endeavor, the researchers employed a multiple-case study approach. This qualitative approach was appropriate for providing a thorough investigation of service offerings and the factors hindering the growth of agritourism destinations in the Davao region. This approach enabled the researcher to discern and assimilate deeper similarities and differences between the cases under study and to better analyze the phenomenon from multiple perspectives. Moreover, a multiple-case study approach was essential to thoroughly explore specific cases and groups of individuals and to comprehensively gather in-depth information from various sources.

As explored by Creswell (2013), multiple case studies were used to examine real-life, contemporary multiple-bounded systems over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information and reporting case descriptions and case themes. This approach has a wide array of benefits, as noted by Gustafsson (2017), which include wider discovery of theoretical evolution and research questions, understanding of explorative subjects, as well as compelling and reliable evidence, and also how the valuable results are clarified.

Participants in the Case Units. The participants of this study were the farm owners and farmers of agritourism destinations in Davao Region. This study utilized a purposeful maximum variation sampling technique. Suri (2011) stated that maximum variation sampling identifies key dimensions that differ from other cases.

The participants in this research were agritourism owners and workers from different destinations. The participants below were identified by the case unit:

Case Unit 1. Floriculture. The first case pertains to a type of destination that offers a floral business, specifically flowers, as part of its experiences. Data collection will take place at Angel's Flower Garden and Nursery. The place offers a variety of flowers and plants, ideal for relaxation and meditation. This is located in Barangay Mapawa, Maragusan, Davao de Oro.

Case Unit 2. Vineyards. The second refers to destinations that grow grapes and produce wine from their produce. Tourists can immerse themselves in the vineyard and learn how wines are produced and processed. This destination also sells grape fruits and wines. Particularly, this will be undertaken at The Vine, located at GovGen Beach Resort, Barangay Tamban, Governor Generoso, Davao Oriental. Aside from their family resort and camping site offerings, the place also features a vineyard where tourists can enjoy fruit picking. Moreover, they also serve coffee and classic Filipino dishes.

Case Unit 3. Livestock Raising. This third case concerns agricultural activities related to the production of meat, milk, and eggs, as well as byproducts such as wool, leather, and the like. This destination also raises and maintains domesticated animals for breeding, feeding, care, and even recreation. The specific company for this livestock-raising business will be Isla Farms, located in Barangay Tagpopongan and Barangay Licup, Island Garden City of Samal. This Highland and Organic Learning Farm provides a wide range of farming and livestock-raising services. This is a suitable case as they promote naturally grown technology in growing milkfish, native chicken, hog, vegetables, and feed for farmers in Davao del Norte.

Case Unit 4. Sloping Agricultural Land Technology. The fourth case concerns an agroforestry system that integrates farming practices for soil conservation and food production. This term can also be called contour farming, in which short-term, medium-term, or permanent crops are planted in a single setting. Specifically, the study will be conducted at Mindanao Baptist Rural Life Center, located in Kinuskusan, Bansalan, Davao Del Sur, a suitable location offering sloping agricultural land and technology services. This agritourism business has provided effective, successful community-based ecotourism,

highlighting its sustainable agricultural practices. Moreover, the business has been popular for its soil conservation practices, making it a suitable case.

Case Unit 5: Demonstration and Farm Tours. This case concerns farm destinations that offer farm tours by integrating farm activities and immersive experiences. This also provides farm demonstrations and educational activities for visitors. Particularly, this will be administered in Gran Verde Family Farm. The farm offers cacao & various fresh produce located in Upper Lacson, Calinan, Davao City. Moreover, aside from dining experiences, they also offer farm tours and various demonstrations of farming practices.

Data Analysis. In analyzing the data, this study conducted descriptive, within-case, thematic, and cross-case analyses, as these methods are relevant to case study research. In his writings (2021), Priya described descriptive case analysis as the phenomenon of a specific topic being studied. As specific details were documented, such as asking good questions, keen listening skills, adapting to potential predicaments during the collection, extensive knowledge of the topic, and comprehensive data that can be assimilated, these are essential during the analysis. Meanwhile, a within-case analysis examines the dynamics, complexities, and details of the particular case being studied (Yin, 2014). Moreover, a thematic analysis was conducted on the gathered data. Thematic analysis, as discussed by Braun & Clarke (2019), helps identify, analyze, and uncover patterns in participants' responses. Finally, cross-case analysis was also applied in this study. Miles et al. (2014) defined cross-case analysis as a method that compares and contrasts responses across multiple case units. This was useful for identifying commonalities, variations, and even trends across the various agritourism landscapes in the Davao region.

With that in mind, the researcher appropriately adhered to the collection and organization of interview transcripts, observation notes, audio recordings, and other relevant materials acquired during the collection process to warrant a more wide-ranging understanding of the phenomenon.

To summarize, the data were transcribed, coded, categorized, thematized, and differentiated from other cases of the study. On top of that, each case was properly deciphered separately, ensuring that patterns of relationships and the disparities among the cases were corroborated.

Trustworthiness of the Study

The study's trustworthiness was integral to conducting this research. As defined by Pilot & Beck (2014), this emphasizes the thoroughness and quality of a study, highlighting the level of confidence in data, interpretation, and the methods used. Lincoln & Guba (1985) emphasized that qualitative researchers have agreed that trustworthiness is evidenced by these aspects: transferability, dependability, confirmability, and credibility. In accordance with the suggestions of Merriam (2009) and Lincoln & Guba (1985), the following procedures were used in conducting this study.

RESULTS

Profile of the Participants

The profiles of the participants in each case from the different agritourism sites in the region (Table 1). The profiles of the participants vary depending on the type of agritourism business the sites operate. These agritourism sites are located in various provinces across Davao Region. Specifically, they are located in Maragusan, Davao de Oro; Governor Generoso, Davao Oriental; Island Garden City of Samal, Davao del Norte; Digos, Davao del Sur; and Calinan, Davao City. These participants include farm owners, directors, managers, supervisors, and predominantly farmers, making the demographics diverse.

Case 1 is a floriculture agritourism site established in 2017. This site offers sightseeing of their garden. Apart from that, they offer a variety of products, including cacao, coffee, bananas, and other fruit crops. This flower garden focuses on a low-impact type of tourism service. Case 2 depicts a vineyard in the heart of a beach resort. This agritourism destination was established in 2018, sparked by the general manager's curiosity to introduce something unconventional in a beach resort. This vineyard is under the management of GovGen Beach Resort, offering sea, sun, sand, and, of course, the vineyard where visitors, both tourists and excursionists, may enjoy picking, tasting, or just plain sightseeing appreciation. Additionally, Case 3 is a livestock-raising operation established in 2004; however, it began tourism operations in 2017. This agritourism and training site aims to contribute to the nation's food security. Aside from Livestock Raising, the place also offers farm visits, fruit and vegetable crops, and training programs. The place focuses on offering diverse products and services. Meanwhile, Case 4 is the Sloping Agricultural Land Technology, which is focused on slope farming. Established in

1971 to improve the lives of the poor Filipino farmers. This agritourism site offers a wide array of sustainable farming technology training programs focused on farmers' welfare. One of their thrusts is to introduce FAITH, which stands for Food Always In The Home, to promote basic farming and agricultural appreciation in the home. Lastly, Case 5 is a demonstration and farm tour agritourism site that focuses on Cacao Farming. This agritourism site was a legacy of the first-generation owners and passed on to the second-generation family members. This case advocates a spiritual connection with nature and increasing recognition of the value of the environment in our lives.

Table 1.
Profile of Participants of Each Case Unit

Case Unit 1. Floriculture - Davao de Oro		Year of Start of Operation		2017
Pseudonym	Years in the Agritourism Site	Designation	Sex	Code
Azalea	31 Years	Owner	M	AGRI101
Rose	7 Years	Owner	M	AGRI102
Dahlia	3 Years	Farmer	M	AGRI103
Iris	5 Years	Farmer	M	AGRI104
Sunflower	7 Years	Farmer	M	AGRI105
Case Unit 2. Vineyards - Davao Oriental		Year of Start of Operation		2018
Cabernet	6 Years	General Operations Manager	F	AGRI106
Pinot Noir	3 Years	Caretaker & Reception	F	AGRI107
Merlo	5 Years	Caretaker	F	AGRI108
Concord	3 Years	Caretaker	F	AGRI109
Chardonnay	3 Years	Grape Grower	M	AGRI110
Case Unit 3. Livestock Raising- Davao del Norte		Year of Start of Operation		2017

Goat	1 Year	Tourism Officer	M	AGRI111
Cattle	20 Years	Farmer/Tour Guide	M	AGRI112
Chicken	6 Years	Farmer/Tour Guide	F	AGRI113
Hog	5 Years	Supervisor/Trainer	M	AGRI114
Case Unit 4. Sloping Agricultural Land Technology - Davao del Sur		Year of Start of Operation		1971
SALT	25 Years	Director	M	AGRI115
AgroForestry	12 Years	Extension Services	M	AGRI116
AgroLivestock	3 Years	Livestock In-charge	M	AGRI117
AgroFruit	2 Years	Extension Services Trainer	M	AGRI118
Sloping	20 Years	Supervisor Trainer	M	AGRI119
Case Unit 5: Demonstration and Farm Tours - Davao City		Year of Start of Operation		2006
Cacao	18 Years	Owner & Farmer	F	AGRI120
Cacao Nibs	7 Years	Head Caretaker	F	AGRI121
Cacao Shell	3 Years	Caretaker	F	AGRI122
Cacao Pods	5 Years	Farmer	M	AGRI123

Services of the Agritourism Site

As I exchanged ideas and knowledge with the participants, they shared invaluable services and offerings that do not focus solely on a specific type of product or service. The themes that emerged from my conversation with them are as follows: Diverse Agritourism Offerings, Experiential Hands-On Learning, and Distinct Offerings and Landscape. Table 2 summarizes the themes and the specific core ideas. These themes were analyzed and evaluated based on

participants' responses. This specifically addresses the products and services offered by agritourism sites across the region.

Table 2

Services of the Agritourism Site

Themes	Core Ideas
Diverse Agritourism Offerings	Provide innumerable services.
	Integrates activities within the farm.
	Offers multiple educational trainings and hands-on learning experiences.
	Practices demonstration services for visitors.
	Arranges guided tours to different visitors.
	Grants sustainable agricultural services.
	Providing specialized activities.
Experiential Hands-On Learning	Agritourism site provides extensive hands-on learning methodologies.
	Provides practical farming systems and practices.
	Immerse visitors in the planting and product development process.
	Teach and demonstrate farming technology and trainings.
	Promotes sustainable agricultural appreciation.
Distinct Offerings and Landscape	Believe that the garden's river side made the location unique.
	Only location in the who provides such kind of offering.
	Offering farm activities in a location surrounded by resorts.
	Value adding Experience due to distinct sharing of product development process.
	Models offered cannot be copied due to its uniqueness.

Factors and Experiences that Hinder the Growth of Agritourism

Each case has truly shared a wide array of experiences and challenges in running the agritourism business. Their challenges have brought them much learning and have made their experiences even more remarkable. Among these

notable experiences are as follows: Lack of Manpower, Changing Weather Conditions, Laborious Responsibilities, Lack of Funding, and Communication Barrier. These factors and experiences have brought a challenge to their business's growth in the tourism industry.

Table 3

Factors and Experiences that Hinder the Growth of Agritourism

Themes	Core Ideas
Lack of Manpower	Due to lack of workers on duty, handling visitors becomes harder.
	Supervision becomes tedious that might affect the operation.
	Becoming committed despite the lack of manpower.
Changing Weather Conditions	Climate change affects the production of enough fruit crops.
	Due to the unpredictable change in weather conditions, one attraction in the site was affected.
	Using heavy duty equipment that could withstand typhoons.
	They become ill due to too much exposure to the sun.
Laborious Responsibilities	No work no pay if sudden rain comes.
	It becomes harder to load products due to rivers that lead to injury.
	Responsibilities become harder to do due to various problems like electricity, heat index, birds.
	Taxing responsibilities of looking after 200 goats.
Lack of Fundings	Due to the lack of user-friendly machines, it becomes harder to finish the task.
	Development was thwarted due to lack of funds.
	Putting up a greenhouse for the grapes is seen as very costly.
	Development of the area also impeded them to improve the area due to other priorities of the owner.
	Fundings for the improvement of facilities for the center is expensive.

	Due to low sales of product, improvement of the farm would be hard and challenging because of how niche their market is.
Communication Barrier	Having hard time communicating using English language.
	Dependence on co-worker due to communication deficiency.
	Just talking to the spouse to translate and relay the message.
	Accents of English speaking guests become harder to understand.
	Sign language in conveying the message.

Coping Strategies of Agritourism Site

Being able to combat workplace challenges makes the responsibility fulfilling. For the different agritourism sites, they have integrated several mechanisms that helped them resolve or even pacify their predicaments. Moreover, skills have also been learned as they continuously cope with such dilemmas. Among these coping mechanisms are Delegation of Tasks, Consistent Monitoring and Evaluation, Responsive Work Ethics, Learning More Technical Skills, and Strengthening Interpersonal Communication Skills. These coping strategies have been beneficial to them in making their business sustainably ready.

Table 4
Coping Strategies of Agritourism Sites

Themes	Core Ideas	Challenges
Delegation of Tasks	Works have been designated properly.	Combating the lack of workers on the farm.
	Asking help and giving tasks to co-workers.	
Consistent Monitoring and Evaluation	Monitor and follow instructions.	Difficulties in the various workloads and taxing responsibilities.
	Improvement in once work and continuous monitoring and evaluation.	

	<p>Conducting personal and collective evaluation for meetings and year end reports.</p> <p>Referencing the work done and checking improvement to provide demands of the next visitor.</p> <p>Talking about the mistakes and reviewing what had transpired.</p>	
Responsive Work Ethics	<p>Ask questions that would be of help in doing the job.</p> <p>Providing first aid to the problem.</p> <p>Find solutions to the possible problems.</p> <p>Making sure to prioritize the tasks in responding to the problem.</p> <p>Preparation so possible problems will be prevented by doing immediate actions.</p>	Handling difficult situations like problems in climate and even the lack of funds.
Learning more the Technical Skills	<p>Learn the technicalities in pruning even more.</p> <p>Know the technicalities on grape farming more.</p> <p>Requiring farmers to have technical skills.</p> <p>Acquiring the standard process of cacao farming.</p>	Issues about planting and other standard farming responsibilities.
Strengthening Interpersonal Communication Skills	<p>Learning to entertain guests.</p> <p>Improved the guiding and catering to guests.</p> <p>Developed the communications skills beyond the teachings in the university.</p> <p>Championed the storytelling skills.</p> <p>Responding appropriately to conflict and problems with the person in conflict.</p>	Struggles in communication and guest service relations.

Similarities and Differences between Agritourism Sites

The similarities and differences across cases in their programs, experiences, and coping mechanisms regarding such hindrances among agritourism destinations in the region are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Similarities and Differences of Services, Hindrances, and Coping Strategies of Agritourism Sites

Themes of Program Offerings, Experiences and Coping Strategies	Case Unit		Remarks
	Similar	Different	
<i>Services of Agritourism Sites</i>			
Diverse Agritourism Offerings	Case 1-5		All cases have provided diversified products and services, as well as programs in their agritourism site.
Experiential Hands-On Learning	Case 3-5		Cases 3 to 5 shared the same experience about their provision of hands-on experiential learning for their visitors in the farm.
		Case 1	Case 1 doesn't have any experiential hands-on learning as they only provide sightseeing activities.
		Case 2	Case may have activities like picking, dining by the vineyard, and other activities the resort and vineyard provides, they do not provide any hands-on learning experiences.

Distinct Offerings and Landscape	Case 1-5		Case 1 to 5 provides a unique experience in their respective farms.
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Factors and Experiences that Hinder the Growth of Agritourism

Lack of Manpower	Case 1-4		Cases 1 4 have had hard time executing their work due to the limited number of workers.
		Case 5	Case 5 did not mention the lack of manpower but rather the amount of workload.
Changing Weather Conditions	Case 1-5		All agritourism sites have experienced the adverse effects of the climate change.
Laborious Responsibilities	Case 1-5		Indeed that the kind of work these cases have been painstakingly strenuous.
Lack of Fundings	Case 1-5		Cases 1 to 5 have had predicaments when it comes to the lack of funds that may and have thwarted some immediate development.
Communication Barrier	Case 2, 3, & 5		Case 2, 3 and 5 have profoundly shared their hardship in communicating most especially the foreign visitors.
		Case 1	Case 1 emphasized hardship of handling visitors during weekends.

		Case 4	Case 4 have only shared concerns about the challenge of tourism aspect application.
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Coping Strategies of Agritourism Sites

Delegation of Tasks	Case 1, 3, 5		Case 1, 3, and 5 have shared the importance of delegating the tasks due to the lack of workers.
		2	No emphasis of delegating the tasks but rather focused on doing the responsibilities at hand.
		4	Did not dwell on having limited manpower because the people has good product knowledge that can make them do other tasks.
Consistent Monitoring and Evaluation	Case 1-5		All agritourism sites are integrating monitoring and evaluation of their work.
Responsive Work Ethics	Case 1-5		The cases have provides immediate and proactive actions in problems in the farm.
Learning more the Technical Skills	Case 1-3, & Case 5		Case 1, 2, 3, and 5 have shared the importance of honing technical skills in their respective duties.
		Case 4	Case 4 focusing more of the soft skill.
Strengthening Interpersonal Communication Skills	Case 1-5		Communication skills among cases have strengthened due to its experiences in the farm.

DISCUSSION

This chapter exhibits the analysis, conclusion, implications for practice, and possible investigations that future researchers may pursue, grounded in the theme that emerged from the data analysis. The discussion is based on the themes that emerged and will be directed to future researchers.

Services of the Agritourism Site

The agritourism sites in the region have brought so much significance to many. Diverse Agritourism Offerings have been evident across all cases, showing that sites have provided and introduced many services and brought diverse offerings to their markets. This corroborates the study by Arru et al. (2021) in Italy, which describes diverse agricultural activities, including horticulture, olive and grape production, which paved the way for increased agritourism in the last decades. Moreover, Yamagishi et al. (2021) noted that the Philippine government encourages farm diversification and has established farm schools, supported by the Farm Tourism Development Act (R.A 10816) and Department of Tourism (DOT) accreditation standards, to increase the number of farm sites and tourists.

Meanwhile, three cases mentioned that Experiential Hands-On Learning was one of the themes that emerged, making the whole experience valuable. In this sense, Simes' (2018) research concurs with the finding that agritourism sites offer a gastronomic experience, learning about how the producers grow them, as well as tours and educational services that allow tourists to immerse themselves. In this regard, Antonio (2018) also noted that business sustainability can be achieved by integrating training, technology demonstration, advisory services, and the production of information and educational services.

As for the other cases, experiential, hands-on learning is scarce, as they offer only sightseeing activities. And other farms may integrate activities, but are not focused on experiential learning. This result corroborates the study of Lak and Khairabadi (2022). Their grounded theory study examined how to attract potential tourists to sightseeing-oriented agritourism without requiring interactive farming activities. Moreover, Tugade (2020) also emphasized in her study that more passive recreational activities focused solely on the enjoyment of the environment and cultural heritage in rural areas, without requiring

hands-on experiential participation.

Finally, as competition is very stiff in the tourism sector, all of these agritourism sites have noted that they offer distinct offerings and landscapes. It can be observed that these agritourism sites provide unique offerings and characteristics that connect to the study of Farm-Based Education Network (2019), which states that a value-based approach for an agritourism site stirs the willingness of visitors to pay for what they consider valuable, in good quality, unique features, as well as the benefits they will acquire. Moreover, Comen (2017) noted that location plays a crucial role in highlighting an agritourism business, as it is a key determinant of its success. Furthermore, Bhatta and Ohe (2020) found that promoting unique activities may attract more tourists. Thus, they also point out that having a wide array of activities may also be difficult and could not be a good strategy for any agritourism business.

Factors and Experiences that Hinder the Growth of Agritourism

The next findings under this area focused on the factors and experiences that hinder the growth of such agritourism sites. One significant finding was the shortage of manpower. As perceived by most participants, due to manpower constraints that hindered operations, the work became more taxing.

This concurs with the study by McGoldrick (2010), who noted that a labor shortage may amplify other problems, especially on small farms. Furthermore, the agricultural worker shortage will contribute to less and more expensive production of produce, and labor expenses may outweigh the potential revenue of the produce (Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2019).

Hence, one of the cases did not mention a predicament due to a lack of manpower, but rather the amount of work the workers have. As highlighted in the study by Bhatta and Ohe (2020), the workload in agritourism destinations depends on site size and the types of services offered. Additionally, they have noted that the larger the agritourism, the more it requires staffing and infrastructure investment to ensure a more satisfying visit. Moreover, the University of California (2020) found that extensive workloads at agritourism sites require proper planning and resource management.

In the same manner, changing weather conditions have also posed a challenge for agritourism sites. The adverse effects of changing climate conditions are directly felt in crop production, the destruction of certain

attractions, and illness, among other impacts.

Research about climate change and agritourism somehow substantiates this result. The review by Yamagishi et al. (2021) underscores climate change as one of the emerging threats to agritourism, driven by ocean temperature changes, shifts in severe weather patterns, rainfall variability and extremes, and increased cyclone intensity. Moreover, Pratt et al. (2022) noted that one negative impact of climate change is a decrease in crop production, which may prompt farmers to seek alternative income sources. Also, Torabi et al. (2023) noted that climate change may hamper tourism activities due to unfavorable weather patterns, posing a risk to both visitors and farmers.

Another significant finding is that participants at all agritourism sites have also noted the laborious nature of farm work. This indicates how taxing the work these agritourism sites do is. In this regard, Uglis et al. (2023) noted that agritourism can leverage additional time and labor, and that labor-intensive jobs, such as agriculture, are often characterized by low productivity and limited potential to absorb rising unemployment (Sakketa & Braun, 2019).

Additionally, financial resources truly are an important element in any business. As for agritourism sites, a lack of funding has been a challenge. This has thwarted the development of facilities and the construction of new projects in the area. This supports the study by Kurtyka-Marcak and Janowska-Biernat (2020), which found that financial constraints for the development and beautification of agritourism sites are typical pressing problems. Additionally, reports of insufficient financial support hampered the development of agrotourism (Vogt, 2014). In this regard, even Sri Lanka experienced limited resources, as noted by Ohe and Ciani (2012), which hampered development. Furthermore, Adamov et al. (2020) noted that the lack of agritourism support, marketing, and financial resources at the site hinders agritourism development.

The last hindrance that affected the growth of such agritourism sites is communication. Communication is seen as one of the most crucial parts of the tourism industry, as service industries like agritourism need to build rapport and connection with the guests. This communication barrier directly underscores the difficulty of English conversation, as also observed in Sri Lanka, where Malkanthi (2011) found that small farms lack interpersonal and communication skills. Moreover, Tovmasyan et al. (2020) suggested that the need for someone who could communicate in a foreign language at least would be eased and would

help tourists better understand.

Moreover, other cases have emphasized the hardship of handling visitors rather than the communication. The other case has emphasized the hardship of handling visitors on weekends due to workers' day off, while the other case has only shared concerns about the challenge of the tourism application. These results validate the study by Garcia (2016), which examined the potential for an overwhelming influx of tourists at an agritourism site every weekend when staff are off-duty, potentially necessitating greater workplace complexity. Additionally, the Food and Agriculture Organization (2023) has recognized the significant contribution of agritourism activities and tourism services that require operators to possess hospitality skills.

Coping Strategies of the Agritourism Site

Several coping strategies emerged from participants' responses. These coping strategies revolved around workload delegation, evaluation, responsiveness, learning, and interpersonal communication. In that regard, consistency can make things done efficiently.

As a lack of workforce has been a dilemma at some agritourism sites, most have emphasized the importance of delegating tasks to address the worker shortage. A study in Uzbekistan highlighted that the shortage of skilled labor can be a barrier to the development of agritourism activities (Togaymurodov, 2023). However, another case did not mention delegating tasks but rather focused on fulfilling the responsibilities at hand, which aligns with the study by Whitt et al. (2019). Peak seasons add complex demand on the workforce, which can strain resources. Additionally, another case noted that not dwelling on the limited workforce because the people have good product knowledge, enabling them to take on other tasks. In the study by Cors-Iglesias (2023), they have stated that when agritourism businesses have a deep understanding of local products, it enables effective management of production and tourism services.

To overcome the challenges, all agritourism sites have implemented consistent monitoring and evaluation within their operations. Monitoring progress and following instructions were integrated to determine whether the work has improved. Moreover, there were self-evaluation, reporting, and referencing to ensure quality.

This concept aligns with the study by D. Rio and Nunes (2012), which found that monitoring and evaluation are key tools for achieving the sustainability of rural tourism destinations. Furthermore, regular monitoring will help maintain high standards of service and product quality in agritourism destinations and help you navigate potential operational bottlenecks (Agriculture Marketing Resource Center, 2022).

Additionally, the participants are aware of the challenges within their business. They believe that proactive responses to the work they do when faced with a problem would help them ease the difficulty. This relates to studies by Oregon State University Extension Service (2019) that show that a responsive attitude towards the challenges in the agritourism industry maintains success and sustainability in the ever-changing business environment. Adapting to recent trends and understanding the preferences of various demographics are essential for agritourism businesses to remain relevant in the market. eXtension Foundation (2024) also underlined the importance of community collaborations in maintaining continuous knowledge of the industry. Finally, the various challenges in agritourism require proactive solutions and support mechanisms from interested groups (Alar, 2024).

Unlike other cases, one of these agritourism sites has emphasized soft skills over technical skills. This result aligns with the studies by Togaymurodov et al. (2023) and Barbieri (2020), which suggest the need for more effective communication and for blended educational and interpersonal skills to ensure customer satisfaction.

Furthermore, as they struggle with farming, they expressed that they continuously pursue new learning to hone the skills that would help them be more productive in their respective tasks. The article by Phelan and Sharpley (2010) argued that farmers must continue to develop new skills and capabilities to combat the ever-challenging business environment. In addition, continuous skill development is crucial in agritourism. This will help workers develop customer service and relationship skills, become more effective in operations, and prevent potential risks to the business. Having said that, it will, in turn, provide visitors with satisfaction (Travel Outlook, 2024).

Finally, as a communication barrier has been one of their predicaments, strengthening interpersonal communication has been learned throughout the coping phases of their experiences, which, in turn, helped them improve at

engaging and entertaining visitors. This is corroborated by Loreto's (2020) research, which argues that interpersonal communication skills are among the most essential in the hospitality and tourism industry. Čuić Tanković et al. (2023) also found that interpersonal communication skills enhance business efficiency and interpersonal relationships among colleagues and visitors. Moreover, this approach can be seen as very significant, as it enables interpersonal communication in tourism to engage persons involved and exchange verbal and non-verbal messages. In conjunction with that, interpersonal communication is a socioemotional aspect marking a valuable work ethic (Acosta et al., 2017).

In connection with the above results, the researcher evaluates the extent to which the theories underpinning this study are supported. It can be observed that the theory of Knowledge Management was evident on these agritourism sites through the continuous provision of experiential, hands-on activities, where both visitors and workers can learn and appreciate nature. This exchange and transfer of information and knowledge are manifested within the business. Moreover, the study results clearly highlighted the risks and crisis management, as various mitigating measures have been implemented to address the challenges faced by these agritourism sites. In addition, resource-based theory was integrated, as the challenges faced by these agritourism sites have demonstrated their steadfastness in overcoming difficulties posed by such predicaments as they continuously strive for business sustainability. In this regard, they have integrated various mechanisms that also enhance their competitiveness, market visibility, and effective management. Finally, the sustainable tourism development model is evident in this study, as agritourism sites uphold sustainable practices to balance people, planet, and profit and achieve a more sustainable, greener agritourism landscape.

Implication of the Study to Practice

Conversations with various agritourism sites in the region have been truly valuable. Having said that, the insights shared by the participants about the service offerings, factors, and experiences that hinder the growth of agritourism, as well as the coping strategies regarded with such significance and implications to agriculture and the agritourism business.

Firstly, in the agriculture and agritourism sectors, these results can enrich operations by ensuring sustainability is integrated into the business.

Implementing sustainable initiatives across all aspects of the agritourism business can align its objectives and business goals with protecting the planet, caring for people, and ensuring profitability by navigating the business's challenges and involving relevant groups in formulating coping strategies for business growth.

Secondly, the education sector. The result revealed that various skills emerged, becoming challenges as well. In that sense, agritourism may be embedded in tourism- and agriculture-related programs to equip future business ventures with tourism knowledge, especially since the agritourism industry is booming.

Moreover, the Department of Tourism can continuously evaluate the standards these agritourism destinations meet and provide sustainable programs that may benefit, especially, the neophyte agritourism businesses in the region. Continuous assistance by listing, visiting, and even providing some tourism development and tourism policy training to increase the tourism know-how of these operators. Moreover, the Department of Tourism may create appreciation and learning programs for educational and immersive agritourism sites for specific groups. With this, these agritourism sites will be ready for larger tourism opportunities.

For the Local Government Unit, local policymakers may use this as a guide to ensure that agritourism sites in the locality are supported in all aspects, thereby promoting the one town, one product initiatives. Moreover, understanding the predicaments of the agritourism destinations in the locality may be a driving force in formulating local regulations to protect these small, micro, and medium farms and visitors.

Implication to the Future Researchers

The researcher has identified several limitations in this undertaking. Thus, the findings of this paper may serve as a valuable reference not only for understanding the situation but also for identifying researchable areas relevant to the industry's needs. First was the limitation of cases. Due to the various cases that participated in this study, this paper is limited to only four to five participants for each agritourism site, which has a different approach to business despite being homogenous when it comes to the form of tourism. A need to look into specific agritourism sites may help in assimilating more information for

each agritourism approach. Moreover, future researchers may examine tourists' preferences, motivations, and satisfaction in farm areas, as this research is limited to agritourism operators and farmers. This may help the agritourism business identify ways to tailor its programs to visitors' demands.

Additionally, future researchers may focus on the underexplored areas of the agritourism business and investigate the hindrances faced by agritourism sites in the region on a larger scale, as this research does not generalize across all agritourism sites. Furthermore, integrating other research designs, such as ethnography, mixed-methods, and quantitative studies, as well as other contexts, will provide a comprehensive understanding of the agritourism spectrum. Looking into agritourism trends may also help agritourism sites navigate the ever-expanding demand in the industry.

CONCLUSION

Concluding Remarks

The agritourism programs and offerings in the region, despite differences in the types of agritourism businesses, can be noted based on the results: they offer a wide array of agritourism services and products that entail experiential, hands-on learning for visitors and tourists alike. These agritourism sites cater to diverse markets and tailor their offerings according to the market's needs. Moreover, these sites also noted the distinction and landscape of their offerings.

Conversely, these agritourism sites have faced challenges and factors that hinder their growth in some areas, including workforce shortages, drastic changes in climate patterns, labor-intensive activities, financial constraints, and communication barriers. Hence, how it has transformed them holistically and helped them appreciate simple farm life can also be expressed. Indeed, businesses that integrate agriculture provide farmers with physiological and economic needs, and also offer training and other fringe benefits. Moreover, such agritourism sites provide local opportunities that open some doors for economic movement. Furthermore, sustainable practices are also evident in these agritourism destinations, helping sustain the business.

Despite such predicaments in the business, agritourism sites continue to thrive in this ever-expanding world, and various skills have been honed as they cope with the challenges. Delegation of tasks, consistent monitoring, a responsive work ethic, and continuous learning of skills to strengthen interpersonal skills are among the effective ways they have addressed the

never-ending challenges of the business.

Upon reflecting on such beautiful stories from the participants, I realized that agritourism plays a crucial role in alleviating the lives of many. Thus, it is undeniable that these agritourism sites have faced hurdles that have affected their growth. With this, the need to strengthen our regional agricultural assets is tantamount to sustainability, ensuring growth in the fast-changing world.

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