

# The Process Innovation of Local Economy to Enhance the Value Added of Creative and Experiential Community-Based Agrotourism: GI Durian in Ban Naiwongtai

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of various types of process innovations (technological change, communication, coordination, and information, trained human resources, and Information) to enhance the value added performance of agrotourism in Thailand. Argo - tourism is a common method of farm diversification that aims to generate revenue through tourism. Examining the correlations between the value-added performance indicators is part of the evaluation of agritourism innovations. Previous agrotourism research has not used quantitative data to identify and address the associated forms of process innovation and value-added performance. The survey method is being used to determine the role of various types of innovation in improving the value-added performance of agrotourism in Thailand. We distributed 250 questionnaires and received 210 for data Analysis. SPSS 23.0 software was used to test the proposed hypotheses. According to the findings, various aspects of process innovation are critical in achieving value-added performance in Thailand's agrotourism sector. The finding implies that the characteristics that could drive sustainable agritourism include the expansion and application of an agritourism-specific plan, as well as the creation of a value chain for the local industry.

**Keywords:** Process innovation, Thailand, Agrotourism, Durian.

## INTRODUCTION

Agrotourism is a form of tourism that focuses on studying rural people's agricultural methods by having tourists participate in events that teach about tradition, culture, way of life, and agriculture. Furthermore, agricultural businesses are used as a tourist destination in agrotourism (Prugsarporn & Charoenboon, 2020). Agrotourism can take the shape of natural sceneries, technical activities and a variety of agricultural production, and community culture (Ferniza, 2017).

Agrotourism is defined by the activities that occur on and off the farm. Agrotourism events include fruit and vegetable picking tours, horseback riding, agricultural festivals etc (Budiasa, 2014). Agrotourism can also incorporate other traditional and modern concepts. However, traditional agrotourism offers tourists a holiday to enjoy farming's natural resources, whereas modern agrotourism farms take the initiative to invest in expanding their offering of agritourist products (Milena, 2015). The agrotourism concept is widely applied in a variety of tourists' attraction,

leading to the development of agrotourism in several tourist sites. Ideally, culture and innovation can be maintained in accordance with the natural conditions of the environment (Ismail, Nainggolan, & Turnip, 2020). In view of this, agricultural innovation is an important topic because it can result in increased output volumes, financial resources, material cost savings, labor productivity, and other benefits. Various scholars are of the view that innovation is the process of developing or improving competitive technologies (product or service) and integrating them into an enterprise's operations within a specified time frame (Gamidov, 2000). Various researchers argued that innovation is an outcome of an innovative process magnified through new methods, technologies, and products (Jankovskij & Muhar, 2001). Whereas other scholars believed that innovation is a transition in organization, technology, and engineering that will eventually result in the resolution of certain societal issues (Kuznecova & Gohberg, 2002). Additionally, there appears to be a concept of "agro innovation," which refers to advancements applied to the agrotourism industry (Almukhambetova, yermankulova, tokhayeva, & keneshbayev, 2017). Ivanov (2008), argue that agrotourism innovation is the application of research and development results in different forms such as new approaches to social services, new management, and agricultural forms in various economic sectors, animal processing and husbandry, new technologies in crop production, new equipment, materials, new and improved food products, poultry, animal breeds and species, and new plant varieties.

Moreover, agritourism (agriculture tourism) was represented to stakeholders of Thai farmers to restore the environment and natural resources. Agritourism's goal is not only to maximize financial gains, but rather to maximize value to shareholders, to improve their life quality, and to encourage protection of the environment (Tseng et al., 2019). Agritourism is promoted in Thailand to assist farm owners in becoming self-sufficient and is performed across the country by all professions. In Thailand, agritourism

encompasses a range of unified and diverse operations aimed at improving agricultural production and the environment. It integrates forestation and agriculture and focusing on improving soil quality and biodiversity and cultivating cash yields and improving the quantity and variety of agricultural goods. As such, agriculture tourism is a part of rural tourism in which different range of farms serves as tourist attractions (Phillip, Hunter, & Blackstock, 2010). However, it is an economic activity that may have economic, social, and environmental (or triple bottom-line) consequences that are largely depending on the region's particular features (Shih et al., 2018; Stoddard, Pollard, & Evans, 2012). Agrotourism has the capacity to strengthen local economy by increasing farm income (Choo & Petrick, 2014; Wilson, Thilmany, & Watson, 2006). Due to traditional projections, the magnitude of the economic impact and gain is still debatable (Tseng et al., 2018).

Therefore, agriculture innovation can be described as a process that provides a new way by a firm entity to its operations with the goal of boosting the performance of products with a value-added innovative agro based tourism (Botagoz et al., 2017; Kerdpitak, 2022). According to various scholars (Barbieri, 2013; Lupi, Giaccio, Mastronardi, Giannelli, & Scardera, 2017), agritourism can help in the development of the country by generating revenue for businesses while also providing additional benefits like improved employment and ecological conservation. However, more research is needed to determine how agritourism should be conducted appropriately to avoid future problems (Tseng et al., 2019). According to researchers, farms that engage in agritourism rarely engage in systematic planning process (De Rosa, McElwee, & Smith, 2019), which necessitates further research in agritourism sector (McGehee, 2007). Farmers are at danger of losing income and must therefore employ risks-mitigation strategies. To address this knowledge gap and promote agritourism operations, it is necessary to identify a set of process innovation. However, there appears to be a dearth of study on process innovation and value-added creative

performance of agrotourism in Thailand, particularly in Ban Naiwongtai. Thus, this research seeks to close the highlighted gap while also contributing to the literature on process innovation from the viewpoint of a developing country (Thailand). As a result, the current study tried to achieve the following research objectives: This study's purpose is to use quantitative data to identify different forms of agritourism process innovations. The research proposes the interdependencies between the variables using a causal model and presents criteria for enhancing community based agrotourism.

### Literature Review

The term "innovativeness" originates with the Latin word *innovatio*, which means "introducing something new" (Rodgers, 2007). Alois (1960) introduced the term to economics theory in 1912; for him, an innovation was defined as the use of novelties and practical application in product and process (production, manufacture, and supply). Moreover, the key to understanding the nature of innovation is "novelty", innovation encompasses anything that has been employed for the first time and has created favorable economic benefits, as well as being practicable. However, innovation is an outcome of action and creative thinking; it is a process through which new knowledge and concepts are transformed into innovative product or service (Sundbo, Orfila-Sintes, & Sørensen, 2007). Recently, tourism process innovation has attracted the attention of both scholars and practitioners in the tourism industry (Baggio, 2014; Hall, 2009). However, process innovation can be maintained in accordance with the natural conditions of the environment. Agrotourism innovation has become an important tourism destination to be explored by the executor to launch new agrotourism ventures and expand existing agrotourism ventures. The innovation process yields innovativeness that is undeniably more interesting and superior to anything previously available. The innovation will be accepted if the adopter or farmer benefits from it. Furthermore, innovation is the adoption of a

novel concept by potential users. As a result, adaptation is defined as the process by which a person's behaviour changes because of receiving an innovation in the form of new skills, attitudes, and knowledge ("The effect of farmer group cooperation capabilities on the application of system of rice (sri) technology in sumedang regency," 2014). Innovative approaches to agrotourism promotion have been implemented in a variety of tourist destinations, including Nai Wong Tai, La-un, Ranong, Thailand. Nai Wong Tai District is a popular tourist destination. Nai wong tai District is well-known for Chinese streamed custard buns, mangosteen, durian, and vegetables, as well as natural agrotourism destinations. The Office of Tourism every year seeks for new and innovative ways to improve Nai Wong Tai District a more appealing tourist destination. This is to achieve Nai Wong Tai mission and vision, which is to elevate Nai Wong Tai Districts Agrotourism to a global level of prosperity, competitiveness, and character (Ismail et al., 2020). Each place in this District has its own tourist symbol. It does, however, allow the community to work collaboratively to establish and promote the location as a tourism destination by leveraging superior goods found in each area. The gradually expansion of agrotourism in Nai Wong Tai District has prompted numerous entrepreneurs and civic groups to consider innovative ways to promote the industry.

Furthermore, Nai Wong Tai is one of the districts in Ranong Province that is providing a platform for the development of agrotourism. In comparison to the other forms of agrotourism, such as selling vegetables and fruits, Nai Wong Tai District offers a unique innovation in the form of agrotourism centered on the concept of durian selling (Ismail et al., 2020). The selling concept of high-quality agrotourism durian has developed a distinct identity and has established itself as a prominent icon in Nai Wong Tai District. The Nai Wong Tai District Farmers Association established this agrotourism venture to increase District income and educate the wider community about the potential of the Nai Wong Tai District. Agro-tourism in Nai Wong Tai is

still in its infancy. Efforts are being made to be innovative in its process, because agrotourism can become even better than it was before. Diverse parties carry out the innovation process, which must be compatible with the community's current social system for them to be adopted for the growth of agro-tourism in Nai Wong Tai. Numerous studies on the adoptions of innovation by farmers have been conducted. But no study has been done on durian agrotourism in Nai Wong Tai District, Ranong, Thailand (Ismail et al., 2020). Several of these studies examined the elements that motivate farmers to conduct more research. Previous studies have discussed agricultural technology, but not its application in agrotourism. A similar study has not been carried out in the Nai Wong Tai District. The current study is critical because durian agrotourism in Nai Wong Tai District is still underdeveloped. However, the innovation process is inextricably linked to the farmers targeted for development (Ismail et al., 2020; Kerdpitak et al., 2022). Hence, innovations are being carried out in the intention of improving and synergizing this agrotourism. As a result, it is critical to conduct studies on the community's innovation process to increase the value added of creative and experiential community-based agrotourism in Nai wong tai District, Ranong Province, Thailand for promoting durian agrotourism. Figure 1 shows the theoretical model of the study.

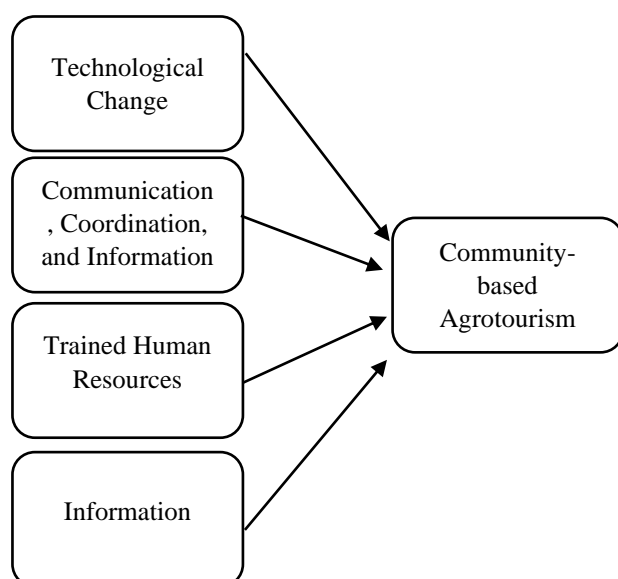


Figure 1: *Theoretical Framework*

## Method and Participants

We conducted this research using a survey design method. The survey method was adopted, with a structured questionnaire serving as the main instrument for data collection. We sampled 250 farmers using a purposive sampling approach and received 210 questionnaires for the analysis. We discarded seven questionnaires with incomplete information and two outliers from the data. The final response rate of the survey was 80.4 percent. The participants of the study were farms farmers of Nai Wong Tai District. We initially obtained consent from participants using an informed consent form and ensured them the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. The questionnaire was translated from English to Thai language with the help of language center. We The SPSS 23.0 software was used to analyze the data.

## Measures

The scale of the community-based agrotourism with eight items was adapted from Novelli, Klatter, and Dolezal (2017). The scale for technological change with three items was adapted from Choi and Sirakaya (2006). Moreover, the scale of communication, coordination, and information with four items, trained human resources with two items, and information with three items was adapted from Zielinski, Jeong, and Milanés (2021). All these items were measured on a five point Likert type scale ranging 1 to 5.

## Results

This section provides the research findings of data analysis. The findings include a descriptive analysis of latent constructs, test results of classical assumption, results of hypotheses test, and regression analysis.

### Reliability and Validity of Scales

In this study, validity and reliability were used to conduct a pre-test. In this research, the standard assumption tests of normality, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinearity were performed (Goetsch, 2018). We began by

conducting an EFA with 20 items with the help of SPSS software. The validity of the constructs was determined using the “Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin” (KMO) method and “Bartlett’s sphericity test” (Rajapathirana & Hui, 2018). If the KMO’s total score is 0.6 or greater, factor analysis is considered valid (Özdamar, 2017). Both the KMO (0.87) and Bartlett’s test of sphericity results indicated that the data were appropriate for factors analysis. However, total variance explained was 87 percent, exceeding the standard threshold of 60 percent (Özdamar, 2017). The value of 4504.412 significant at  $p < .001$  of Bartlett’s sphericity test indicates that there is sufficient correlation among the constructs. Each scale has a factor loading greater than 0.5, which ranges between 0.681 and 0.764 (Hair, Money, Samouel, & Page, 2007; Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015). Thus, the values obtained demonstrate the validity of our scales.

#### Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics are used to characterize or summarize features of a sample or data collection, such as the mean, standard deviation, or frequency of a variable. The aim of descriptive analysis is to describe participants’ perceptions of the construct’s items studied in this study for each construct via technological change, communication, coordination, and information, trained human resources, and Information, and community-based agrotourism. The variable with the

highest average score (3.92) is communication, coordination, and information, followed by information (3.83), technological change (3.59), community-based agrotourism (3.51), and trained human resources (3.43).

#### Normality Test

The classical assumption test was conducted in this study using SPSS 22 for testing normality, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinearity. We checked the data for normality using skewness and kurtosis values; the results of the normality test showed that the skewness and kurtosis values are between  $\pm 2$  as shown in Table 1. Therefore, we can conclude that data is normally distributed. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) argued that for identifying multicollinearity, one of the simplest methods is to utilize the variance inflation factor (VIF) and the tolerance value. The VIF value should be less than 10 and the tolerance value should be greater than .01 for the regression model to be free of multicollinearity. In this study, all latent constructs had a VIF values less than 10 and a tolerance value greater than 0.1 (see Table 1). Therefore, it is possible to state that there is no multicollinearity problem in this model. The heteroscedasticity test was conducted by regressing the residual absolute value on the exogenous construct using the Glitter method. The findings indicate that the regression model is free from homoscedasticity because all latent constructs had significance level greater than .05.

Table 1 *Descriptive Statistics, Data Normality, and Multicollinearity*

Variable	M	S.D	1	2	3	4	5	Skewness	Kurtosis	VIF	Tolerance
CBAT	4.011	.419	<b>1</b>					1.245	1.772	3.462	.428
TC	3.609	.642	.613	<b>1</b>				1.806	1.275	2.798	.656
CCI	3.881	.617	.519	.492	<b>1</b>			-0.927	1.182	4.152	.715
THR	3.376	.543	.583	.647	.473	<b>1</b>		-1.421	0.943	3.445	.462
Infor	3.525	.545	.479	.454	.509	.456	<b>1</b>	0.843	1.712	4.250	.575

Notes: Correlation significant at 0.01 level e.g., two-tailed; CBAT = Community-based Agrotourism; TC = Technological Change; CCI = Communication, Coordination, and Information; THC = Trained Human Resources; Infor = Information

#### Hypotheses Testing

##### Multiple Regression Analysis

In this research, multiple regression analysis was performed to determine the impact of

technological change, communication, coordination, and information, trained human resources, and Information, and community-based agrotourism in Nai Wong Tai District, Ranong Province, Thailand. Table 2

summarizes the findings of the multiple regression analysis conducted using SPSS 22.

Table 2 *Regression Analysis*

Hypotheses	Relationships	Beta value	Std.Dev	t-values	p values	Remarks
H1	TC -> CBAT	0.318	0.152	4.842	0.000	Accepted
H2	CCI -> CBAT	0.385	0.171	5.610	0.000	Accepted
H3	THR -> CBAT	0.419	0.165	7.215	0.000	Accepted
H4	Infor -> CBAT	0.334	0.174	4.885	0.000	Accepted

Note: TC = Technological Change; CCI = Communication, Coordination, and Information; THR = Trained Human Resources; Infor = Information, and CBAT = Community-based Agrotourism.

All the four study's hypotheses were supported as proposed. The findings of the study indicate that technological change had a significant relationship with community-based agrotourism. Thus, supporting hypothesis 1. Moreover, the relationship between communication, coordination, and information and community-based agrotourism was also significantly related, supporting hypothesis 2. In addition, trained human resources had a significant relationship with community-based agrotourism. Therefore, providing support for hypothesis 3. Moreover, information had a significant effect on community-based agrotourism, which led us to accept hypothesis 4. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) score (.496) for the model demonstrates that, together, the exogenous constructs (technological change, communication, coordination, and information, trained human resources, and Information) predicted community-based agrotourism by about 49.6 percent. This indicates that the exogenous constructs contributed 49.6 percent of the total to community-based agrotourism.

## Discussion

According to the findings of this study, process innovation has a greater impact on community-based agrotourism (Sakdiyakorn & Sivarak, 2016). These results are useful because they show that different aspects of process innovation are required by farms in the subregion to increase both service supply and output. Based on past literature, agrotourism sector should prioritize different aspects of

process innovation that are intended to significantly add value to community-based agrotourism rather than embracing bundles of diverse facets of process innovation. In essence, the agrotourism sector should place a greater emphasis on process innovation to stimulate growth and improve performance, which will undoubtedly benefit the community as a whole (Ciolac et al., 2019). Additionally, the findings of the study demonstrated a substantial association between process innovation aspects (technological change, communication, coordination, and information, trained human resources, and Information) and value addition of community-based agrotourism. Therefore, H1, H2, H3, and H4 were all supported by the outcomes of this investigation. Agrotourism sector must consequently devote a significant amount of attention and efforts to identifying, designing, and executing new techniques for process innovation to remain competitive and benefit their stakeholders. However, capability building provision and technical support had a considerable and favorable effect on community-based agrotourism. This shows that placing a premium on new and innovative techniques will have an impact on the agrotourism's overall performance as they gain acceptance and usefulness from tourists and farmers alike. The findings also imply that increasing farms' innovativeness will result in an increase in the community's overall value-added performance, which includes financial and market performance (Boettiger, Denis, & Sanghvi, 2017). According to the findings of this study, the more the agrotourism sector

incorporates innovation into their processes, the better they will perform in this sector. Advancement in technology as a technique that fosters innovation. Recognizing the critical role that information technology tools can play in fostering greater learning, the community moved quickly to establish important information technology infrastructure within the agrotourism community (OECD, 2001). For example, residents will be able to read and learn more because of the free Internet access provided to them. In response to the digital information they receive, many will begin developing new product and service concepts. Additionally, they would be able to uncover what visitors think about Nai Wong Tai district and apply that information to improve the tourism experience. In general, motivation and creativity, as well as technological advancement, facilitate the emergence of the following innovation processes in the Nai Wong Tai district, which will ultimately benefit the agrotourism community value addition. Moreover, process innovation is a multifaceted notion that encompasses tangible and intangible components. A tourism location that embraces this full range of process innovation enhances the tourist experience (Blichfeldt, 2009). The Nai Wong Tai district example exemplifies this process innovation notion since respondents identified different aspects of process innovation as critical components. Process innovation, on the other hand, frequently occurred concurrently with product innovation and aided in the development of more efficient production, which improved agrotourism performance. Process innovation in tourism frequently entails identifying new methods to deliver superior or alternative tourism experiences. Given Thailand's abundance of routinely tourism sectors, altering the way services are delivered contributed to Nai Wong Tai district's distinctiveness as a unique area offering unique experiences to tourists (Sakdiyakorn & Sivarak, 2016).

## Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to determine the influence of different aspects of process

innovation (technological change, communication, coordination, and information, trained human resources, and Information) on community-based agrotourism in Nai Wong Tai district, Ronang province, Thailand. The findings of the current research indicate that process innovation is a strategy that promotes agrotourism success and ought to be used as an integral part of agrotourism plan to increase community-based agrotourism performance. Thus, process innovation serves as a platform for agrotourism community-based performance. Agrotourism sector with a supportive culture of process innovation and innovative farmers can examine competitive and profitable ways and then translate these ideas into successful agrotourism sector for long-term profitability and growth.

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