

Agritourism in Central Luzon, Philippines: Status, Challenges, and Pathways to Sustainable Growth

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ABSTRACT. This study explores the status, challenges, and pathways to sustainable growth in Central Luzon, Philippines agritourism. Data from agritourism trainers, farm owners, trainees, and stakeholders are analyzed using a descriptive research design and statistical tools such as Multivariate Tests, Wilks' Lambda (Exact Statistic), and Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation. The research identifies significant variations in agritourism status across site characteristics and underscores the importance of tailored management approaches. Moreover, it reveals a positive correlation between knowledge acquisition and utilization, emphasizing the role of training in enhancing agritourism practices. Despite challenges like waste management and bureaucratic hurdles, agritourism is recognized as a valuable driver of economic development in Central Luzon, offering opportunities for rural communities and sustainable agriculture. This study's implications inform policymakers, educators, and government officials, providing insights for agritourism program development and policy formulation, ultimately contributing to regional economic growth and community well-being.

1.0. Introduction

The global context of agritourism reveals a paradigm shift in the agricultural sector worldwide (Misra & Ghosh, 2024; Kumar, 2024; Yamagishi et al., 2021). Notably, regions such as Asia and Europe have witnessed a surge in agritourism activities (Ruland & Carrapatoso, 2022). This global trend underscores the universality of the challenges and opportunities faced by family farms venturing into agritourism (Brune et al., 2023). In exploring this phenomenon within the Philippines, specifically in the context of Central Luzon, this study delves into the local intricacies and nuances of agritourism development. Yusuf and Wulandari's (2023) study identifies various challenges in agritourism development, including agribusiness management, impact management, institutional and support facilities, and risk mitigation. This research places a significant emphasis on the pivotal role of model design in agritourism development, considering dimensions of sustainability, involved actors, and the support system. Sustainable strategies for agritourism development revolve around value addition through product and service diversification, sustainable marketing, network and partnership development, environmental conservation, and the empowerment

of the local community, ultimately emphasizing the importance of achieving sustainable growth.

In the Philippines, agritourism is not merely an economic venture but also a cultural bridge (Yamagishi et al., 2021). Agritourism transcends its economic dimensions, serving as a cultural bridge that fosters understanding and connection between visitors and local communities. Through experiences such as cultural exchanges, preservation of heritage, celebration of local cuisine, cultural events, educational initiatives (Canson & Caelian, 2022), and showcasing artisanal crafts, agritourism intertwines agricultural practices with the cultural fabric of a region. This multifaceted approach provides economic benefits and promotes a deeper appreciation for local traditions, creating a sustainable and enriching form of tourism that goes beyond financial considerations.

In a harmonious extension of this cultural enrichment, a parallel effort is made to assess the status of the Kalamay Festival in Iloilo. This evaluation encompasses economic, social, environmental, and cultural aspects, examining opportunities and challenges related to accessibility, accommodation, attraction, amenities, and awareness (Franciliso & Estores, 2020). The proposed festival development plan, grounded in this comprehensive assessment, aligns seamlessly with the ethos of agritourism, contributing to the continuous improvement of

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the festival. It reflects shared values of cultural preservation and supports the overall sustainable development of the region's tourism landscape.

On the other hand, once limited to traditional food production, family farms have transformed into multifaceted spaces (Brandth & Haugen, 2011; Ohe, 2022). They serve as both economic engines, supplementing incomes, and cultural ambassadors, connecting urbanized visitors with the origins of their food (Kaefer, 2022; Zhang et al., 2019). In a globalized world where urbanization is rampant, agritourism offers a unique sanctuary for tourists, allowing them to reconnect with nature, spirituality, and heritage amidst rural simplicity (Joyner et al., 2018). The gap in the existing literature becomes evident when considering the complexities of this transition. While there is growing enthusiasm for agritourism, there is a notable absence of comprehensive studies addressing its environmental implications, particularly in the Philippines. As family farms transition into agritourism, they move from conventional agricultural practices to managing the diverse needs of tourists. This shift necessitates a careful balancing act to preserve natural resources and environmental sustainability.

In contrast, the challenges in the destination stem from the negative impacts of tourism. Residents exhibit a positive perception of the environmental effects of tourism but express negative sentiments regarding its economic impacts. Overall, the positive impacts of tourism tend to outweigh the negatives. Thematic analysis reveals three overarching themes: economic tourism impact, environmental tourism impact, and sociocultural tourism impact. Sub-themes include the effects of tourism on road development, tourism as a source of residents' income, and the increase in land value attributable to tourism (Serfino et al., 2022).

Moreover, the existing literature predominantly focuses on the economic benefits of agritourism, such as increased revenue streams and direct-to-consumer experiences (Sznajder et al., 2009; Zvavahera & Chigora, 2023). While these aspects are undeniably crucial, the environmental dimensions of this transition have been underexplored. Understanding the environmental impacts is pivotal for the long-term viability of agritourism in the Philippines, especially in a region like Central Luzon, where agricultural landscapes are diverse and environmentally sensitive.

The Philippines, endowed with abundant agricultural land, is well-positioned for farm tourism. To maximize this potential and counteract low agricultural yields, essential initiatives in physical attributes, product development, education, training, management, entrepreneurship, marketing, customer relations, and government support are indispensable.

However, the lack of skills, training, and capital among farmers hampers the conversion of their farms into tourism sites, underscoring the imperative to cultivate entrepreneurial and hospitality skills (Yamagishi et al., 2021).

This research aims to fill a critical gap by aligning with the legislative frameworks of the Philippines, focusing on sustainable agricultural practices outlined in the Farm Tourism Development Act of 2016 or Republic Act 10816 (Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines, 2016) and the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act of 1997 or Republic Act 8435 (Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines, 1997). The study seeks to shed light on the environmental dimensions of agritourism, addressing specific research questions about the status of agritourism in Central Luzon, the challenges faced, and potential pathways for achieving sustainable growth. By providing essential insights for policymakers, agricultural practitioners, and local communities, the research aims to contribute to the formulation of guidelines ensuring that agritourism activities are economically beneficial and environmentally responsible, safeguarding the natural resources that underpin this transformative industry.

Aligned with legal frameworks, this research comprehensively explores various aspects, offering a holistic understanding of the regulatory landscape and assessing opportunities for sustainable agritourism practices. Focused on Central Luzon, the study addresses key research questions related to characteristics, status, knowledge/skills of respondents, utilization of acquired knowledge and skills, differences across agritourism site characteristics, the relationship between knowledge acquisition and utilization, and challenges in site management. The researcher aims to provide nuanced insights for informed decision-making and strategic planning in the evolving agritourism sector of Central Luzon through this comprehensive exploration.

2.0. Methodology

Research Design. This study adopted a descriptive research design. The descriptive approach was chosen because it allowed for identifying characteristics, frequencies, trends, correlations, and categories related to agritourism in Central Luzon. Descriptive analysis facilitated the systematic and accurate description of the agritourism landscape, encompassing a wide range of phenomena.

Respondents or Sources of Data: The study utilized simple random sampling to secure representation from crucial stakeholders in Central Luzon's agritourism sector, encompassing farm owners, Agricultural Training Institute trainers,

trainees, and other stakeholders. The diverse sample of 379 participants—contributed insights through interviews and questionnaires. This strategic approach sought to encompass a broad spectrum of perspectives, bolstering the validity of statistical analyses for inferential purposes. Interviews were conducted with cultural and linguistic sensitivity, facilitated by a bilingual questionnaire for effective communication.

Data Gathering Procedure. To ensure the questionnaire's validity, a panel of experts, including academicians from agricultural universities, leaders in farm tourism, and experienced trainers, conducted a rigorous validation process. After this validation, a pilot test of the instrument was implemented among farmers who were not part of the initial study cohort. Valuable feedback from this trial run was carefully considered and applied to fine-tune the questionnaire, resulting in its final and improved version.

The data-gathering process entailed conducting interviews with a diverse set of identified respondents, primarily focusing on farm owners (129), trainers (67), trainees (92), and other stakeholders (91). In total, 379 participants associated with farm tourism or agritourism sites provided valuable insights and responses to the questionnaire. Each interview was approached with cultural and linguistic sensitivity, recognizing the bilingual nature of the questionnaire to ensure effective communication and understanding.

Mode of Data Analysis. This study employed a robust analytical approach, utilizing various statistical techniques to comprehensively assess the status and challenges of agritourism in Central Luzon. Multivariate Tests, specifically Wilks' Lambda, were employed to investigate differences in agritourism status concerning site characteristics like type, land area, hospitality services, and lodging accommodations, offering a nuanced understanding of their interrelations. Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation was applied to explore the intricate relationship between knowledge acquisition and its practical utilization in agritourism, providing valuable insights into the complex dynamics within the industry. Descriptive analysis succinctly summarized and clarified the collected data, offering a clear overview crucial for drawing meaningful conclusions from the research findings. These meticulous analyses generated valuable insights, forming the foundation for informed recommendations and strategies for fostering sustainable agritourism growth in Central Luzon.

3.0. Results and Discussion

Characteristics of Agritourism Sites

The characteristics of agritourism sites in Central

Luzon were examined to gain insights into the diversity of offerings within the sector. The results revealed seven primary characteristics:

Category: The majority of the respondents (30%) focused on health and food tourism farms, followed by educational and entertainment farms (28%), natural and ecotourism farms (23%), and recreational and sports tourism farms (20%). This diversity in categories reflects the multifaceted nature of agritourism in the region, catering to a range of visitor interests.

Type: Respondents identified various agritourism sites, with ecotourism, integrated farm tourism, and seaside tourism being the most common (17% each). Culture tourism and heritage tourism were the least represented types (10%). This diversity underscores the region's capacity to offer a wide array of agritourism experiences.

Land Area or Farm Size: Approximately 44% of respondents owned and operated agritourism sites with land areas ranging from 16 to 19.99 hectares. Another 33% managed sites spanning 20 hectares or more, while 22% operated sites covering 8 hectares or more. The variation in land sizes suggests varying resource availability and management challenges among agritourism sites.

Original Use of the Land: Farming emerged as the most common original land use, with 44% of respondents having previously used the land for agricultural purposes. Raising animals or poultry was the second most prevalent use (38%), while 19% of respondents reported that the land had not been previously used for any industry. The historical use of the land underscores the agricultural roots of many agritourism sites.

Status of Ownership: A significant proportion of respondents (56%) were landowners, indicating a sense of ownership and long-term commitment to their agritourism ventures. Meanwhile, 22% operated as tenants or renters, reflecting different operational dynamics and potential challenges.

Average Number of Tourists Per Month: Approximately 44% of respondents reported hosting 200 or more tourists each month, while 33% accommodated 300 or more visitors. Only 22% of respondents attracted an average of 400 or more monthly visitors. These figures highlight the varying scales of agritourism operations, with some sites experiencing higher visitation rates than others.

Activities Provided in Agritourism Sites: The majority of respondents (88.9%) offered educational tours, U-pick and U-harvest activities, and classes, seminars, and workshops. In contrast, winery activities were the least provided (22.3%). These findings emphasize educational and hands-on experiences in agritourism sites, aligning with

the region's commitment to promoting agricultural awareness and learning.

Agritourism Services: In terms of hospitality services, all respondents (100%) provided food stands and food services, along with take-out options. Other services, such as catering or customized meals, Deli Stores, and Pasalubong Centers, were offered by 88.9% of respondents. However, cookouts, barbecues, or picnics were provided by only 66.7% of respondents. Regarding hosting services, all respondents offered relaxation and related therapeutic services, while 55.6% provided services for weddings, private parties, corporate events, or business retreats. Concerning lodging and accommodations, 88.9% of respondents engaged in campsites and bed and breakfast services, while 77.8% operated cottages, cabins, and farm vacation options. Hotels, inns, lodges, or resorts were less prevalent, with 55.6% of respondents offering these accommodations. These service offerings demonstrate the diverse range of experiences available to agritourism visitors, catering to various preferences and needs.

The characteristics of agritourism sites in Central Luzon are indicative of the region's rich and diverse agritourism landscape. The diversity in categories, types, land sizes, and original land use underscores the adaptability of the agritourism sector to different contexts and preferences. The diverse agritourism sites were the focus of Esguerra's (2020) study, which characterized farmers, analyzed operations, and identified best practices and challenges. The study focused on family-run farms affiliated with tourism and agriculture organizations, ensuring safety standards. Local and international visitors engaged in services like classes and tours. Best practices included trust-building, referrals, hands-on operations, and strict financial monitoring. Challenges encompassed labor shortages, niche market status, price fluctuations, seasonal dynamics, staff skill gaps, and significant capital needs. These insights lay the foundation for enhancing the region's agritourism sector through a targeted development plan. Despite this adaptability, agritourism farmers, guided by intrinsic motives, actively preserve tangible heritage on their farmlands. The study underscores the robust connection between farmland, farmer, and agritourism attributes and the motivations driving heritage preservation. However, despite the evident effectiveness of agritourism in this aspect, there is a potential oversight by farmers on economic opportunities linked with these resources, posing a risk to the sustainability of their conservation efforts (Valdivia & Barbieri, 2014). The prevalence of landowners among respondents indicates a long-term commitment to agritourism, often rooted in a profound connection to the land. The diverse visitation rates observed across agritourism sites

underscore the importance of implementing tailored marketing and development strategies to optimize the sector's potential. Notably, entrance fees range from Php200 to Php500, reflecting the varied pricing structures within the industry.

Moreover, the extensive provision of educational activities, including tours, workshops, and U-pick experiences, highlights the region's commitment to promoting agricultural awareness and learning among visitors. Baipai et al.'s (2023) study identifies challenges in agritourism, such as a lack of activities, funding constraints, and uncoordinated efforts among stakeholders, raising concerns about its impact on agricultural production. The study recommends enabling policies and coordinated efforts to boost agritourism, aligning with the educational focus of bridging the urban-rural gap and fostering agricultural appreciation. In contrast, Chen et al.'s (2020) study on student exchange programs (SEPs) in educational tourism reveals rich learning opportunities for exchange students. It explores the positive impact of SEPs on students' education and career choices. Transitioning to a different context, a recent study evaluates a leading Philippine state university's potential as an educational tourism destination using the 6As of tourism, highlighting opportunities for promoting and enhancing resources, particularly in farm and nature attractions, with a key focus on improving accessibility (Canson & Caelian, 2022).

The diversity of hospitality, hosting, and lodging services offered by agritourism sites reflects the sector's capacity to cater to a wide range of visitor preferences. The availability of these services enhances the overall visitor experience and contributes to the sector's growth and sustainability. Mahmoodi et al.'s (2022) study underscores the more advanced state of agritourism development in Poland compared to Iran, emphasizing the need for Iranian authorities to implement additional measures for effective management and growth. This study is one of the pioneering comprehensive comparisons of agritourism development in both countries. Concurrently, Tovmasyan et al.'s (2020) research underscores the crucial role of agritourism in rural development, particularly in Armenian regions such as Lori and Tavush. The study reveals diverse tourism opportunities stemming from their abundant resource potential, including historical-cultural, eco, agro, gastronomic, and adventure tourism.

Status of Agritourism: A Community Perspective

The evaluation of agritourism status within this study encompasses its impact on the local community, specifically in terms of economic and environmental aspects. This research catalyzes raising community awareness about the significance

of agritourism in Central Luzon. Shedding light on the subject empowers individuals to recognize and appreciate the contributions of agritourism to their region. Furthermore, this study assessed agritourism objectives at nine selected agritourism sites and gathered feedback from 379 respondents within the region to gauge the effectiveness of the supervision provided by the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI). The respondents were randomly selected from these agritourism sites, contributing diverse perspectives on achieving objectives in the context of the broader agritourism landscape.

The extent of ATI's supervision practices in agritourism management plays a pivotal role in ensuring the delivery of authentic farm or ranch experiences, the facilitation of educational activities, the provision of high-quality customer service, the maintenance of essential public facilities, the preservation of a safe and accessible environment, the cultivation of positive community relations, and the strategic planning for financial sustainability.

This study aligns with previous research that emphasizes the economic and environmental benefits of agritourism for rural communities (Ammirator et al., 2020). It also echoes the findings by Cavalleri et al. (2022), which highlight the role of community awareness and education in promoting sustainable agritourism.

In terms of supervision and management, Athukorala (2017) stressed the significance of effective oversight and guidance by relevant authorities, such as the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), in ensuring the success and sustainability of agritourism initiatives. The results of this study corroborate these findings, highlighting the positive impact of ATI's management practices on the overall success of agritourism sites.

However, as noted by Lupi et al. (2017), variations in the impact of agritourism on different communities may exist, suggesting that local factors and context play a significant role. While this study reports high levels of attainment of agritourism objectives, further research may explore regional disparities and their underlying causes.

These comparisons and contrasts with existing literature reinforce the importance of agritourism as a means of community development, emphasizing the need for continued research and tailored strategies to maximize its benefits while addressing potential challenges.

Assessing the Acquired Knowledge and Skills of Respondents in Agritourism

Agritourism operations vary widely, encompassing both small seasonal enterprises with limited consumer services and expansive year-round

activities offering a multitude of services. This section delves into evaluating respondents' acquired knowledge and skills in agritourism, encompassing areas such as production technology, pre-production to post-harvest processes, marketing, and financial literacy. The results reveal the following:

Production Technology: Most respondents perceived themselves to possess a high level of knowledge in production technology, consistently scoring high across all task indicators. The overall weighted mean for this category was 3.94, underscoring their proficiency in this aspect (Che et al., 2005).

Pre-production to Post-Harvest: Respondents demonstrated a commendable understanding of pre-production to post-harvest processes, with an overall weighted mean of 4.10, signifying a high level of competence. This proficiency contributes to the efficiency and success of agritourism ventures (Ammirator et al., 2020).

Marketing: The computed weighted mean for respondents' acquired knowledge in marketing stood at 3.96, aligning with a high descriptive rating. This aptitude in marketing is pivotal for attracting visitors and ensuring the sustainability of agritourism sites (Tseng et al., 2019).

Financial Literacy: On average, respondents reported a high level of knowledge in financial literacy, with a computed mean value of 4.02. This proficiency is instrumental in the strategic management of resources and the long-term financial sustainability of agritourism endeavors (Shen, 2017).

Utilization of Acquired Knowledge and Skills in Farming Activities

Agritourism is recognized as a pivotal driver of farm diversification and an essential contributor to enhancing farm income. The Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) significantly promotes agritourism, fostering a potent partnership between the agricultural sector and tourism. This study aims to elucidate how farms harness agritourism opportunities, focusing on the extent to which farmer-respondents leverage their acquired knowledge and skills in production technology, pre-production to post-harvest processes, marketing, and financial literacy.

The study unveils its findings from a survey encompassing nine (9) agritourism sites and involving 379 farmer trainees in Central Luzon. The survey results shed light on the ongoing progression of agritourism within the agribusiness sector, underscoring the deliberate adoption of agritourism programs in the surveyed areas. The results manifest as follows:

Production Technology Utilization: The computed average weighted mean for all task

indicators related to the utilization of production technology yielded an overall weighted mean of 4.04. This signifies a high level of utilization, emphasizing the practical application of acquired knowledge and skills by farmers in this domain (Tshuma, 2022).

Pre-production to Post-Harvest Utilization: Respondents largely perceived themselves to possess a high level of competence across task indicators pertaining to pre-production to post-harvest processes. The overall weighted mean for this category was 3.89, indicating a commendable degree of utilization in these essential farming activities (Ammirator et al., 2020).

Marketing Utilization: The overall weighted mean for the utilization of marketing stood at 4.40, firmly placing it in the high category. This underscores the farmers' adeptness in leveraging their marketing knowledge and skills, a vital component of agritourism success (Zhang et al., 2018).

Financial Literacy Utilization: The computed weighted means for overall responses regarding the utilization of financial literacy averaged 3.77. This denotes a high level of utilization, highlighting the farmers' proficiency in managing financial aspects, crucial for the sustainability of agritourism endeavors (Ikbal Bahua, 2023).

Relationship of Agritourism Status Across Site Characteristics

The Multivariate Test results unequivocally reject the null hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance, indicating a significant multivariate effect in relation to the characteristics of agritourism sites, namely type, land area, hospitality services, and lodging and accommodation. Wilks' Lambda (Exact Statistic) value of 0.023 further reinforces this result. Consequently, it becomes evident that it is imperative to tailor agritourism strategies to align with specific site characteristics, including type, scale, and the array of enterprises involved. This entails a nuanced approach to effectively manage and plan agritourism ventures in diverse settings (Barbieri, 2013).

Relationship Between the Extent of Acquired Knowledge and Utilization

The Spearman-Rho correlation analysis revealed significant associations between knowledge acquisition and its utilization across various stages of agritourism. While a weak inverse correlation was found between knowledge acquisition and pre-production activities ($r = -0.112$, $p = 0.029$), moderate to weak positive correlations were observed with production ($r = 0.261$, $p = 0.000$) and post-harvest activities ($r = 0.140$, $p = 0.006$). Overall, a positive correlation ($r = 0.178$, $p = 0.000$) emphasized the substantial link between knowledge acquisition and

practical application throughout the agritourism process. These results underscore the pivotal role of knowledge in driving effective utilization across diverse facets of agritourism, supporting the findings of Fahim et al. (2023).

Extent of Concern Regarding Agritourism Site Management Challenges

Owners of agritourism learning sites exhibit a heightened level of concern regarding environmental management issues, particularly waste management associated with tourist activities, despite the presence of signages. Simultaneously, establishing farm tourism sites is perceived as cumbersome and paperwork-intensive. This sentiment reflects the multifaceted challenges and hardships encountered in agritourism, underlining the need for proactive solutions and support mechanisms (Pal & Murdia, 2017; Calina et al., 2017).

Implications of Agritourism for Sustainable Economic Growth

Agritourism, as illuminated by this study, holds significant implications for sustainable economic development in Central Luzon and the broader Philippines. The findings provide a foundation for multifaceted actions and initiatives that can spur economic growth and foster resilience within the agritourism sector:

Policy Development and Enhancement: Policymakers and government officials can utilize the comprehensive insights provided by this study to craft well-informed policies and program initiatives aimed at bolstering the agritourism sector. This includes devising strategies to address the identified challenges, stimulating investment, and creating an enabling environment for agritourism operators (Sgroi et al., 2018).

Strengthening Local Governance: The study's data can empower local government officials, from barangay to regional levels, to assess their strengths and weaknesses in supporting agritourism activities within their jurisdictions. This self-assessment can lead to more efficient and effective programs aligning with local needs and resources (Che et al., 2005; Ciani, 2017; Mishchuk et al., 2022).

Educational Enhancement: Educational institutions can use this study to revise curricula and co-curricular activities, ensuring that students are adequately prepared and equipped with the knowledge and skills required to contribute to agritourism development. This educational emphasis can nurture a pool of future leaders poised to facilitate economic growth and related development.

National Government Support: The national government can adopt the study's findings to

strengthen the leadership and administrative capabilities of officials involved in agritourism. This support can manifest through training, seminars, workshops, technical assistance, and financial aid. Additionally, it can serve as a foundation for targeted research efforts that guide policymaking at the national level (Brzozowska & Niedziółka, 2016).

Legislation for Agritourism: Legislators can draw upon the study's insights to create legislation that fosters tangible development in the agritourism sector across the entire country. These laws can provide a robust legal framework for agritourism operations, ensuring their sustainability and economic contributions (Donia et al., 2018).

The implications of this research transcend data collection and analysis, extending into actionable strategies that can drive sustainable economic growth through the cultivation and expansion of agritourism. In harnessing these implications, stakeholders at all levels can play pivotal roles in advancing the agritourism sector and fostering broader economic development.

4.0. Conclusion

The in-depth study on agritourism in Central Luzon, Philippines, has provided invaluable insights into the current landscape, challenges, and avenues for sustainable development within the region. The research uncovered diverse agritourism sites, predominantly focusing on health and food tourism farms, which offered engaging educational experiences and entertainment, attracting a substantial monthly visitor count. Remarkably, farmers and stakeholders engaged in agritourism showcased a high level of proficiency in crucial areas such as production technology, marketing, and financial literacy. This proficiency underscored the efficacy of training programs, indicating that these initiatives have successfully equipped individuals for the complexities of agritourism. Moreover, the study highlighted the practical application of the acquired knowledge and skills in farming activities, indicating a promising future for agritourism ventures in Central Luzon. Through rigorous statistical analyses, the research illuminated the influence of specific site characteristics, including type, land area, hospitality services, and lodging and accommodation, on agritourism status. These findings emphasized the necessity for tailored strategies and targeted information dissemination, ensuring effective management and planning of agritourism activities based on individual site attributes. Furthermore, the study revealed significant positive correlations between the extent of knowledge acquisition and its utilization in various facets of agritourism, underscoring the perpetual need for continuous

education and skill development among agritourism stakeholders to maintain the industry's growth and sustainability.

5.0. Limitations of the Findings

The findings of this study, while valuable, are subject to certain limitations. Firstly, the geographic scope, confined to Central Luzon, may not comprehensively capture agritourism dynamics in other regions or countries. There is a potential sampling bias as the data primarily emanates from willing agritourism sites, potentially neglecting non-participating sites with differing characteristics. Additionally, reliance on self-reported data introduces the possibility of biases, impacting the accuracy of responses. The study provides a snapshot, making it susceptible to temporal factors and potentially outdated in the face of the rapidly evolving agritourism industry. Moreover, while the study yields valuable insights into Central Luzon's agritourism, establishing universal causality and generalizability is limited due to the observational nature of the research. Incorporating Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation as a statistical tool aligns with these considerations. Lastly, the choice of specific statistical tools carries inherent assumptions and limitations, influencing the depth of the findings. Acknowledging these limitations is essential for a nuanced understanding of the research outcomes, emphasizing the need for cautious interpretation and inspiring future studies to comprehensively address these constraints.

6.0. Practical Value of the Paper

This study offers practical insights crucial for agritourism stakeholders in Central Luzon. Agritourism operators can enhance visitor experiences by tailoring offerings to market demands identified in the study. Policymakers gain targeted insights for crafting supportive policies, while development agencies can design focused training programs, addressing specific skill gaps among agritourism stakeholders. In aligning offerings with visitor interests, this research provides actionable guidance, ensuring sustainable economic and sociocultural benefits for agritourism ventures in the region.

7.0. Directions for Future Research

Future research in agritourism should prioritize comparative regional studies to understand diverse dynamics across different regions nationally and internationally, offering tailored strategies for development. Longitudinal studies are vital to tracking evolving trends and visitor preferences over time, enabling adaptive strategies for sustained growth. Furthermore, there is a crucial need for in-depth investigations into agritourism's sociocultural impact,

focusing on its influence on local communities, social structures, and cultural preservation. Additionally, research should explore the integration of technology to enhance visitor experiences, streamline operations, and expand the reach of agritourism ventures in an increasingly digital landscape.

8.0. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

This study did not receive any funding.

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