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Exploring Critical Success Factors in Agritourism: A Mixed-Methods Approach

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Abstract

Agritourism is an alternative approach to distributing economic and social advantages and fostering sustainable development in rural regions. This research aims to identify critical success factors of agritourism to comprehend the obstacles and problems associated with Thailand and examine the essential factors of achieving success. The research adopts a mixed-method approach to collect, analyze, and interpret qualitative and quantitative aspects. The data was collected by reviewing documents, conducting in-depth interviews, conducting questionnaires, making onsite observations, and conducting focus group discussions. The questionnaires were sent to a panel of experts from educational institutions, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, and the tour operators. The data analysis involved paired t-tests and factor analysis to provide a comprehensive analytical output. The findings revealed four critical success factors in the Thai agritourism industry: geographical location, the entrepreneurial mindset of the farm operators, the quality of products and stories, and social media and publicity strategies. Agritourism sites in famous areas were found to have more potential for success, and an entrepreneurial mindset allows farmers to create attractions and diversify products. Therefore, knowing how to use new communication channels helps farmers deal with customers and better understand customer needs.

Keywords: Agritourism; Agriculture; Tourism; Entrepreneur; Sustainable Development.

1. Introduction

The emerging trend of agritourism has been seeing a surge in popularity due to a growing appreciation among urban dwellers of the peaceful rural setting and its inherent authenticity. In recent decades, agritourism has emerged as a potential strategy for promoting sustainable development in rural areas and fostering economic diversification within these regions [1]. Agritourism, as a segment within the tourism business, encompasses tourism offerings intricately linked to the agricultural environment, agricultural goods, or agricultural accommodations [2, 3]. Agritourism is a vacation concept wherein people engage in recreational, leisurely, educational, or participatory activities at a farm [4].

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Current trends in modern tourism, where many travelers choose farm-based vacation experiences over conventional forms of tourism, have fueled the growth of agritourism. These experiences often involve harvesting fresh produce, immersing oneself in authentic farm life, and tasting organically grown foods directly sourced from the farm. Previous researchers Baipai et al. [5] and Phillip et al. [6] proposed five distinct natures of agritourism as follows:

- 1) Agritourism establishments through non-operational farms, such as bed and breakfast accommodations located on former agricultural properties.
- 2) The implementation of agritourism on a functioning farm. Non-participatory agritourism encounters encompass various activities, such as providing accommodation and breakfast services on actively functioning farms.
- 3) The practice of agritourism within actively functioning agricultural establishments. The practice of providing food goods on farms, which involves indirect touch, is being examined.
- 4) The practice of agritourism as it pertains to functioning farms. One form of direct engagement in the realm of agritourism involves staged agritourism activities, which may include observing demonstration farms and
- 5) The practice of agritourism involves implementing agritourism activities on actively functioning farms and actual direct interaction, such as aiding with domestic chores on agricultural property.

Agritourism has a significant role in boosting on-farm revenues, generating supplemental income resources, and enhancing the stability of small farm households' incomes. In many cases, an agritourism venture may first emerge as a supplementary business with little financial returns but then transform into a farming family's principal means of income. Nevertheless, certain farmers are strongly committed to their on-farm activities and are interested in identifying strategies to optimize their earnings. These farm operators are more likely to integrate agritourism into their business and consider it an attractive way to continue and maintain their farming activities [7].

The agricultural sector in Thailand continues to be of significant importance since it employs over 30% of the nation's overall labour force [8]. The promotion of agritourism in Thailand aims to enhance the self-sufficiency of farmers and is embraced by individuals across many occupations throughout the nation [9]. In 2015, a cooperative agreement was entered into by the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives in conjunction with the Ministry of Tourism and Sports to foster the development and promotion of agricultural tourism.

This collaboration aims to foster economic growth, enhance the overall quality of products, and prioritize the equitable distribution of money among farmers. Guidelines for the development of agritourism destinations encompass collaborative operations. Meanwhile, the guidelines for integration encompass establishing a project to foster a connection between the business industry and the agricultural sector. This initiative seeks to provide hotels and restaurants with the chance to procure products directly from farmers. The Department of Agricultural Extension, in collaboration with the Tourism Authority of Thailand, allocated a budget of 125 million baht (equivalent to around US\$ 4 million at the time) to enhance and advertise agritourism destinations throughout various regions within the country [10].

Over time, numerous agricultural regions have undergone development to accommodate tourists and transform into tourist destinations capable of facilitating various forms of tourism, including community-based tourism, rural tourism, ecotourism, and agritourism. At present, Thailand boasts a total of 1215 agritourism attractions, encompassing 969 community tourism attractions as well as government-sponsored tourism attractions. The 87 locations and 163 educational centers are dedicated to enhancing agricultural output efficiency.

Agritourism Definition:

Agricultural tourism destinations refer to places with agricultural activities as the main tourist resource or products or techniques and knowledge related to agriculture. They provide tourist services like farms, gardens, learning centers, demonstration plots, etc. Agritourism destinations refer to tourist attractions that enhance agricultural knowledge, leisure, and entertainment. Tourists can experience the local community's agricultural way of life, traditions, and culture and participate in various agricultural activities. To build skills, exchange knowledge of agriculture, and receive entertainment in various forms, including being able to purchase agricultural products and community products [11].

However, the Ministry defines categories of agritourism to ensure transparency and ease of understanding of the definition. There exist five distinct categories of tourism, which are as follows:

- 1) The topics of interest include agriculture, the exploration of flower gardens, the observation of herbal gardens, the examination of flower gardens, and the study of attractive plants.
- 2) Forestry study involves exploring both natural and manufactured forest gardens cultivated by farmers.
- 3) Engaging in pisciculture, exploring the cultivation of shrimp, shellfish, crabs, and fish, as practiced by accomplished aquaculturists.
- 4) Agricultural enterprises specializing in rearing and managing domesticated animals to produce meat, dairy products, and other animal-derived commodities. People can interact with amiable domesticated animals and enjoy agricultural pursuits, such as horseback riding and cow milking.

5) Additionally, one can explore the cultural aspects, customs, and lifestyle of farmers, and so on, Ministry of Tourism and Sports [11].

United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 1: no poverty, SDG 2: zero hunger, SDG 3: good health and well-being, SDG 8: decent work, SDG 12: responsible consumption and production, SDG 13: climate action, and SDG 15: life on land is essential towards sustainable growth of Thailand's agritourism. In 2019, under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, the Department of Agricultural Extension established a functional working group to establish guidelines for fostering agritourism collaboration. The aim was to enhance agricultural tourist sites' quality and safety while increasing their competitiveness within the tourism industry. However, a few farmers have achieved success and met the established standard. The agricultural tourism sector in Thailand continues to exhibit certain drawbacks concerning its capacity as a tourist attraction. These drawbacks encompass the management capability of agricultural tourism destinations, the service potential of such destinations, and their ability to attract tourism [12].

The tourist industry encompasses various areas, including transportation, public sector support services, recreation, leisure, attractions, travel, wholesale and retail, events, housing and catering, and private sector support services. The many sectors within the tourist business exhibit differences in nature, operations, and external environment. Consequently, the critical success factors (CSFs) within each sector and type of operation may also vary [13]. Moreover, critical success factors can pertain to either tangible physical components or intangible service components [14]. The literature assessment of critical success factors conducted by Wang & Hung (2015) [15] indicates the important success variables most commonly identified in this analysis. Quality, Finances, and Human Resources emerged as three criteria consistently ranked among the top five in both statistical and descriptive analyses.

Fatmawati et al. (2021) recognized two primary resources and competitive competencies of Sabila Farm in Indonesia [16]. The initial asset under consideration was the organization's human resources. All individuals involved in farm operations, encompassing the proprietors, tour guides, instructors, personnel, and even laborers, demonstrated competence in their respective roles. The subsequent resource pertains to natural resources. Sabila Farm is susceptible to the environmental impact of the eruption of Merapi Mountain. Additionally, the farm offers a scenic view of the surrounding natural landscape on its right side, which is observable straight from the premises. Krishna et al. (2021) identified that the formation, management, and marketing of agritourism services constitute a critical process [17].

The success of an agritourism site is contingent upon these key aspects. In a study conducted by Krishna (2021), it was shown that five distinct characteristics can be derived from a set of 16 variables considered to be relatively significant in promoting the success of agritourism [18]. The factors contributing to a business's success can be categorized into five key areas: location advantage, customer satisfaction, resource management, promotion and publicity, and government backing.

2. Research Methodology

This study used mixed methods with both quantitative and qualitative research methods for data collection and analysis (see Figure 1).

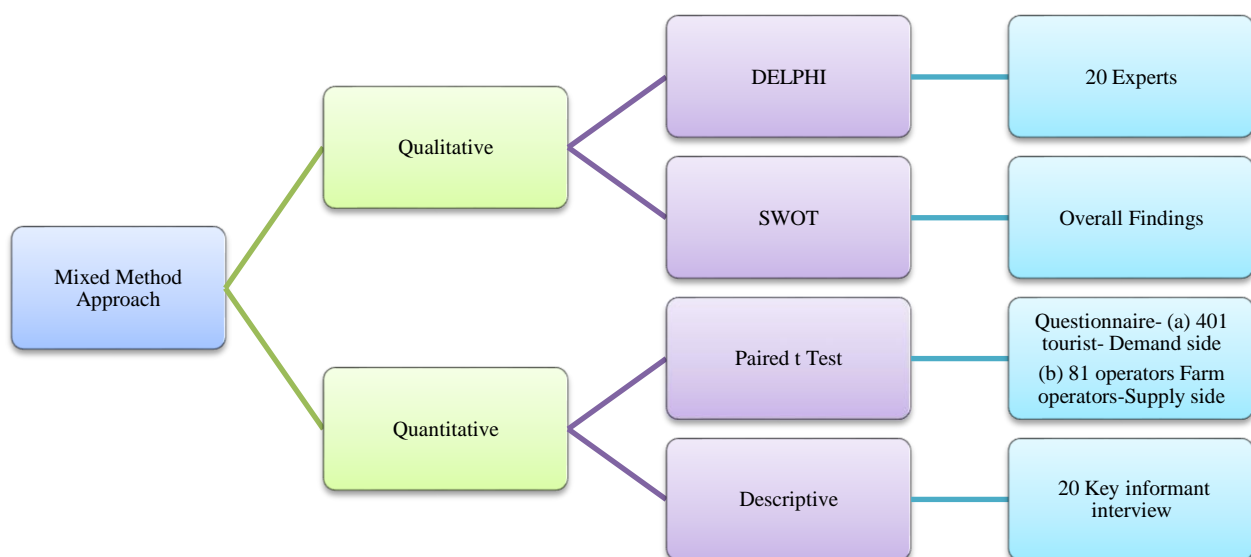


Figure 1. Methodological framework for this research

Considering the factors that influence the success of the agricultural tourism industry, the researchers have chosen the Delphi technique. While data validation and findings will be revised by a triple-check as follows:

2.1. Data Collection and Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis used the Delphi technique. However, this study is a case study of the agritourism business involving qualified people from different sectors. As a result, more than using the traditional Delphi technique may be required to complete the data. Therefore, the researchers chose to use the Modified Delphi Technique with the following steps:

1. Review various documents and theories to define the framework of open-ended and closed-ended questions and the study area. Then, determine the key informants in each area by interviewing opinions from experts from educational institutions (3 people), those responsible for agricultural tourism promotion from the Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (three executives and officials), those responsible for promoting agricultural tourism from the Department of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism and Sports (three executives and officials), and one expert representative from the tour operator.
2. Using the information from step 1, create an open-ended questionnaire and email it to 20 experts.
3. Summarize the answers of 20 experts, integrate differences and consistency, and analyze the deficiencies of the original information and questions. Create a new questionnaire (closed-ended question), send it to the same expert, and arrange for a re-interview.
4. We interviewed experts and entrepreneurs in each area to confirm their understanding of the answers. Moreover, the researchers visited establishments to collect data by observing their locations. To verify the information, researchers organized a focus group discussion in the area.
5. We conducted an expert in-depth interview, observation, and focus data analysis to answer the research question and summarize the key factors that affect the success of the agricultural tourism industry.

2.2. Data Validation and Discovery

The qualitative research requires a data validation process to ensure the reliability of the results. Data collection and the process of obtaining research results using third-party verification methods are detailed below:

1. Examining data triangulation (Data Triangulation) by consistently comparing data obtained from questionnaires, in-depth interviews, observation, focus groups, and literature review, in conjunction with the Delphi technique.
2. Three-dimensional examination of data collectors (Investigator Triangulation) by dividing duties during interviews with each informant. Meeting the research team daily to verify how each person receives information and whether findings are similar or different. Finding conclusions and providing information in the same direction.
3. Review Triangulation Data verification was divided into three steps:
 - 1) Data verification by organizing subgroup meetings of information providers in every area after collecting information to present the processed data.
 - 2) Discussion of results compared with theory and other research.
 - 3) Hold a large conference to present research results to informants in all sectors.

2.3. Population and Sample

The observation sites were selected based on the recommendation from the Department of Agriculture Extension, Ministry of Agricultural and Cooperatives. The chosen consecutive farm operators were situated in four distinct regions of Thailand, recognized for their prominent agritourism operations. These regions include Chiang Mai Province in the northern part of the country, Nakhon Ratchasima Province in the northeastern region, Petchaboon Province in the central part, and Chumphon Province in the southern part (Figure 2).

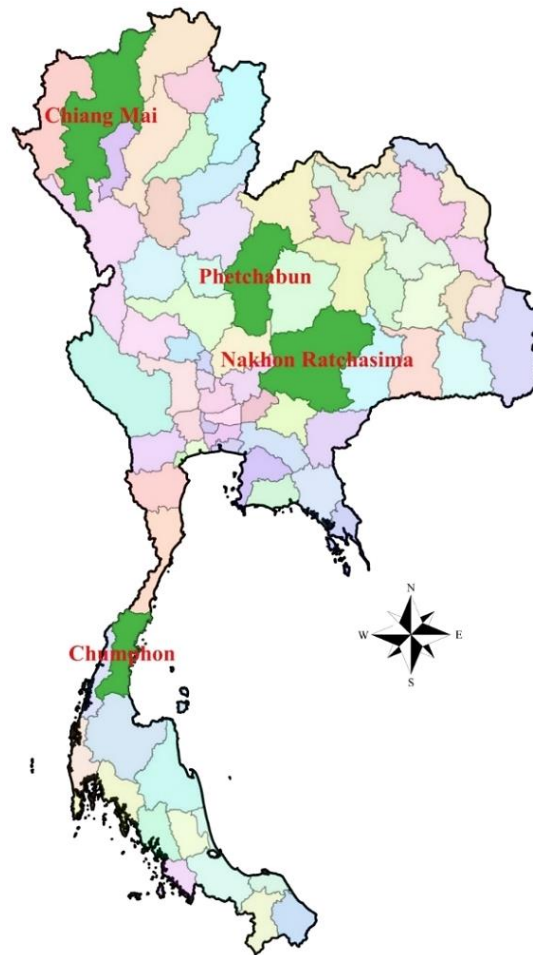


Figure 2. Study area locations in Thailand

Tourists: The sample size used by the researchers in this study includes tourists who visited agricultural tourist attractions in the research area comprised of Maerim - Chiang Mai Province, Khao Kho- Petchaboon Province, Wangnamkeaw - Nakhon Ratchasima Province, and Chumphon Province. 401 tourists were visited from successful agricultural tourism attractions in all the regions, which were randomly selected.

Sampling was divided into four regions in Thailand. Using quota sampling, divide the sample by tourist type and province, as shown in Table 1. Then, unexpected sampling methods were used to sample each group in each region until the required sample size was reached.

Table 1. Sample of tourists

Type/Province	Chumphon	Chiang Mai	Nakhon Ratchasima	Petchaboon	Total
Number of Tourists	100	100	100	101	401

Entrepreneurs: The number of sample units used by the researcher in this study are agricultural tourism attraction operators in the study area, which covers the area of Mae Rin District, Chiang Mai Province, Wang Nam Khieu District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Khao Kho District, Petchaboon Province, and Chumphon Province, totaling 81 people by selecting a purposive sampling. The number of sample units is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Sample of Entrepreneurs

Type/Province	Chumphon	Chiang Mai	Nakhon Ratchasima	Petchaboon	Total
Number of entrepreneurs	20	20	20	21	81

Sampling was divided into four areas for study using quota sampling by dividing the samples of agricultural tourism operators in each area, as shown in Table 2. Then, each group in each area was sampled using the method of selecting a specific sample (purposive sampling) until the sample size was reached as specified.

2.4. Research Tools

The research instrument was a questionnaire which was created by the researcher. After reviewing related research documents and advice from experts, the questionnaire was divided into two sets: the first on the management of agricultural tourism destinations in the prototype provinces and the second on tourists' opinions towards agricultural tourism destinations. Both sets consist of a questionnaire on the management of agricultural tourism destinations in the study area, including general information about the respondents, agricultural tourism management formats and agricultural product management. The questionnaire on tourist opinions on agricultural tourism attractions included a survey of the universal characteristics of respondents and tourists' views on agricultural tourism attractions. In addition, there are inquiries about expectations and satisfaction. These are five important levels as 1 representing the minimum value, 2 meaning less, 3 meaning in medium level, 4 means a high and 5 means the maximum value.

The questionnaire creation and checking of questionnaire quality were persistent throughout the research. By sending it to 5 experts to make corrections until the results of the content validity analysis (Index of Item Objective Congruence: IOC) of both sets of questionnaires were between 0.60-1.00 for every item, which was considered to have passed the content validity criteria. The questionnaire was then evaluated with 30 non-sample tourists and used to measure its reliability. The reliability of both sets of interviews was analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. It was found that the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of both versions of the questionnaire on the management of agricultural tourism destinations in the model provinces and the questionnaire on tourists' opinions towards agricultural tourism destinations had values equal to 0.656 and 0.975, which were at quite fair and exceptionally good levels, respectively. Then, both questionnaires were used to collect data from the sample group.

2.5. Data analysis

Descriptive data analysis (descriptive method) regarding the socio-economic characteristics of the sample group is shown in the figure. Analyze percentage, average, frequency, minimum, and maximum values with ready-made programs. Quantitative analysis (Quantitative method) uses the hypothesis test of the difference between the means of two related sample groups (Paired Samples T-Test) to analyze the level of expectations and satisfaction received by tourists.

3. Findings

The demand situation in the survey questionnaire can be summarized as most agricultural tourists take private cars to natural attractions 2-3 times a year. The budget for each trip is 1000-5000 Thai baht. Travel with family and relatives. The purpose is to relax by obtaining information from friends/relatives. Travel for two days from Saturday to Sunday.

The supply situation of questionnaires for agricultural tourism operators can be summarized as most agricultural tourism operators do not primarily work as farmers. Most of the land is used for agriculture. No one was found to have an ownership certificate. The main tourism model in Thailand is comprehensive agricultural tourism, which involves selling valuable agricultural products to generate income for entrepreneurs engaged in agricultural tourism for over five years. These entrepreneurs are now expanding their business, and they believe that their agricultural tourism business has achieved success in terms of business performance. The proportion of income for agricultural tourism operators is not the main source of income. By operating an agricultural tourism business, we seek various forms of income through lifestyle and business (Figure 3). However, when considering the difference between expectations and satisfaction obtained in the study, hypothesis testing the difference between the means of the sample 2 related groups (Paired Samples T-Test) test results (Refer Table 3) has the following details:

In terms of tourist attractions, the level of satisfaction received averages the expectation level. On average, there was a significant difference of 0.05 in every issue except issue 6.

Ability to access tourist attractions, the average level of satisfaction received, and the average level of expectations. There are significant differences 0.05, only except issue 14 in line with the fact that specific routes for different types of vehicles, such as bicycles, are limited.

Facilities in tourist attractions, the average level of satisfaction received, and the average level of expectations. There was a significant difference of 0.05 except only issue 1.9. There is a standard and thorough waste management system. Likewise, the travel program has an average level of satisfaction received and an average level of expectations. There was a significant difference of 0.05 in only issue number 33. There is a tourism program covering agricultural and commercial tourism destinations.

Tourism activities had an average level of satisfaction received and an average level of expectations. There was a significant difference of 0.05 in only issue 3.8. There are tourist activities that promote and preserve the traditional way of life. Issue 41, there are tourism activities that can reflect the state of agricultural culture. And living in the community, issue 42 deals with participation in agricultural activities.

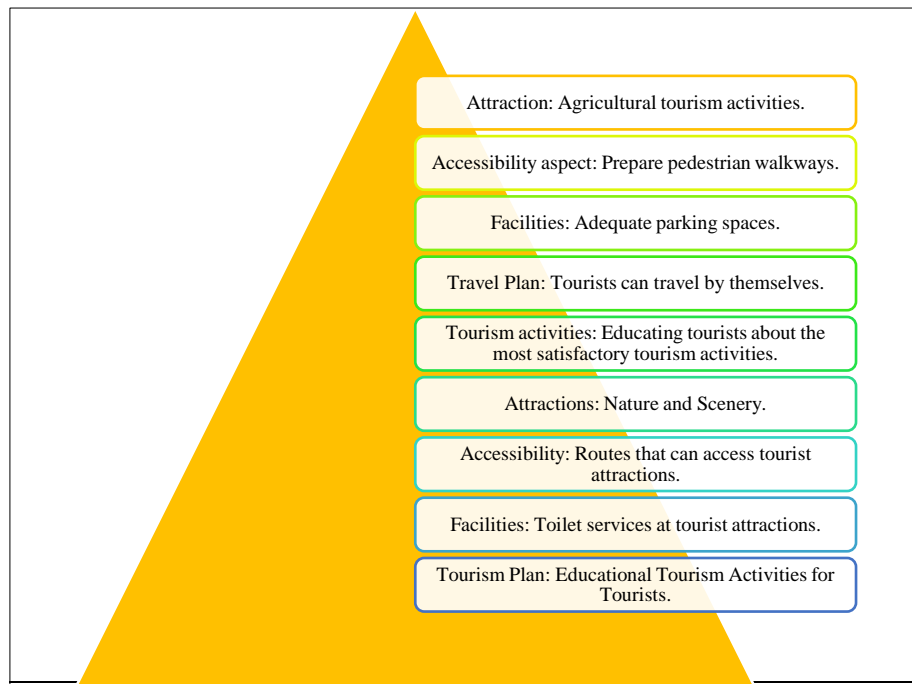


Figure 3. Significant areas for agritourism in Thailand

Table 3. Statistical results

Issues	Expectation level	Satisfied with receiving	T-test	P-value
<i>In terms of tourism attractions</i>				
	2.29	2.43	2.858	0.004*
1. Have highlights of sufficiency agriculture and new theories				
2. There are highlights of natural conditions and beautiful scenery	2.36	2.49	2.790	0.006*
3. There are highlights of agricultural technology or new innovations	2.25	2.35	1.991	0.047*
4. There are highlights of agricultural tourism activities	2.37	2.48	2.519	0.012*
5. Highlights leadership local wisdom community way of life tradition and culture to be used to promote tourism	2.23	2.39	3.235	0.001*
6. There are highlights of local farming characteristics that are not found anywhere else.	2.31	2.39	1.649	0.100
7. You want to be a part of the development of agricultural tourism	2.29	2.43	2.794	0.005*
<i>Ability to access tourist attractions</i>				
	2.43	2.48	1.101	0.271
8. There is a route that allows easy access to tourist attractions.				
9. There are many routes that can be used to access tourist attractions.	2.36	2.39	0.682	0.496
10. The condition of the roads used to travel to tourist attractions has been improved.	2.38	2.42	0.931	0.353
11. Road signs have been prepared.	2.40	2.46	1.301	0.194
12. Walking routes have been prepared to visit tourist attractions.	2.44	2.43	-0.272	0.786
13. There are routes that connect many tourist attractions.	2.37	2.40	0.699	0.485
14. There are specific routes for different types of vehicles, such as bicycles.	2.23	2.35	2.420	0.016*
15. Maps of tourist attractions are prepared and distributed to tourists.	2.28	2.34	1.255	0.210
<i>Facilities in tourist attractions</i>				
	2.44	2.46	0.454	0.650
16. There is a development of a water supply system for consumption in tourist attractions sufficient to meet demand.				
17. The electrical system has been developed to meet demand.	2.42	2.45	0.658	0.511
18. Telephone and internet systems are organized in tourist attractions.	2.44	2.45	0.166	0.868
19. There is a standard and thorough waste management system.	2.48	2.36	-2.778	0.006*
20. Restrooms are available in tourist attractions.	2.45	2.48	0.842	0.400
21. The accommodation system is thoroughly organized to provide services.	2.45	2.39	-1.199	0.231
22. There is a sufficient number of accommodation services to meet the needs of tourists.	2.41	2.41	0.000	1.000
23. There is adequate food and beverage service.	2.39	2.45	1.208	0.228
24. Local food is available.	2.33	2.35	0.440	0.660
25. There is a shop selling a variety of local products and souvenirs.	2.30	2.30	-0.060	0.952
26. Products that show uniqueness are sold, preserve and preserve the culture of the area	2.29	2.32	0.513	0.608
27. There is adequate parking service.	2.52	2.47	-1.18	0.237

28. There are adequate tourism service personnel available.	2.41	2.42	0.158	0.874
29. Tourist service centers are established at tourist attractions.	2.40	2.39	- 0.113	0.910
30. There are various media services to provide information on tourist attractions.	2.41	2.36	-1.19	0.235
31. There is a service providing information on tourist attractions/knowledge at various points.	2.43	2.43	0.105	0.916
Travel program				
32. A variety of interesting travel programs have been prepared.	2.32	2.39	1.381	0.168
33. There is a tourism program covering agricultural tourism and other tourist attractions in the area.	2.29	2.41	2.599	0.010*
34. There is a clear announcement of the date and time of the travel program.	2.36	2.39	0.721	0.472
35. There is an appropriate price for the travel program.	2.40	2.43	0.839	0.402
36. There is a travel program that allows you to travel on your own.	2.43	2.46	0.805	0.421
Activities travel				
37. There are a variety of tourism activities.	2.39	2.44	1.157	0.248
38. There are tourism activities that promote and preserve the traditional way of life.	2.22	2.35	2.755	0.006*
39. There are tourism activities that do not disturb and cause nuisance to the community.	2.39	2.43	0.909	0.364
40. There are tourism activities that can educate visitors.	2.42	2.46	0.958	0.339
41. There are tourism activities that can reflect the state of agricultural culture and living in the community	2.30	2.41	2.270	0.024*
42. Participate in agricultural activities.	2.24	2.38	2.813	0.005*
43. There are people in the community participating in tourism activities.	2.32	2.32	0.112	0.911
44. There are travel companies that provide standard services.	2.26	2.30	0.936	0.350
45. There is a bank hospital service, gas stations in important tourist spots	2.32	2.34	0.378	0.706
46. There is a distribution center for community shops at tourist attractions.	2.28	2.29	0.212	0.832
47. Volunteer guides are arranged to tour tourist attractions.	2.20	2.28	1.720	0.086
48. There is a bus service to pick you up and send to tourist attractions	2.29	2.29	0.177	0.860

* Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

The results of a survey of the opinions of a sample group of tourists on agricultural tourism destinations in terms of their overall attractions. Most opinions had the highest level of expectation for the outstanding points of agricultural tourism activities. Calculated as the average level of Expectation. Next, there are outstanding natural conditions and beautiful scenery. There are strong points in sufficient agriculture and new theories. Highlights of agricultural technology or innovations have highlighted leadership, local wisdom, community way of life, tradition, and culture to be used to promote tourism. Most sample tourists were most satisfied with the natural conditions and beautiful scenery. Followed by agricultural tourism activities. Sufficiency in agriculture and new theories have highlighted leadership, local wisdom, community way of life, tradition, and culture to be used to promote tourism, and highlighted agricultural technology or innovation.

Similarly, most sample tourists are expected to prepare walking routes to visit tourist attractions. There is an average level of expectations next (Figure 4). There are routes that can easily access tourist attractions where road signs were prepared. Road conditions used to travel to tourist attractions are improved. Routes that connect many tourist attractions are created.

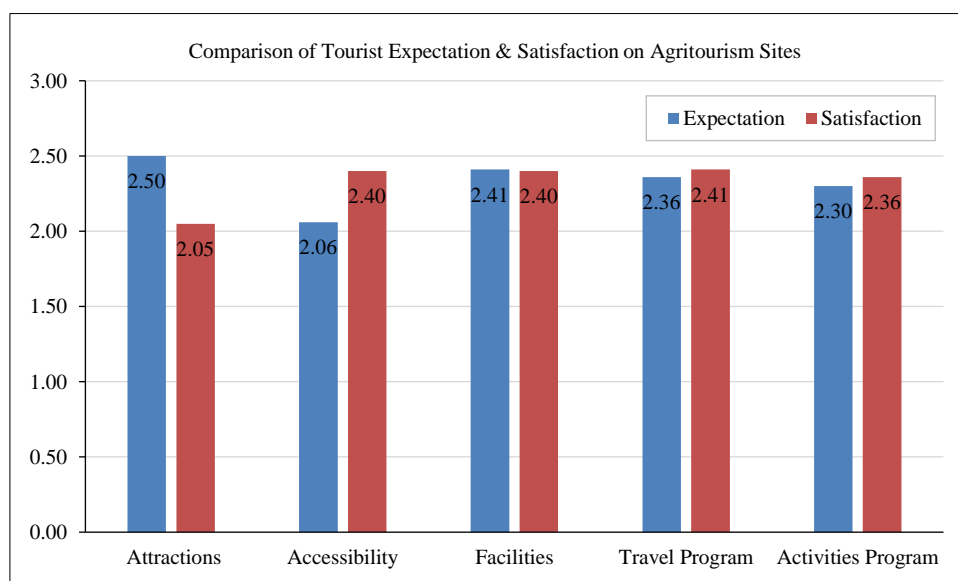


Figure 4. Comparative results of tourist expectations and satisfaction for agritourism sites in Thailand

In terms of facilities in tourist attractions, most of the sample tourists expect adequate parking service, calculated as an average score of 2.52, followed by organizing a standardized and thorough waste system with a score of 2.48. Restrooms were available in tourist attractions, and the accommodation system is thoroughly organized to provide services. Most of the sample tourists had a high level of satisfaction with restroom services in tourist attractions.

Most sample tourists expect to have expected to have a travel program that allows them to travel independently. The reasonable travel program prices, setting a clear date and time for the travel program, etc. are preferred by the respondents. Most of the sample tourists had a high level of satisfaction with the travel program that allows them to travel by themselves; most have a score of pricing for suitable tourist attractions. The travel program covers agricultural tourism attractions and other tourist attractions in the area. Interesting variety of tourism and have clear notification of the date and time of the travel program. However, most of the sample tourists have a certain level of expectation. There are tourism activities that provide knowledge to visitors. Most have average scores of 2.42, followed by various travel activities, and some tourism activities do not disturb and cause a nuisance to the community, etc.

Most of the sample tourists were satisfied with the tourism activities that provide knowledge to visitors. At the same time, tourists were satisfied with the arrangements, including volunteer guides on tours through the tourist attractions. There is bus service to pick you up. However, when considering the difference between expectations and satisfaction obtained in the study, the hypothesis tested the difference between the means of sample 2 related groups (Paired Samples t-Test).

The problems or obstacles in agricultural tourism are general business and labor shortages and policies that are not conducive to government agricultural tourism. The highlights of agricultural attractions that attract tourists are natural conditions and scenery, followed by food and photography spots. Tourism operators provide tourists with a variety of products that are recognized locally and regionally. Agricultural products can generate income. The operator stimulates the sales of agricultural products by distributing promotional activities. However, there are no activities to learn about the agricultural way of life.

There is no plan for managing tourist attractions to accommodate tourists, and there is no map or plan for using the area. There is safety management for tourists with security guards. However, tourists can travel freely. In terms of waste management, there is garbage disposal and wastewater treatment. There is also a maintenance plan. Tourists are given education on agricultural sites on their visits. Most tourist attractions do not have accommodations available, but tourists can enjoy beverage and souvenir shops. Advertising and public relations are proceeding and building networks with local agencies. Knowledge/information about tourist attractions is provided. However, there are no tour guides, and services for the elderly or people with disabilities are not provided.

Similarly, most tourism activities are educational lectures, and visitors can experience the community's way of life. Most of them have designated travel times throughout the year. There is a connection with nearby tourist attractions. A network of cooperation with people in the community at the local and organizational levels.



Figure 5. SWOT analysis for this study

Income is generated for the community. However, most labor hires do not yet have people in the community working in agricultural tourism destinations. Public relations: Establishing public relations and networks with local institutions. These factors contribute to the success (growth) of operating an agritourism business.

Like any other business, everyone has the same chance of success and failure. But the important thing is when an opportunity comes; if success is desired, then there is a need to seize the opportunity to join the process first. The entrepreneur will not have a chance if they do not join the process. It can be seen that when tourism in Thailand was growing, it had spread to every province. Many entrepreneurs see the opportunity and begin to snatch this opportunity by starting an agricultural tourism business (see Figure 5). From the survey, it was found that both businesses are continuously growing and businesses that do not grow must go out of business. When the data from both groups were taken to extract lessons, it was found that factors that make agritourism businesses successful consist of both internal and external factors. The details are summarized as follows.

3.1. Internal Factors

Internal factors refer to factors within the organization, including individual characteristics, abilities, attitudes, and organizational management systems. The results from the lessons learned from the success of operating an agritourism business that are internal factors can be summarized as follows:

1) Attitude of the entrepreneur. This issue is different from other groups of entrepreneurs. This is due to most of them being farmers who have turned to doing additional business in agriculture. As a result, many agritourism business operators do not see themselves as entrepreneurs. It is a business that is still attached to the image of being a farmer, whereas the tourists are visitors. This makes many tourist attractions receive guests throughout the year. But there is no income from tourists, such as in the case of the 200-year Ratchawet Park or the Chaiya Fragrant Rice Farmers Group, the Surat Thani Province, causing the business not to grow. However, if they change their attitude towards doing business, then the management is different. Costs and profits are calculated for creating products for sale. Emphasis on service attracts tourists to come again. This will allow the business to grow.

2) Most importantly, the entrepreneur's management ability is having a service mind and never getting tired of welcoming and taking care of tourists. The entrepreneur should have knowledge of tourist services and tourism business management and be keen to find ways to organize tourism activities and new services regularly presented to tourists.

3) Know-how to take advantage of government agencies. Most entrepreneurs tend to have a bad attitude towards government agencies and will conclude that success would be better if we did not rely on the government sector. However, some entrepreneurs view the government sector as an additional unit, such as Chanarin Coffee Farm, which uses the services of government agencies every time they have the opportunity. In terms of using the government sector only as reinforcement and continuing the work themselves to improve as appropriate until being able to lead the business to grow up to the present.

4) Have a partner, as most agritourism business operators and change themselves from a farmer. When doing business, they will encounter unfamiliar obstacles. On an unfamiliar path, they need a partner who will join in solving problems. Whether it is family, siblings or a network of agritourism business operators require us to work together.

5) Love what you do. Agricultural tourism business operators who transformed from farmer, or a descendant of the farmer mentioned above. Therefore, in addition to having a partner Love of the agricultural profession and wants to present the career path. The happiness of a career in agriculture to outsiders is therefore particularly important and necessary. This is because at the beginning of a new entrepreneur's agritourism business, it may not yet provide satisfactory returns. It is just additional income for the household. But at the cost of privacy because they have to welcome tourists daily. Therefore, love for what you do is a key factor supporting the business to gradually take root and having the opportunity to gain further experience.

6) Have the ability to use online media, a communication channel requiring little investment. However, it is easy to reach a variety of target groups. But the important thing is entrepreneurs must have knowledge and skills to make interesting presentations. This may require additional training.

7) Agricultural products are unique. Not every entrepreneur has unique products. But if any entrepreneur can create a unique story that stands out from other entrepreneurs. It will be a better attraction for tourists. The chance of success is increased.

8) Focus on service. Do not take undue advantage of tourists.

3.2. External Factors

External factors here refer to factors outside the organization that help drive the entrepreneurs' agritourism business to grow better. This may be direct or indirect assistance. It was found that there were external factors that were important supporting factors, including:

1) Being in a main tourist city.

Agricultural tourism businesses located in main tourist cities will have a greater chance of success than businesses from other sources. The compelling cause is that the number of tourists, a source of income for entrepreneurs, is high, giving entrepreneurs a greater share. Giving entrepreneurs a greater share and staying in a tourist city for a long time makes entrepreneurs absorb good hosts. Immersing in the tourism business makes it possible to adapt better. Being in a tourist city will have more quality networks to support the business. There are more learning resources and extended support from government agencies than in cities with less tourism. For example, agritourism business operators in Chiang Mai will be able to run their businesses more easily than entrepreneurs in Chumphon Province.

2) There is a strong network.

Networks of tour operators are especially important in the tourism business as tourism income comes from tourists. The operator's income increases if tourists stay in the area for several days. But to make tourists stay in the area for a long time, there must be activities for tourists and must be activities that match the interests of tourists. In large tourist cities such as Chiang Mai, there is enough variety of tourist activities. Entrepreneurs may not need to do anything else. However, there are few tourist activities in secondary tourist attractions and community tourism, which have few tourism operators. Entrepreneurs need to build a network and link tourism routes between networks in the area to provide tourists with more fun activities to participate in. For example, in the case of the Khao Pa Na Lay tourism network of Chumphon Province. Or it is such as the case of creating a community tourism network of Ban Bang Mak community, Chumphon province.

3) Sharing benefits Once there is an entrepreneurial network, sharing benefits among members is crucial for maintaining the network and promoting common development. Sharing benefits is important because the tourism industry cannot exist alone. If the benefits are not complete, the internet will collapse—the entire tourism system will collapse.

4) Have a leader who can coordinate all parties well. The leader here refers not only to the leader or chairman of the association but also to the situation of all entrepreneurs who can think together. And be able to collaborate within the network and all external networks. Assisted in supporting tourism promotion activities in the region based on the roles and responsibilities of each department, such as utilizing government agency networks to support activities, promote infrastructure development, and utilize major mass media networks. Let us do the news and introduce the story of the tour group.

5) Contact local mass media. Journalists and major mass media, such as newspaper reporters and television reporters, are still the main means of communication even in today's internet age. Let these journalists come into contact with everyone.

4. Discussions

On the demand side, it was found that most tourists visit agritourism sites 2-3 times per year by private car (because most agritourism sites are located in remote areas or the countryside). The pull factor is natural attractions at agritourism sites., followed by food and photography spots. Furthermore, the purpose of travel, mostly for vacation, accounted for 84.50%, followed by visiting relatives and family, which accounted for 10.70%, and study visits/seminars, which was calculated as 4.70%. The data revealed that the traveling budget is around 1,000-5,000 baht per time since most tourists come for short-term trips (2 days, mostly on weekends). As a result, the cost per capita of tourist expenses is not high.

Most sample tourists have the purpose of vacation, accounting for 84.50%, followed by visiting and family members. 10.70%, 4.00% for inspections/seminars. Regarding agritourism site information, most of the sample tourists knew agritourism sites from family and friends, which accounted for 52.60 percent, followed by websites, which accounted for 33.20 percent; others, such as Facebook, Instagram, and online media, accounted for 13.70 percent. Factors that leave a deep impression on agritourism sites show that the majority of tourists, with 90% of respondents, prioritize the beauty and order of the venue, followed by employee service, convenient accessibility, and a variety of interesting agricultural products.

The paired sample T-test results depict that in terms of tourism attractions, the average level of satisfaction received, and the average level of expectations, there is a significant difference of 0.05 in every issue except issue 6. There are distinctive characteristics of local farming that are not found anywhere else. The average level of satisfaction received, and the average level of expectations showed a significant difference of 0.05 only in point 14. Routes only used different types of vehicles, such as bicycles. The average level of satisfaction received, and the average level of expectations are significantly different, with a 0.05 only in Issue 19: there is a standard and thorough waste management system.

Regarding the average level of satisfaction received and the average level of expectations, there was a significant difference of 0.05 only in Issue 33. A tourism program covered agricultural tourism and other tourist attractions in the area only. The average level of satisfaction received, and the average level of expectations are significantly different, only at 0.05, in issue 38. There are tourist activities that promote and preserve the traditional way of life. Issue 41 has tourism activities that can reflect the agricultural cultural conditions. And living in the community, and issue 42: Participate in agricultural activities only. Similarly, regarding overall attractions, most opinions had the highest level of expectation for the outstanding points of agricultural tourism activities. It was calculated as an average expectation level of 2.37, followed by strengths in natural conditions and beautiful scenery, 2.36 strengths in sufficiency agriculture and new theories, 2.29 strengths in agricultural technology or innovations, 2.25 strengths in using local wisdom, community way of life, tradition, and culture used to promote tourism 2.23.

Most sample tourists were most satisfied with natural conditions and beautiful scenery at 2.49, followed by agricultural tourism activities at 2.48. Sufficiency in agriculture and new theories are 2.43. They have the strength to use local wisdom. Community way of life tradition and culture used to promote tourism 2.39 has the lowest strength in agricultural technology or innovation 2.35. Likewise, the expected level findings depicted that most sample tourists are expected to prepare a walking route to visit the attractions. Average expected level After 2.44, there is a route that allows easy access to tourist attractions. 2.43 has a sign. 2.40 improves the road conditions to tourist attractions. 2.38 Route connecting multiple tourist attractions 2.37, etc.

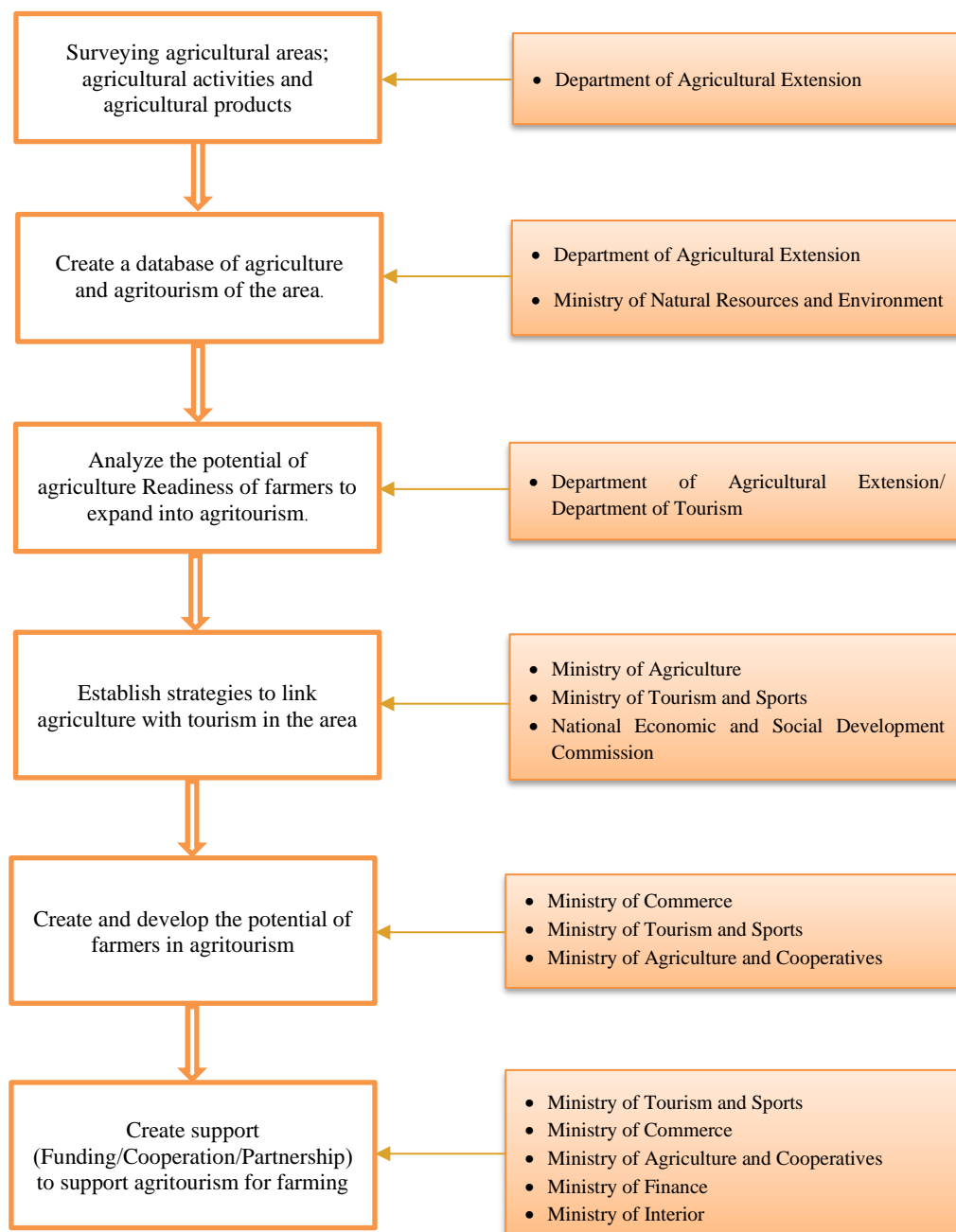


Figure 6. Discussed policy implications for this study

Most sample tourists are satisfied with the most convenient route to the scenic spot. 2.48 The second sign is 2.46; the walking route is to visit tourist attractions at 2.43, and the tourist attraction map is distributed to tourists. 2.34, etc.. Similarly, most sample tourists hope to have enough parking spaces, with an average score of 2.52, followed by a standard and thorough garbage system. 2.48 Tourist attractions provide toilets and accommodation systems 2.45. Most tourists are 2.48 satisfied with the toilet service in tourist attractions, followed by the telephone and Internet. The development of the power system to meet the demand of 2.45, with the lowest sales satisfaction for products representing the uniqueness and cultural protection of the region 2.32.

The expectation level towards a travel program is that they can travel independently. Has an average score of 2.43, followed by calculating the appropriate price for the travel program at 2.40 and setting the date and time of the travel program at 2.39, etc. Most sample tourists had the highest satisfaction with the travel program, which allowed them to travel independently. It has an average score of 2.46, reasonable tourist attraction pricing of 2.43, and a tourism program that covers agricultural tourism and other tourist attractions in the area of 2.41. There is a level of satisfaction in organizing various interesting tourism programs. There is minimal clear notification of the date and time of the travel program 2.39. Similarly, most of the sample tourists had an expectation level of having tourism activities that provide the most knowledge to visitors, with an average score of 2.42, followed by having a variety of tourism activities and having tourism activities that do not disturb. And create a nuisance for the community 2.39, etc.

Therefore, most of the sample tourists were satisfied with having tourism activities that provided the most knowledge to visitors, 2.46, followed by having a variety of tourism activities, 2.44, having tourism activities that did not disturb or create annoyance. Community 2.43 has tourism activities that can reflect the state of agricultural culture. Living conditions in the community were 2.41, etc., while tourists were the least satisfied with arranging volunteer guides to tour tourist attractions. It has an average score of 2.28 and has established a distribution center for community shops at tourist attractions. And there is a bus service to and from tourist attractions on 2.29.

The findings on the supply side were carried out by questioning a sample group of 81 agritourism operators to understand the importance of the situation. The questions were related to policies and measures, as well as problems and obstacles in connecting the agricultural and tourism sectors in the country. The results of the study depicted that most of the agritourism operators in the sample have a fully integrated agritourism management model, accounting for 28.40 percent, followed by the form of private tourist attractions that are outstanding in agriculture, which is accepted from outside, accounting for 17.30 percent, and has a form of selling agricultural products directly. The form has accommodation that accounts for 9.90 percent of the total. It was found that most of the agritourism entrepreneurs in the sample have been in the agritourism business for five years or more, accounting for 65.40 percent, followed by two years, accounting for 12.30 percent. The agritourism entrepreneurs in the sample considered it successful, accounting for 54.30%; not quite successful/not successful, accounting for 43.20%; and very successful, 2.50.

The main objective of agricultural tourism was to seek various sources of income, which accounted for 32.10 percent, followed by changing from farmers to agricultural tourism, accounting for 23.50 percent. They want to provide knowledge and transfer agricultural knowledge, which is calculated as 16.00%, to use vacant land or agricultural land to benefit. It is calculated as 14.80% for main occupation and personal interest, accounting for 8.60 percent. The sample agritourism entrepreneurs stated characteristics of agricultural tourism operations as lifestyle + business, which accounted for 60.50 percent, followed by business, accounting for 18.50 percent, traditional way of life accounted for 12.30 percent, and more business-oriented than family, accounting for 8.60 percent. The limitations and obstacles in doing agritourism business included the general business operations step, accounting for 32.10 percent, followed by labor shortages, accounting for 17.30 percent, and policies not conducive to agricultural tourism from the government, accounting for 13.60 percent.

Regarding advertisement and public relations of tourist attractions, most sample agritourism entrepreneurs stated that media is created for advertising. They also promote their tourist attractions, accounting for 50.60 percent, followed by creating media for advertising. Publicizing tourist attractions, including external agencies interested in requesting information to publicize, accounts for 43.20 percent. Likewise, regarding creating a network to support tourist attractions, respondents stated that a network had been created to support tourism with local or provincial agencies, which accounted for 54.30 percent, followed by no tourism support networks being created with outside agencies, united for 30.90 percent, and the network has been created to support tourism with national or international agencies, accounting for 14.80 percent.

The management of tourism activities stated that there are additional activities for tourists to learn and relax or entertainment in tourist attractions accounted for 51.90 percent, followed by no additional activities for tourists, accounting for 34.60 percent. There are additional activities for tourists to learn and relax or entertainment in tourist attractions from 2 or more types, accounting for 13.60 percent. A network of cooperation with the community has been created to reach the community. There is a network of agricultural cooperation with people in the community or outside organizations at the local or provincial level, accounting for 55.60 percent, followed by no agricultural cooperation network with people in the community or outside organizations, accounting for 27.20 percent. Similarly,

there is a network of agricultural cooperation with people in the community or outside organizations at the regional and national level, accounting for 17.30 percent.

The agritourism entrepreneurs in connection with various tourist attractions stated that there are two or more connected tourist attractions nearby, accounting for 56.80 percent, followed by at least one connected tourist attraction nearby, accounting for 24.70 percent, and no connected tourist attractions nearby within a radius of 20 km; the percentage is 18.50 percent. However, generating income for the community found that employing people in the community is not less than 10-50 percent of all employees in tourist attractions, accounting for 60.50 percent, followed by no employment of people in the community where the agricultural source is located to come to work, which accounted for 29.60 percent, and employing more than 50 percent of all employees in the community to work in agricultural tourist attractions, accounting for 9.90 percent.

Most of the farmers have turned themselves to agricultural tourism. Will take the initiative on their own due to the readiness of resources (agricultural area) and budget. In addition, during the past two years, the COVID-19 outbreak has impacted Thailand's tourism industry and agricultural sector, affecting the expansion of the Thai economy [19]. The COVID-19 outbreak has caused the global tourism landscape to change, which is a good opportunity for Thailand to set policies that make the growth of the economic sector, which is an important cog of the country, grow sustainable and generate income distribution from growth [20].

In Thailand, the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan (related to tourism) is Strategy 3: Strengthening the economy and sustainably competing. Thailand requires specified guidelines for tourism development that focus on integrated development by promoting income generation from tourism by developing tourism cluster groups based on the potential of areas linked to activities.

In some places, trial and error must be taken at your own risk, even in the case of the example of agricultural tourism sites that the Department of Agricultural Extension supports. It is an initiative from the farmers themselves. When farmers develop their land to a certain level, it opens further growth opportunities. Therefore, the matter is submitted to request support from the Department of Agricultural Extension or request certification of tourism standards from the Department of Tourism if the government has an initiative-taking policy. Surveying potential farmers in the area and helping them develop the necessary skills will allow farmers to manage tourism easily and according to tourism standards.

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This is because, at present, agricultural tourism is carried out by farmers in rural areas. There was no clear travel plan. Characteristics of tourist attractions from surveys of agricultural tourism areas found that farmers often do similar things if nearby areas are successful. There will be limitations in the same area, such as the flower garden in Mae Rim District, Chiang Mai Province, the strawberry farm in Khao Kho District, and Petchaboon Province, causing competition among themselves. In addition, there is no diversity in tourism products or attractions. Creating a strategic plan to develop and promote a clear connection between agricultural activities and tourism in each area will allow each area to offer a variety of agricultural attractions and activities [21]. Help promote and support each other's tourism.

Problems regarding privileges in agricultural areas It is a critical issue for farmers regarding agricultural development and expansion into agritourism. This problem was found to be a major problem for farmers who cultivate agricultural gardens in the Wang Nam Khiao District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province, which is considered an important fruit agricultural area near Bangkok. Some agricultural areas have been allocated as protected areas (Sor Por Kor) areas, overlapping with the national park area in the Thai Samakkhi Sub-district zone. Some parts overlap in the National Reserved Forest Zone C in the Wang Khiao Sub-district area. The villagers have to pay land maintenance tax (Por Tor. 5) to the sub-district, which is called in the local language "grass flower tax". In agricultural areas where there is no irrigation system, water will be accessed from ponds, canals, and streams, which will have weirs to store water. Distributed in various ravines. Such legal problems cause farmers, especially small-scale farmers, to not receive full support or assistance from the state in agriculture and tourism. For farmers in these areas, development and investment in agriculture and tourism are risky [22].

The government, therefore, must urgently come in and deal with this problem. The agencies promoting agritourism must rush to conclude directly with the Forestry Department, Ministry of Agriculture. Having clearer policies and guidelines is essential because Wang Nam Khiao District is an area with high potential in terms of agricultural products and development into an agricultural tourism destination. In Khao Kho's case, it is the same. The problem of land exclusive rights is also an obstacle that hinders the development of linking agriculture and tourism. Some areas developed for tourism and agriculture are designated National Forest Reserves, Basin 1A, resulting in lawsuits demanding the demolition of hotels or resort buildings. The unclear law regarding area rights causes farmers to lose many development opportunities. For example, they cannot request the details of GPS (Global Positioning System).

Currently, the Agricultural Tourism Promotion Law of 2010 aims to promote agricultural tourism, requiring the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Trade and Industry to provide market assistance, technical expertise, support, promotion, and development of products related to agricultural tourism to assist the Ministry of Tourism, the Convention and Tourism Bureau, the Tourism Development Committee, the agricultural tourism projects of economic development organizations, and local government organizations to launch agricultural tourism initiatives [23]. Therefore, the Ministry of Finance has instructed the formulation of rules to specify which expenses will enter the agricultural tourism liability insurance network. The tax credit is 20% of the agricultural tourism liability insurance and does not exceed 50,000 pesos (2,934 USD) in any tax year so that all departments can integrate the drives in the same direction and simultaneously. It also includes other supporting measures, such as special tax measures to reduce farmers' expenditures and incentive measures to develop agricultural tourism, including taxes.

Tourism attraction activities that determine and reach target groups, customer groups, marketing, etc., are required to create an outstanding and unique tourism experience amidst the study area [24]. When considering the sample case studies surveyed in the study area, it was found that the tourism management of agricultural parks was mostly self-organized according to the convenience of the operators. It was found that some standards were missing according to the standards set by the Thai agricultural tourism destination guidelines [25]. In addition, when considering the important activities of most agricultural tourism destinations, it is found that the form of agritourism offered to visitors is not yet true according to the meaning studied from foreign works. This is because the tourism activities are unrelated to or create agricultural experiences [26]. It is just a matter of visiting and taking pictures of tourist attractions. The link between related and unrelated agricultural products and agricultural activities conducted by operators is still at a moderate to low level.

5. Conclusions

Thailand's tourism situation reveals that its main activities can create much added economic value. The concentration of tourism activities with little economic value results in per capita tourist expenditures in Thailand being lower than they should be and not very high, indicating that tourism currently does not generate enough returns. The holistic policy recommendations include (1) A survey of agricultural tourism, (2) Setting up the database for agricultural tourism, (3) a potential analysis of agricultural tourism, (4) Strategic planning and agritourism policy formation at national, regional, and local levels (5) Capacity building and (6) Providing government supports.

5.1. Government Sector

Developing entrepreneurial skills for farmers who want to connect their current agriculture with tourism, such as agricultural tourism sites that the Department of Agricultural Extension supports. Surveying potential farmers in the area and helping them develop the necessary skills will allow farmers to manage tourism easily and according to tourism standards. Creating a holistic agricultural tourism development policy and a strategic plan to develop and promote a clear connection between agricultural activities and tourism in each area. The agencies involved in promoting agritourism, including the Department of Agricultural Extension, the Forestry Department, and the Ministry of Agriculture, must collaborate closely to ensure the success of this initiative. As in the case of the Philippines, legal measures have been promulgated.

5.2. Entrepreneurs

Cooperation between entrepreneurs or agricultural and tourism networks that think together helps create an outstanding diversity of agricultural products. Create a travel route where each entrepreneur will have equal income. Increasing the potential of entrepreneurs, especially in tourism management, to meet standards of tourism safety. The arrangement of facilities, creation of tourism products/activities, and marketing have to be reviewed. This study fosters future research into enhanced employment opportunities for Thai entrepreneurs and government agencies to inculcate business ideas and community building among Thailand's naturally rich, resourceful areas.

6. Declarations

6.1. Author Contributions

Conceptualization, P.D. and S.P.; methodology, P.D. and S.P.; software, P.D. and S.P.; validation, P.D., C.L., P.T., and S.P.; formal analysis, P.D. and S.P.; investigation, P.D. and S.P.; resources, P.T.; data curation, P.D. and S.P.; writing—original draft preparation, P.D. and S.P.; writing—review and editing, P.D. and S.P.; visualization, P.D. and S.P.; supervision, P.T.; project administration, P.D. and S.P.; funding acquisition, P.D. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

6.2. Data Availability Statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

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6.4. Institutional Review Board Statement

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6.5. Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

6.6. Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this manuscript. In addition, the ethical issues, including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, and redundancies have been completely observed by the authors.

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