
Tourists' behavior and importance of marketing mix factors in decision to use community-based agritourism services under the new normal era in Rayong Province, Thailand

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Abstract The results showed that the majority of tourists visiting the site were female, between the ages of 20-30, single, and had completed a bachelor's degree. Most of the tourists were students and had a monthly income of at most 15,000 THB. In terms of agritourism behavior, the study found that most tourists visited the site during weekends and holidays for study tours before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. First-time visitors were prevalent, and most were influenced by friends and colleagues before the pandemic. During the pandemic, self-decision became the primary factor for traveling. Tourists preferred day trips to the Suan Yai Da agritourism site, with a majority intending to revisit the site. People's recommendations and Facebook fan pages were the top sources of information for tourists. Regarding the perception of marketing mix factors, tourists gave the highest importance to the awards received by the agritourism site as the best tourist attraction ($\bar{x} = 4.25$). This indicates that the reputation and recognition of the agritourism site play a significant role in attracting visitors. Other product factors that were highly rated included processed products available ($\bar{x} = 4.20$), lectures for agricultural knowledge ($\bar{x} = 4.20$), and the ability of tourists to visit all year round ($\bar{x} = 4.14$). In terms of price factors, tourists rated all of them as important, with mean ratings (\bar{x}) ranging from 4.12 to 4.25. Overall, the study provides insights into the socio-demographic profile, agritourism behavior, and perceptions of marketing mix factors of tourists visiting the Suan Yai Da agritourism site. The findings can serve as a basis for agritourism service providers to improve their services and attract more tourists.

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic, Agritourism, New normal, Marketing mix

Introduction

Thailand's tourism sector plays an essential role in the Thai economy. In 2019, the tourism sector generated about two trillion THB, or 11% of the gross

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domestic product (GDP), from nearly 40 million foreign tourists (Bank of Thailand, 2021). However, this value was severely affected by the Coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic, causing a decrease in tourist arrivals since December 2019 (Sun *et al.*, 2022). This pandemic continues to threaten the tourism industry due to travel restrictions and additional lengthy requirements for tourists entering the Kingdom. This pandemic is not only affecting mainstream tourism in Thailand but also impacting local community-based tourism, causing fewer tourists to visit and patronize local products and activities (Virakul *et al.*, 2022). Some local tourism sites have even closed temporarily. In contrast, other businesses continue to do business as usual but follow the new normal protocols (i.e., social distancing, mask-wearing, etc.) (Marome and Shaw, 2021). In addition, local farms engaged in agritourism activities were greatly affected by this pandemic.

Agritourism is any activity that engages people who visit farms or other agricultural operations for recreation or education (Flanigan *et al.*, 2014). These activities allow farmers to diversify their farm business and increase income. This type of tourism activity is part of the “Creative and Cultural Tourism plan” by the National Strategy (2018-2037) of the National Economic and Social Development Council (2018). The strategy focuses on creating more value for tourism products and services, emphasizing the use of indigenous knowledge and innovation (i.e., natural resource diversity and culture), developing new alternative experiences for tourists, and remodeling sustainability standards. Moreover, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives has established guidelines to promote Thailand’s agricultural industry by inviting locals to travel and visit other provinces. This plan also encourages travelers to support local agritourism sites and products (e.g., farm souvenirs and homemade items) to help local communities earn income (Faysse *et al.*, 2022).

As Covid-19 is already considered endemic starting October 2022, community-based tourism sites should adjust their business operations and strategy to continue to welcome foreign and local tourists under the new normal. This includes protocols emphasizing community members’ and tourists’ cleanliness and safety, particularly in agritourism activities. Most importantly, the changing tourist consumer behavior after the pandemic should also be given attention by crafting new guidelines to cope with these recent changes (Cuomo *et al.*, 2022). The agritourism sector of Rayong province is among those greatly affected and should cope with these challenges.

Community-based agritourism service (CBAS) in Rayong province has long been considered unique among other provinces in Thailand as it is the center of quality fruits and rich natural resources harmoniously integrated into the community’s life, culture, and local business activities (Khermkhan *et al.*,

2020). Although agritourism activities were severely affected during the Covid-19 pandemic, tourists and locals are returning as the travel restrictions are eased. Three popular agritourism sites in the province are Suan Yai Da, Suan Panan, and Suan Puyai Somkuan, which have been top-rated by foreign and local tourists for many years, with around 100 to 1,000 tourists visiting per day (Khermkhan *et al.*, 2020). An initial conversation with the entrepreneur found that marketing promotions through discounts are given to attract more consumers. However, this move was not sustainable for the business and could not be used all year round. In addition, CBAS still needs more information on target customers that will be useful for formulating marketing strategies following the needs of target customers. The framework data collection canvas (Muangtum, 2020) to collect target customer data is shown in Figure 1.

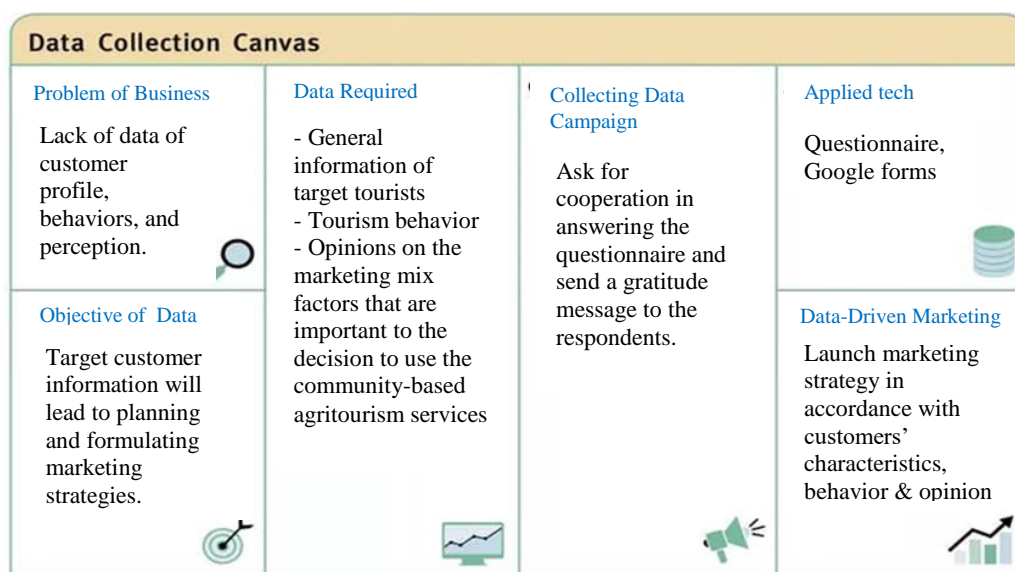


Figure 1. Data-collection canvas for community-based agritourism services under the new normal era in Rayong Province, Thailand

With the easing of pandemic restrictions, new marketing strategies must be developed and implemented to continue to survive and ensure tourist arrivals in the new normal (Cuomo, *et al.*, 2022). The agritourism sites started to focus on covering other dimensions of the business environment by presenting local farm characteristics to tourists, selling local products available, and involving other people in the community to help them generate more income. Moreover, they also consider fostering collaborations with various government departments to assist them in technology adoption and marketing their fruit harvests to outside communities (Tseng *et al.*, 2019). New strategies must also

consider addressing businesses' weak points in delivering products and experiences to consumers (Kotler and Keller, 2015). Moreover, consumer behavior is an important aspect to consider in building marketing strategies, as it can help make better decisions about how to market products and services (Cavite *et al.*, 2022). Consumer behavior surveys are essential for community-based business strategy formulation (Cavite *et al.*, 2021).

Hence, this study focuses on examining the business environment and identifying marketing strategies to develop the agritourism sector in Rayong province, Thailand, under the new normal. With the changing consumer behavior brought about by the pandemic, it becomes increasingly essential to obtain reliable information for planning, decision-making, and developing marketing strategies. Therefore, the objectives of the study were to compare the marketing system of community based agritourism sites during and after the Covid-19 pandemic, and determine the opinion and perceptions of consumers on the marketing factors, and develop marketing strategies.

Materials and methods

Study area and sample

This study was conducted in Rayong province, a well-known agritourism province in Thailand. The province is also known as the center of quality fruits and rich natural resources harmoniously integrated into the community's life, culture, and local business activities (Khernkhan *et al.*, 2020). The participants in this study were local tourists who visited the "Suan Yai Da" community agritourism site, the most popular tourist destination in the province.

The site also won an outstanding provincial award in the fruit garden category. The sample size of participants was computed using Cochran (1977)'s formula with a 95% confidence level. The Cochran (1977) can be expressed as:

$$n = \frac{z^2(pq)}{e^2} \quad (1)$$

Wherein n the sample size, z the standard error with the chosen confidence interval, p the variability or standard deviation, q derived from $1 - p$, and e the acceptable sample error. The result of the sample size computation was 385 respondents. To give allowance for respondents' incomplete responses, a total of 400 cases were gathered.

Data collection instruments

Data were collected using the convenience sampling technique. First, the survey questionnaire was developed using a literature review. Then, the quality of the questionnaire was checked in terms of accuracy and reliability using the item-objective congruence (IOC) method (Rovinelli and Hambleton, 1977). In the IOC method, a value of at least 0.50 per questionnaire item indicates that the item is valid and measures the intended content.

Pre-testing was also done with a group of tourists (30 cases) to confirm the validity of the questionnaire data for most items using Cronbach's alpha method (Cronbach, 1951). Finally, an actual survey of the 400 respondents was done after developing the questionnaire based on the IOC values and Cronbach's alpha. The final questionnaire consists of the parts: Part 1: Socio-demographic profile of tourist-respondents, Part 2: Tourists' agritourism behavior; Part 3: Perception of marketing mix factors for agritourism services. Perception items were rated as: 1 = unimportant, 2 = slightly important, 3 = moderately important, 4 = important, 5 = very important (Direksri and Suwanmaneepong, 2021).

Data analysis

Survey data from tourists were encoded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) v.26.0 software. Tourists' socio-demographic profiles were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as means and frequency distribution. As for tourists' behavior and opinion towards marketing mix factors for agritourism, means and standard deviation were computed. Interpretation of the mean scores was made based on the criteria; 4.21-5.00 = Very important, 3.41-4.20 = Important, 2.61-3.40 = Moderately important, 1.81-2.60 = Slightly important, 1.00-1.80 = Unimportant

Results

Socio-demographic profile of tourist-respondents

Tourist-respondents' demographic profiles were summarized and presented in Table 1. The results showed that most tourists were female (69.1%), and the majority were between 20 and 30 years old (72.77) and single (86.4%). As with the education level, the majority of the tourist respondents finished their bachelor's degree (79.0%). The analysis also indicated that most

respondents were students (35.8%), and most had a monthly income of at most 15,000 THB (38.3%) and 15,001 to 20,000 THB (38.3%).

Table 1. Socio-demographic profile of tourist-respondents (n=81)

Items	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	25	30.9
Female	56	69.1
Age		
Under 20 years	9	11.1
20-30 years	59	72.7
31-40 years	6	7.3
41-50 years	3	3.7
Above 51 years	4	4.8
Civil status		
Single	70	86.4
Married	10	12.3
Divorced	1	1.2
Education Level		
Lower than a bachelor's degree	64	9.9
Bachelor's degree	8	79.0
Master's degree	4	4.9
Post-graduate	5	6.2
Occupation		
Student	29	35.8
Government officer	6	7.4
Private company officer	21	25.9
Business owner	12	14.8
Freelance	11	13.6
Unemployed	1	1.2
University officer	1	1.2
Income per month		
Less than or equal to 15,000 THB	31	38.3
15,001-20,000 THB	31	38.3
20,001-25,000 THB	9	11.1
25,001-30,000 THB	2	2.5
Above 30,000 THB	8	9.9

Tourists' agritourism behavior

Tourists' behavior towards agritourism behavior was assessed and presented in different aspects. This behavior ranged from the frequency of visits, the purpose of travel, the decision-maker involved, and the mode of travel, among others. The following sections present and describe these behaviors.

First, the frequency of tourist visits on particular days and the purpose of travel are shown in Tables 2 and 3, respectively. A comparison was made before the onset of Covid-19 and during the Covid-19 era. The findings reveal that before the pandemic hit, most tourists visit during the weekends (43.2%) and holidays (32.1%). The same trend was also observed during the Covid-19 era, with slightly higher tourist visits during weekends (46.9%). As for the purpose of travel, the majority of tourists that visit the Suan Yai Da agritourism site for study tours before (45%) and during Covid-19 (63.0%). The data shows that more study tours were conducted during Covid-19.

Table 2. Frequency of tourist visits on particular days at the Suan Yai Da agritourism site

Duration	Before Covid-19 (Before 2020)		During Covid-19 (2020 to present)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Mondays-Fridays	11	13.6	11	13.6
Holidays	26	32.1	19	23.5
Saturdays-Sundays	35	43.2	38	46.9
Public holidays	9	11.1	13	16.0
Total	81	100.0	81	100.0

Table 3. Purpose of travel at Suan Yai Da agritourism site by tourists

Purpose	Before Covid-19 (Before 2020)		During Covid-19 (2020 to present)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Relaxation and leisure	19	23.5	20	24.7
Study tour	45	55.6	51	63.0
Walk-in visit	25	30.9	30	37.0
To experience eating a fruit buffet	23	28.4	16	19.8
Total	112	138.3	117	144.4

Second, the types of tourist visitors in terms of frequency and decision-makers involved were analyzed and presented in Tables 4 and 5, respectively. Results revealed that most tourist visitors at the Suan Yai Da agritourism site are first timers (45.7%). It is also notable that 11.1% of the tourist respondents surveyed indicated they had visited the site more than three times. Meanwhile, as for the decision-maker involved in traveling, most tourists were influenced by their friends (30.9%) and colleagues (28.4%) before the Covid-19 pandemic. However, this pattern changed during the Covid-19 pandemic, as tourists indicated that it was their self-decision (30.9%) to travel to the Suan Yai Da agritourism site.

Table 4. Types of tourist visitors at the Suan Yai Da agritourism site

Tourist type	Frequency	%
First timers	37	45.7
Second timers	22	27.2
Third timers	13	16.0
Visited more than three times	9	11.1
Total	81	100.0

Table 5. Decision-maker involved in traveling to Suan Yai Da agritourism

Decision-maker	Before Covid-19 (Before 2020)		During Covid-19 (2020 to present)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Self-decision	20	24.7	25	30.9
Family members	13	16.0	14	17.3
Friends	25	30.9	23	28.4
Colleagues	23	28.4	19	23.5
Total	81	100.0	81	100.0

Third, the number and type of tourists that visited the Suan Yai Da agritourism site were analyzed and presented in Tables 6 and 7, respectively. The findings showed the same trend in the two eras, where groups of more than seven people mostly visited the agritourism site before (55.6%) and during (38.3%) the Covid-19 pandemic. However, it is noticeable that groups of more than seven people became lesser during the Covid-19 era, which could be attributed to the social distancing protocol of the Ministry of Health. Meanwhile, most Suan Yai Da agritourism site tourists are groups of friends (46.9%), and no noticeable difference was seen before and during the Covid-19 era.

Table 6. Number of tourists that visit the Suan Yai Da agritourism site

Number of tourists	Before Covid-19 (Before 2020)		During Covid-19 (2020 to present)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Solo traveler	2	2.5	3	3.7
2-3 people	21	25.9	29	35.8
4-6 people	13	16.0	18	22.2
More than 7 people	45	55.6	31	38.3
Total	81	100.0	81	100.0

Table 7. Types of tourist travelers at Suan Yai Da agritourism site

Tourist type	Before Covid-19 (Before 2020)		After Covid-19 (2020 to present)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Solo traveler	4	4.9	2	2.5
Family members	20	24.7	20	24.7
Friends	38	46.9	38	46.9
Colleagues	19	23.5	21	25.9
Total	81	100.0	81	100.0

Fourth, the mode of travel and traveling expenses by tourists were analyzed and presented in Tables 8 and 9, respectively. The results revealed that the majority of tourists travel by private car. This trend is true both before Covid-19 (69.1%) and during Covid-19 (80.2%). Only a few tourists (1.2%) used a motorcycle as their mode of transportation to go to the agritourism site. Meanwhile, the traveling expenses of the respondents ranged from 1,001 to 2,000 THB (38.3%). No difference in traveling expenses was observed before and during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 8. Mode of travel by tourists visiting Suan Yai Da agritourism site

Mode of travel	Before Covid-19 (Before 2020)		During Covid-19 (2020 to present)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Private car	56	69.1	65	80.2
Public transportation	12	14.8	10	12.3
Travel agency	12	14.8	5	6.2
Motorcycle	1	1.2	1	1.2
Total	81	100.0	81	100.0

Table 9. Traveling expenses by tourists at the Suan Yai Da agritourism site

Traveling expense	Before Covid-19 (Before 2020)		During Covid-19 (2020 to present)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Less than 1,000 THB	26	32.1	26	23.5
1,001-2,000 THB	31	38.3	31	38.3
2,001-3,000 THB	11	13.6	11	24.7
Above 3,000 THB	13	16.0	13	13.6
Total	81	100.0	81	100.0

Lastly, the length of travel, tourists' revisit intention, and source of information about agritourism were assessed and presented in Tables 10, 11, and 12, respectively. It was revealed that the majority of the respondents preferred a day trip to the agritourism site. Before the pandemic, about 36% of tourists preferred this travel length, and it notably increased during the pandemic, with about 56% of the tourists who preferred this one. As for tourists' revisit intention, the majority of the respondents (55.6%) are certain of visiting the Suan Yai Da agritourism site again, and there were 43.2% that are not sure of coming back. Regarding tourists' sources of information about agritourism, the top two on the list are people's recommendations (76.5%) and the Facebook fan page of agritourism (56.8%). Only a few used television media (4.9%) as tourists' source of information.

Table 10. Length of travel of tourists at Suan Yai Da agritourism site

Length of travel	Before Covid-19 (Before 2020)		During Covid-19 (2020 to present)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
A day trip	29	35.8	45	55.6
Overnight stay	27	33.3	23	28.4
Overnight stay (> 1 night)	25	30.9	13	16.0
Total	81	100.0	81	100.0

Table 11. Tourists' revisit intention at Suan Yai Da agritourism site

Revisit intention	Frequency	%
Certainly	45	55.6
Cannot identify	35	43.2
No	1	1.2
Total	81	100.0

Table 12. Tourists' source of information about agritourism

Source of information	Frequency	%
Facebook fan page of agritourism	46	56.8
News media/ magazine	8	9.9
Television media	4	4.9
People's recommendation	62	76.5
TAT's Information/ Department of Tourism	10	12.3
Others (include Professor's recommendation)	2	2.5
Total	132	162.9

Perception of marketing mix factors for agritourism services

Tourists' perceptions of marketing mix factors were assessed and analyzed. Aside from the four main marketing factors – product, price, place, and promotion, this study extended the marketing concept and added three other factors relevant to agritourism services. These factors are people, physical, and process. The overall tourists' perception is shown in Table 13. Four out of the seven factors were rated by tourists as very important – place ($\bar{x} = 4.25$), people ($\bar{x} = 4.28$), physical ($\bar{x} = 4.27$), and process ($\bar{x} = 4.25$). This finding implies that the extended marketing mix factors are essential for understanding better tourists' behavior.

Table 13. Tourists' overall perception of marketing mix factors in the decision to use CBAS

Marketing mix factors	\bar{x}	S.D.	Interpretation
Product	4.19	0.58	Important
Price	4.18	0.65	Important
Place	4.25	0.60	Very Important
Promotion	4.10	0.74	Important
People	4.28	0.58	Very Important
Physical	4.27	0.64	Very Important
Process	4.25	0.63	Very Important
Overall mean	4.22	0.57	Very Important

As for the main marketing factors, product, price, place, and promotion, results were analyzed and presented in Tables 14 to 17. Tourists gave the highest importance to the awards received by the agritourism site as the best tourist attraction ($\bar{x} = 4.25$). Other very important product factors were processed products available ($\bar{x} = 4.20$), lectures for agricultural knowledge ($\bar{x} = 4.20$), and the ability of tourists to visit all year round ($\bar{x} = 4.14$). Meanwhile, tourists rated all price factors as important, with mean ratings (\bar{x}) ranging from 4.12 to 4.25. Of these factors, tourists gave the highest importance to the right price that the agritourism site charges for its processed products.

Table 14. Tourists' perception of product factors in the decision to use CBAS

Product factor	\bar{x}	S.D.	Interpretation
Interesting and beautiful orchards	4.15	0.77	Important
Popular with tourists	4.26	0.64	Important
Processed products/ various products	4.20	0.78	Very Important
Fruit orchard walks and fruit buffet activities	4.28	0.72	Important
Lectures for agricultural knowledge transfer	4.20	0.73	Very Important
Able to visit all year round	4.14	0.91	Very Important
Award received as the best tourist attraction	4.25	0.69	Very Important
Overall mean	4.19	0.58	Important

Table 15. Tourists' perception of price factors in the decision to use CBAS

Price factor	\bar{x}	S.D.	Interpretation
Reasonable admission price	4.20	0.71	Important
Admission price worthy of the farm activities	4.12	0.76	Important
Appropriate fees for various activities	4.19	0.67	Important
Appropriate price of processed products	4.25	0.79	Important
Overall mean	4.18	0.65	Important

As for place factors, most items were rated by tourists as very important. The highest among the list is the availability of online channels of the enterprise in selling its processed products ($\bar{x} = 4.28$). Tourists also gave a very

important rating to the site's easily accessible and convenient selling location ($\bar{x} = 4.26$). Regarding tourists' perception of promotion factors, the only factor that was very important for tourists was the marketing promotion activities of the agritourism site ($\bar{x} = 4.21$). This finding implies that tourists greatly consider how agritourism sites communicate with potential customers to increase awareness of products and services.

Table 16. Tourists' perception of place factors in the decision to use CBAS

Place factor	\bar{x}	S.D.	Interpretation
Easily accessible and convenient selling location	4.26	0.75	Very Important
Able to pay in cash and scan via QR code	4.41	0.64	Very Important
Clean and hygienic selling location	4.26	0.75	Very Important
Available online channel for processed products	4.28	0.71	Very Important
Good advice and service for online ordering	4.15	0.74	Important
Overall mean	4.25	0.60	Very Important

Table 17. Tourists' perception of promotion factors in the decision to use CBAS

Promotion factor	\bar{x}	S.D.	Interpretation
Marketing promotion activities	4.21	0.80	Very important
Conveniently follow the news online and offline	4.05	0.85	Important
Interesting and meaningful press releases	4.06	0.79	Important
Advertising of attractions using various channels	4.11	0.80	Important
Overall mean	4.10	0.74	Important

Tourists' perceptions of people, physical, and process factors were assessed and presented in Tables 18 to 20. Tourists rated all people factors as very important except for one factor, 'fast service by the staff,' which gained an important rating only ($\bar{x} = 4.11$). This finding implies that tourists were satisfied with the new normal measures imposed by the agritourism site and the friendly services provided by its staff. However, the agritourism site needs to enhance its delivery of service to tourists in a faster way. As for physical factors, all factors were rated as very important by tourists, except for one – interesting farm activities ($\bar{x} = 4.19$). This further implies that the agritourism site may provide more interesting activities to its tourists to give them higher satisfaction. Lastly, for the process factors, all factors were rated as very important, except for the distancing measures imposed in the area ($\bar{x} = 4.16$). Such a finding implies that the site needs to improve its social distancing policy for tourists to have more confidence throughout their visit, especially now in the new normal.

Table 18. Tourists' perception of people factors in the decision to use CBAS

People factor	\bar{x}	S.D.	Interpretation
Mask-wearing of staff throughout the service	4.31	0.71	Very important
Adequate service knowledge of staff	4.28	0.71	Very important
Fast service by staff	4.11	0.72	Important
Courteous and friendly service by the staff	4.32	0.70	Very Important
Widely known owner	4.32	0.70	Very Important
Very welcoming owner and staff	4.30	0.71	Very Important
Guided orchard tour by the owner and staff	4.35	0.71	Very Important
Overall mean	4.28	0.58	Very Important

Table 19. Tourists' perception of physical factors in the decision to use CBAS

Physical factor	\bar{x}	S.D.	Interpretation
Unique and different place	4.21	0.75	Very Important
Walking paths and learning areas available	4.28	0.72	Very Important
Point of sale for agricultural products	4.26	0.75	Very Important
Interesting farm activities	4.19	0.79	Important
Orderly and beautiful landscape	4.31	0.78	Very Important
Temperature screening point available	4.32	0.77	Very Important
Adequate waste bins/disposal points available	4.22	0.80	Very Important
Overall mean	4.27	0.64	Important

Table 20. Tourists' perception of process factors in the decision to use CBAS

Process factor	\bar{x}	S.D.	Interpretation
Suitable and adequate facilities (i.e., parking, etc.)	4.21	0.73	Very Important
Free taste of fruits for tourists	4.25	0.76	Very Important
Security measures in place for tourists and property	4.15	0.82	Very Important
Distancing measures in place	4.16	0.85	Important
Mask-wearing measures before entering	4.33	0.72	Very Important
Use of technology in management	4.30	0.74	Very Important
Contribute to increased community income	4.36	0.69	Very Important
Overall mean	4.25	0.63	Very Important

Discussion

The business environment and identify marketing strategies to develop the agritourism sector in Rayong province, Thailand, under the new normal was investigated. This is anchored on the premise that with the changing consumer behavior brought about by the pandemic, it becomes increasingly essential to obtain reliable information for planning, decision-making, and developing marketing strategies (Kotler and Keller, 2015). This study found two key findings, which are discussed below. Also, marketing strategies and policy recommendations are proposed in the succeeding sections.

First, the findings showed that more study tours were conducted during the Covid-19 era. This indicates that tourists see the importance of the Suan Yai Da agritourism site as a learning venue. Agritourism is an increasingly important way for people to learn about agricultural practices, issues, and concepts (Van Winkle and Bueddefeld, 2021). The Covid-19 pandemic has fostered awareness among people regarding the importance of agri-food products, particularly their healthiness (Zanetti *et al.*, 2022; Llonas *et al.*, 2022). In a study by Petroman *et al.* (2016), agritourism enables tourists to understand the public function of agriculture thoroughly, raise awareness for healthy food, develop healthy dietary habits, learn how the agricultural products are produced and marketed, and obtain first-hand experience along the whole agricultural year. Moreover, this current study reveals that it is noticeable that groups of more than seven people became lesser during the Covid-19 era, which could be attributed to the social distancing protocol of the Ministry of Health. Preventive measures such as social distancing are crucial to keep the pandemic under control and to continue carrying out activities in the new normal (Guidry *et al.*, 2022). Business disruptions caused by social distancing have been evident in most operations since the pandemic's start (Koren and Petó, 2020). The findings of this study are consistent with Wellenius *et al.* (2021), who found a strong relationship between the implementation of a social distancing policy and decreasing mobility associated with Covid-19 case growth.

Second, this study found that the extended marketing mix factors were practical in better understanding tourists' behavior, where the added factors people ($\bar{x} = 4.28$), physical ($\bar{x} = 4.27$), and process ($\bar{x} = 4.25$) overall gained a very important rating from tourists. More specifically, tourists were satisfied with the new normal measures imposed by the agritourism site. The Covid-19 pandemic has substantially impacted the tourism market, causing agritourism sites to adopt the new normal of doing business operations (Wojcieszak-Zbierska *et al.*, 2020; Llonas and Suwanmaneepong, 2021). It can also be

mentioned that the farmer acquires new qualifications and skills from dealing with tourists (Ciolac *et al.*, 2021). Similar findings were revealed in a recent study by Chin and Pehin Dato Musa (2021), where they adopted strategies for agritourism farms in Brunei, drawing from the lessons in the new normal to prepare for a crisis-resistant agritourism in the future. Moreover, from this current study, the Suan Yai Da agritourism site may consider providing more interesting activities to its tourists to give higher satisfaction. Such a finding implies that the site needs to improve its social distancing policy for tourists to have more confidence throughout their visit, especially now in the new normal. This implication is relevant to the new normal (Pratt *et al.*, 2022). Ensuring tourists that their environment is safe is not only optional but also required (Chin and Pehin Dato Musa, 2021). Their study claims that agritourism farms should be safe destinations in the new normal to avoid contracting infection possibilities.

This research contributed to the evolving literature on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the development of the tourism sector, particularly in agritourism. The key findings suggested the following marketing strategies for the Suan Yai Da agritourism site during the new normal. First, providing educational tour packages would attract more visitors. A day trip tour is recommended, and there should be concerned a robust implementation of the new normal protocols, such as temperature checks, handwashing, and social distancing, to ensure tourist safety and continued trust in the services. Second, the Suan Yai Da agritourism site should strengthen its social media presence as it drives word of mouth, making more people aware of the tourism site and attracting more people. The agritourism site can use these online channels in marketing their processed products, Third, the site should continue promoting its strengths, such as awards and certifications, as these drive tourists to visit.

As a policy recommendation, it is proposed that relevant government institutions should continue to assist and promote agritourism sites as these help rural farmers and communities improve their income while at the same time providing educational activities and unique experiences to visitors. Furthermore, regulations concerning agritourism sites should be continued to ensure that values, culture, and activities are related to agriculture and its allied fields. Lastly, agritourism activities must be regulated to ensure that these activities are done sustainably, do not harm the environment, and continues to conserve, protect, and enhance natural resources.

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