



Enhancing the Social Media Marketing of Agri-Tourism by Farmers in La Trinidad, Benguet, Philippines and the Development of the Helical Model of Participatory Communication Action Research

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Abstract

Agri-tourism is a sustainable and growing industry in the Philippines that could further be enhanced thru social media, a low-cost marketing tool with a global reach. To maximize social media for agri-tourism, there is a need first to gather baseline information as basis for enhancement. This study assessed the capacity of 26 La Trinidad farmers on using social media to promote their farms as agri-tourism sites. The study employed the Participatory Communication Research Action (PCRA) Model. Results from community consultations, ocular surveys, key informant interviews, and document reviews revealed that the study areas have natural characteristics and enough resources to support agri-tourism. However, the farmers needed further assistance in addressing the issues that come with these characteristics and resources. The assessment test showed that the respondents have a moderate level of social media marketing (SMM) skills, knowledge, and traits. Thus, the study conducted a seminar on SMM where the participants were guided to develop SMM plans for their own farms. Additionally, the study was able to assess the PCRA Model and found it to be far more flexible than originally thought. Thus, the study crafted a more coherent PCRA model, namely the Model of Participatory Communication towards Self-management, from combining the lessons learned from this study and the strength of Dance's Helix Model of communication. The study recommends that government or non-government extension efforts may look into further addressing the needed additional SMM knowledge, skills, and traits of the respondents as well as possible capacity building activities on product development. Future studies could look into the progress of the SMM plans developed by the respondents to find out how the respondents could be further assisted.

KEYWORDS

Social Media Marketing
Agri-tourism
Participatory Communication
Research Action (PCRA)

Introduction

Agri-tourism and social media are two of the buzzwords in the late 20th century. According

to Zoto et al. (2013), agri-tourism is seen as a sustainable industry. On the other hand, social media, aside from 'connecting people' has enabled

the small business owners such as farmers to advertise at par with multi-level businesses (Partner, 2015).

The term social media basically refers to websites and applications that allow the interaction of users by posting photos, links and comments. Damani (2018) described social media networks as a mode of social interaction. It is a platform of sharing and discussing information among human beings. Social media sites are a group of special and user-friendly websites such as Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, Twitter, Tumblr, Wordpress, Blogger, Instagram and YouTube. Social media sites are classified according to their unique characteristics, advantages and users or followers. Nearly 2.8 billion people around the world now use social media at least once a month, with more than 91% of them doing so via mobile devices. Social media use has grown 21% year-on-year, with almost half a billion (482 million) new users signing up starting in 2016. For social media managers (people involved in Social Media Marketing), these figures mean a huge potential customer source.

A study by DigitasLBI Connected Commission among 1,000 adults across 17 countries including Australia, China, UK and USA found out that 52% of consumers' online and off-line purchases were influenced by Facebook while 46% by Pinterest, 43% by Instagram and 36% by Twitter (McCarthy, 2015). In terms of agri-tourism, the study of Carleo et al. (2017) in Pennsylvania, USA showed that Internet websites are the most frequently used resources by tourist in identifying agri-tourism destinations. With this, the state universities in USA such as the University of Kentucky and Rutgers University started promoting the use of social media marketing (SMM) to agri-tourism operators in the form of Webinar series and fact sheets.

Agri-tourism includes all agricultural farm activities that are related to tourism. This notion represents all activities related not only to tourists but also to the organization of holidays (Zoto et al., 2013). The Department of Tourism (DOT) of the Philippine government, on the other hand, defines agri-tourism as a form of tourism activity conducted in a rural farm area that may include tending to farm animals, planting, harvesting and processing of farm products. It covers attractions, activities, services and amenities as well as other resources of the area

to promote an appreciation of the local culture, heritage and traditions through personal contact with people.

The potential of agri-tourism in the country was already identified as early as 1991 with the development of the Philippine Tourism Master Plan. This was formulated along with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the plan aimed to develop tourism on an environmentally sustainable basis. The DOT also released the Rules and Regulations to govern the Accreditation of Agri-Tourism/Farm Site in 2004. With this accreditation, all sites would have to adhere to the minimum standards prescribed by the DOT for all operations and maintenance activities; thereby, guaranteeing a satisfactory visit for the tourists (Spire Research, 2013).

In 2004, the Department of Tourism-Cordillera Administrative Region (DOT-CAR) planned to develop La Trinidad as a premier agro-tourism destination. The municipality of La Trinidad had identified 10 priority tourism sites for development, namely: ⁽¹⁾Strawberry Farm in Betag; ⁽²⁾Benguet State University in Balili; ⁽³⁾Bell Church in Balili; ⁽⁴⁾Cutflower Farms particularly in Bahong; ⁽⁵⁾La Trinidad Vegetable Trading Post in Pico and the Benguet Agri-Pinoy Trading Center in Betag; ⁽⁶⁾Master's Garden in Puguis; ⁽⁷⁾Lily of the Valley Organic Farm in Puguis; ⁽⁸⁾Mt. Kalugong Ecopark in Tawang; ⁽⁹⁾Benguet Museum in Poblacion; and, ⁽¹⁰⁾Jeffrey's Visaya Ornamental Landscape.

The existence of Facebook pages, blogs and TripAdvisor accounts of farms in La Trinidad, such as the page of Lily of the Valley farm, prove that there is already awareness on social media and a certain level of social media utilization by the farmers. However, the full potential and opportunities offered by social media may not yet be fully explored and utilized by the farmers. Blakrishna and Deshmukh (2017) observed that many farmers are still new to SMM so the first task was usually to help them understand and set-up the basic channels. The farmers also needed to know how to communicate what is special about their products or farms. Moreover, SMM was found to be time-consuming which interferes with farm chores.

Thus, the purpose of this study was to first



asses the level of SMM knowledge, skills, and traits of farmers. Afterwards, relevant SMM knowledge and skills were imparted to farmers using the participatory communication action research approach and community consultation. These were expected to help the farmers optimize their utilization of social media in marketing. The results of this study could be utilized by extension education workers and development communication practitioners in further addressing information and skills development needs of farmers in marketing agri-tourism online. The study also aimed to determine the arguments and affirmations in the use of Participatory Communication Research Action along the course of the study.

Methodology

Study Design: The Participatory Communication Research Action

This study is generally qualitative as it sought to understand social media marketing (SMM) in the local context, how farmers make sense of their experiences in marketing agri-tourism through social media and observe the interaction of SMM, local farmers, and agri-tourism. In determining the respondents' level of SMM skills, knowledge, and traits, a quantitative format or pre-determined response categories were used. This study used a combination of the two common qualitative study designs, which are the Participatory Action Research, and Grounded Theory. It is a Participatory Action Research since it involved individuals researching their own socio-cultural settings and experiences; and, Grounded Theory since it described a phenomenon and generated a theory of Participatory Communication Approach grounded on the data. Nigatu (2009) described qualitative research as one that aims to describe a situation and gain insight to a particular practice. It derives in-depth, explanatory data from a small sample; it is circular; and its results are illustrative explanations of individual responses.

The conduct of the study exercised participatory or democratic communication. This principle emanated from the works of Paulo Freire in the 1970-1980s and the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems. Paulo Freire's dialogical pedagogy and the ideas of access, participation, and self-management of the UNESCO

are the two major approaches to participatory communication. Freire emphasized respect for the right of all people to individually and collectively speak their word while UNESCO decided that participatory communication must involve access and participation. Access refers to the use of media for public service and participation implies a higher level of public involvement in communication systems.

Much of these theories, concepts, and principles were observed all throughout this study but as a definite guidepost, the Participatory Communication Research Action Model by CIP-UPWARD and IDRC (2005), as shown in Table 1, was followed. The table also shows the actual research activities done alongside the steps in the model. It is also reiterated that participatory research models are mostly cyclical so the fifth step will ideally connect with the first step. One specific example of participatory communication happening is the participation of beneficiaries or target audiences in the planning and production of media content. Servaes and Malikhao (2005) stated that participation is made possible in decision-making regarding the subjects treated in the messages and regarding the selection procedures.

The paradigm of the study is shown in Figure 1. The Participatory Communication Research Action (PCRA) Model illustrates a cyclical process which fits in the input-throughput-output framework. Thien and Razak (2012) defined input as the resources received from the external environment, throughput is the transformation process of resources within a system that leads to value added output of the system which is exported back into the environment. In this study's context, the inputs are the pre-existing situation of the respondents and the study areas, the throughput is the Participatory Communication Approach and the outputs are the issues that affect agri-tourism, additional Social Media Marketing (SMM), the agri-tourism knowledge, skills and traits acquired by the respondents, the SMM plans of the respondents and the more coherent PCRA model.

The process addressed the respondents' needs and led them to the outputs, which are the acquisition of additional knowledge, skills, and traits in SMM and the development of a SMM plan for their farms. Another output derived from



Table 1	
<i>Steps in the Participatory Communication Research Action Model alongside the Actual Research Activities</i>	
Steps in the Participatory Communication Research Action Model	Research Activities
1. Developing a research relationship the community	-Communication of research purposes with the Local Government Unit Officials -Identifying the respondents -Conduct of community consultations
2. Problem identification or goal setting	-Administering a test to determine the level of SMM skills and knowledge of the respondents -Identifying a capacity building activity topic from the community consultations
3. Planning	-Coordinating with community gatekeepers
4. Intervention (implementation integrating monitoring and evaluation)	-Conduct of Capacity Building Activities
5. Assessment and utilization of results	-Conduct of workshop among respondents to come up with a social media marketing plan

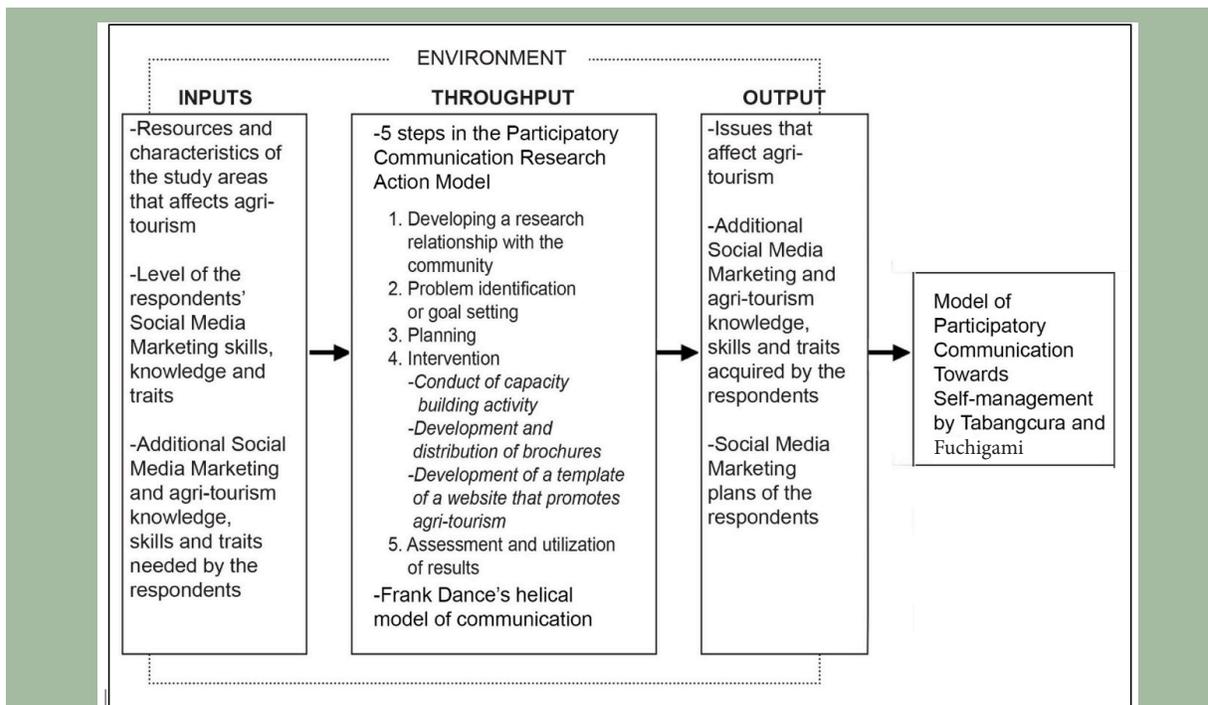


Figure 1. Paradigm of the study

the process is a Participatory Communication Approach diagram where the experiences in this study are integrated.

Data Gathering Procedures and Analysis

Two data collection instruments were used in the study. The first is the Assessment Test used to determine the level of the respondents' SMM



skills, knowledge and traits, and the second is interview used for the community consultations. The ten questions in the Assessment Test were based on the qualities of a successful social media manager according to McHugh (2011). These qualities are: the will to keep on learning; friendly, patient and responsive; willing to mesh personal and professional life online; appreciates Social Media Marketing potentials; aware of what content is attractive or helpful to the brand or product being advertised online; aware of content importance and impact; enjoys social media participation; and prompt in answering queries. The Assessment Test had pre-determined response options following the format used in quantitative research. Letter A in all the ten questions are the highly ideal answers, letter B are the moderately ideal answers and letter C are the less ideal answers. The Assessment Test was also shown to two of the key informants who confirmed that the test can measure the level of the respondents' SMM skills, knowledge, and traits.

After the Assessment Test, face-to-face community consultations were conducted. The plans of the respondents in social media marketing of agri-tourism were gathered through a template, which was filled out during a workshop. Personal interviews were conducted among the key informants and audio recorded with their consent. The interview for community consultation consisted of nine ideal, hypothetical and interpretative questions that focused on gathering the respondents' experiences, opinions and inputs.

The pre-determined response options in the Assessment Test were assigned a numerical value and a descriptive value. The highly ideal answer (Letter A) was assigned a numerical value of 5, the moderately ideal answer (Letter B) was assigned a numerical value of 3 and the less ideal answer (Letter C) was assigned a numerical value of 1. The mean of the respondents' answers for each of the ten questions were first calculated to come up with the mean of means. A mean of 1 to 1.75 has a descriptive value of "poor", a mean of 2.76 to 4.75 has a descriptive value of "moderate" and a mean of 4.76 to 5.75 has a descriptive value of "high". Data from the community consultations, direct observations, document reviews and interactive interviews were transcribed, grouped, categorized and then analyzed using the deductive approach.

Development of a more Coherent PCRA Model

This study was structured and planned based on the Participatory Research Action Model by International Potato Center-Users' Perspectives with Agricultural Research and Development (CIP-UPWARD) and International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in 2005. In using the model, the study assessed its advantages and disadvantages in the local and the topic context. Combining the lessons learned from PCRA Model and the strength of Dance's Helix Model of communication, a more coherent and localized model was generated in this study.

Results and Discussion

The Participants and Study Sites

The study had 26 participants, 14 of them were respondents, seven were key informants and five of them were walk-in participants to the capacity building activity (Table 2). The seven key informants are community stakeholders and local experts who approved the data gathering materials. They were also consulted to supplement and enrich the data gathered from the respondents. Four of the key informants are experienced online marketers while five of them are government officials involved with the promotion of agri-tourism in La Trinidad. The 14 purposively selected respondents are all farmers who upload farm-related content on their personal Facebook pages or on a separate Facebook page for their farm as shown in Table 2. Twelve of the respondents use their personal social media accounts particularly Facebook to promote their farms or their barangays in general while two respondents have a Facebook page for their farm. All the respondents access the Internet through their smartphones using data connection and three of them access the Internet both through smartphones and desktop computers on LAN connection. Internet access turned out to be a major factor influencing the respondents' appreciation of the use of social media marketing. All the respondents belong to the Generation X and Millennial generation, both are known to be active social media users.



Table 2

Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

CHARACTERISTIC	FREQUENCY
Sex	
Male	8
Female	6
Age	
8-27 (Millennial)	7
28-43 (Generation X)	6
Location	
Strawberry Farm	10
Barangay Bahong	1
Barangay Bineng	2
Farmers Organization	
BSU-ATBI-IC	8
Sariling Sikap Farmer Cooperators	2
Bahong Farmers Tourism Advocates	1
None	3
Nature of Internet Access	
Mobile data (smart phones)	14
LAN-Land Area Connection (desktop computer, laptop)	3

The study areas are Barangay Bahong, Barangay Bineng and Strawberry Farm in La Trinidad, Benguet. Strawberry Farm and the Bahong Rose Gardens are leading and established tourist attractions in La Trinidad while Barangay Bineng hosts two developing and three potential tourist attractions (La Trinidad Tourism Development Plan 2015-2019).

Barangay Bahong is located on the southwestern part of La Trinidad. It shares its boundaries with other four barangays of the municipality. Strawberry Farm occupies 472, 933 m² of the La Trinidad Valley owned by the Benguet State University. Meanwhile, Barangay Bineng is located on the southwestern part of La Trinidad with a land area of 825.4258 hectares and is 8 kilometers from Baguio City. The barangay is endowed with waterfalls and scenic springs (Municipality of La Trinidad, 2017).

Agri-Tourism Resources and Issues in La Trinidad, Benguet

Table 3 summarizes the resources, characteristics, and issues in the study areas that affect agri-tourism. The characteristics and resources of the study areas make them unique but the issues are the same with the rest of the Philippines. For instance, the lack of awareness and understanding of agri-tourism among farmers has already been projected by Javier in 2011 as one of the issues that will challenge the LGUs institutional capacity to provide for tourism development.

Awareness, Social Media Skills and Traits of the Respondents

Table 4 shows the summary of the respondents' answers to the assessment test that determine their SMM skills, knowledge and traits. The respondents' answers have an overall mean of 3.23 indicating a moderate level of SMM skills, knowledge, and traits.

Table 3

Summary of Resources, Characteristics and Issues that Affect Agri-Tourism in the La Trinidad, Benguet, Philippines

Resources	Characteristics	Issues
- Farmer organizations	- Scenic views and popular landmarks	- Lack of awareness and understanding of agri-tourism activities among farmers
- Established and known agri-tourism products, activities and attractions	- Accessibility	- Lack of orientation for tourists
- Willingness of farmers to improve and diversify their products	- Proximity to Baguio City	- Slow Internet connection to promote agri-tourism
- BSU landholdings and ATBI-IC		
- LGU support		
- Local experts		



Table 4

Summary of the Respondents' Answers to the Assessment Test

Skills, knowledge and traits being measured by the assessment test questions	Mean	
	Numerical Value	Descriptive Value
Willing to keep on learning	5	High (4.76-5.75)
Appreciates SMM potentials	4.85	High (4.76-5.75)
Passion and enjoyment in social media participation	4.57	Moderate (2.76-4.75)
Aware of content importance and impact	3.42	Moderate (2.76-4.75)
Friendly, patient and responsive	3	Moderate (2.76-4.75)
Willing to mesh personal and professional life online	2.85	Moderate (2.76-4.75)
Regularly checks social media	2.57	Poor (1-1.75)
Prompt in answering queries	2.28	Poor (1-1.75)
Aware of what content is attractive or helpful to the brand or product being advertised online	2.14	Poor (1-1.75)
Multiple social media accounts to increase online visibility	1.14	Poor (1-1.75)
MEAN	3.23	MODERATE

It was observed that the respondents gave ideal answers to questions that measure traits and knowledge on willingness to learn while they gave moderately ideal to least ideal answers to questions that measure skills and knowledge on SMM such as the overall management of a Facebook account used for marketing. According to Jackson (2017), personality traits can make it easier for a person to pick up certain skills than others. It is easier to address gaps in knowledge and skills than to address gaps in personality traits or character. Gaps in knowledge and skills can simply be addressed through trainings, and exposure. However, traits or character cannot be addressed in the same way as knowledge and skills, it will also take a longer period of time for a trait or a character to change. Thus, the respondents' willingness to keep on learning and their appreciation of social media potentials as a marketing tool increased their potentials as good social media managers.

The PCRA Model as Applied in the Study

The information needs of the respondents surfaced during the first three stages of the research patterned after the PCRA Model. After determining the respondent's needs, a capacity building activity titled, "Marketing Agri-Tourism

Through Social Media", was conducted by the researcher. The activity was designed to address the information needs of the respondents that surfaced during the community consultations. It was attended by 10 participants. The resource speakers were Cornelio Benigno of CeeJee Saver's Garden and Dan Saclangan of Living Gifts Nursery who were selected because of their background in SMM and their proximity to the respondents. The respondents and participants of the activity built up a new set of information needs, which were addressed thru the development of three brochures. This communication strategy proved to be effective in reaching out to as much respondents or participants as possible. The development and distribution of brochures also stored and preserved valuable information from the resource speakers. The process of how the respondents determine the additional knowledge, skills and traits relevant to them in order to improve their SMM skills, knowledge, and traits are shown in Figure 2.

In order to encourage the respondents and participants to process, give meaning, and put into action the things they learned from the activity, a SMM plan writing workshop was facilitated right after the capacity building activity. An SMM plan template was developed for this purpose.



The participants came up with six plans and were analyzed. A summary of the observations on their plans is presented in Table 5.

The SMM plans submitted contained much of the concepts shared by the resource speakers. It was also observed that there was an initial

confusion among the participants on the difference between a farm business plan and an SMM plan especially that the template they are using is the same with what they use in their farm business plans. It could be deduced then that the respondents and participants were able to come up with basic SMM plans due to their

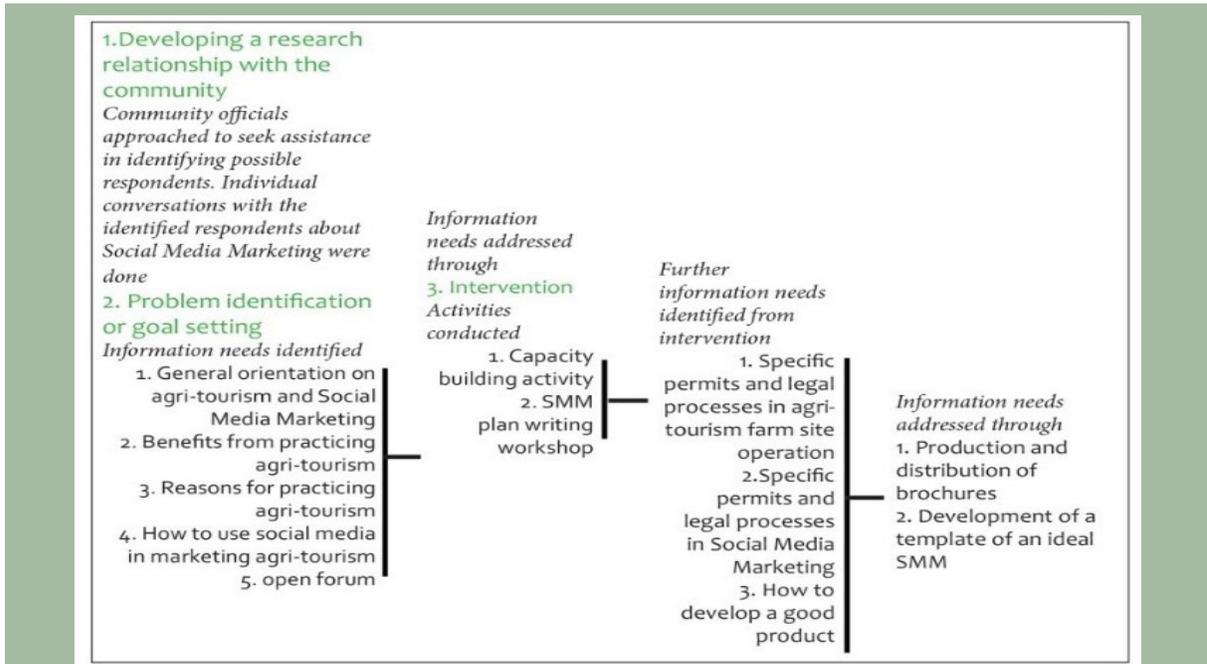


Figure 2. Process of indicating the additional relevant SMM Knowledge, Skills and Traits by the respondents

Table 5

Observations on the Respondents' SMM Plans

SMM PLAN PARTS	OBSERVATIONS
Current status of farm in terms of Social Media Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - none of the respondents and participants had a social media account other than Facebook - aside from the SMM status of their farms, they mentioned general status of farm such as the crops currently planted and location of the farm
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prioritize product development and marketing more than agri-tourism - measurable but lack clear focus - their communities are involved
Strategies to achieve the goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - practical - doable
Who are in charge of what	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - not connected to the strategies - not all of the respondents and participants filled out this part, those who did did not included finding a partner as one of their goals - roles assigned to family members



past experiences and the lectures they had during the capacity building activity. The slight confusion among the respondents at the start of the workshop, between their SMM plan and farm plan is acceptable since both plans are part of each other. However, the respondents and participants have not considered possible neighborhood impacts and competing interests within the agricultural community in their plans. The participants and respondents were encouraged to reflect on their plans and revise them if necessary. One of the respondents started implementing her agri-tourism SMM plan by creating a Facebook page for her family's farm. A screenshot of this page is shown in Figure 3.

The Indiana State Department of Agriculture (2017) emphasized that planning for agri-tourism requires attention to possible neighborhood impacts and competing interests within the agricultural community. Residents often have concerns about the potential noise, traffic, and trespassers because these impacts have the potential to change the overall character of the community. When farmers take proactive actions to maintain good relationships with neighboring land-owners, local decision-makers, and the community, many of these concerns can be resolved informally.

Observation on the PCRA Model

The use of the PCRA model in this study proved to be practical, flexible and it helped

assuage research fatigue among the respondents. On the other hand, one observed disadvantage of using PCRA is its time sensitivity or it cannot be constrained inside a timeline. PCRA is not ideal for short-term studies because the timeline has to be a compromise between the participants and the researchers.

Another is that the circular and one-cycle illustration of the PCRA model by CIP-UPWARD and IDRC (2005) that gives the impression that the use of PCRA is as simple as implementing five steps and repeating some of those steps if necessary. The illustration also failed to present how PCRA is dynamic, that there is no limit to how many times the cycle could be repeated and that it could lead to evolution.

Table 6 summarizes the challenges, resolutions to the challenges, and lessons learned from the use of PCRA in the study. It could be observed, however, that despite the challenges on each step in the PCRA model, the use of it still produced results.

Developing a More Coherent PCRA Model

Due to the abovementioned limitations of the PCRA Model, the study look for another model that can augment those limitations. The study considered the Dance's Helix Model proposed by Frank Dance in 1967. Dance used the form of a helix to describe the communication process. This theory is based on a simple helix which gets

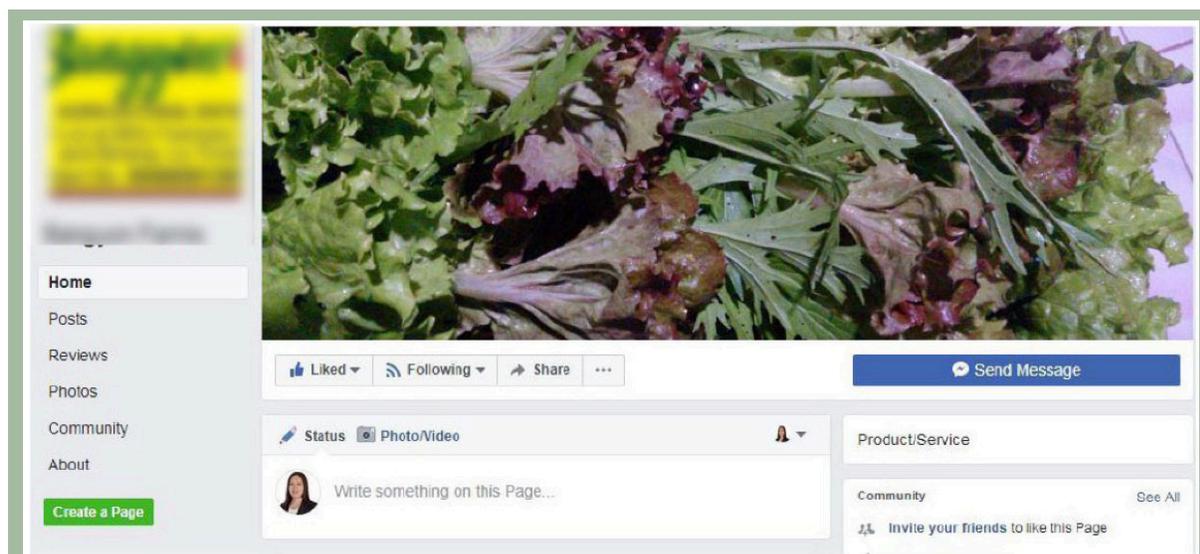


Figure 3. A screenshot of one of the respondents' newly created Facebook



Table 6

Challenges, Resolutions to Challenges and Lessons Learned from the Use of PCRA in the Study

Steps in the PCRA Model	Challenges	Resolution to Challenges	Lessons Learned
1. Developing a research relationship with the community	- possible respondents recommended by the barangay officials were too occupied with farm tasks	- inclusion of one more barangay with similar environment as third study area to have more respondents	- the commitment of community leaders is not always the same with community members
2. Problem identification or goal setting	- research fatigue among farmers approached in the field	- farmers were informed about the benefits of participating in the research	- research fatigue is assuaged if the participants know what they could gain from the research
3. Planning	- the respondents could not be gathered in one venue	- text messaging was done - a basic planning template was developed to guide the respondents	- aside from its practical use, noting down respondents' contact details is a gesture of sincerity
4. Intervention	- only half of the respondents attended	- brochures were developed and distributed to the respondents who were not able to come - a template of an ideal agri-tourism promoting website was made accessible to the respondents	- PCRA is flexible because if the planned intervention methods are not working, other methods can be used
5. Assessment and utilization of results	- lack of time to assess long-term impact of the intervention methods	- maintenance of correspondence with respondents	- PCRA researches is more successful if long-term

bigger and bigger as it moves or grows. The main characteristic of the helical model of communication is that it is evolutionary. The whole process takes some time to reach. Like the helix, the communication process starts very slowly in small circles. Communicators share information only with small portion of themselves to their relationships. The helical model of communication was criticized because it has few variables, it is abstract and not testable, it is not represented in a systematic and orderly way and its variables

cannot be differentiated. It was also argued that continuity may not always be true for communication and the purpose of communication is not always growth (Bajracharya, 2018).

Addressing these criticisms on the helical model by filling them in with the concepts of PCRA integrated with the experiences of this study gives the idea to the researcher to craft a more coherent model. This model, henceforth named as the Model of Participatory



Communication towards Self-management, is illustrated in Figure 5.

This model is a combination of the Helical model of communication and the Participatory Research Action Model integrated with the experiences of this study. The stages of the model are the following:

1. Starting point. Developing a research relationship with the target community is the starting point. The way by which a research relationship with the local community is established and nurtured determines the degree to which community members will or will not participate in the research or development initiatives (CIP-UPWARD & IDRC, 2005). It was observed in this study that in this stage, full disclosure of the research background to the community establishes trust and fosters friendship between the researchers and the participants.

2. Initial Participatory Communication Research Action cycle. This is the first and smallest circle at the bottom of the helix.

This cycle consists of four steps which are: (1) identification of problems, solutions and implementation of initiatives; (2) research planning; (3) intervention; and (4) assessment and utilization of results. This may interest only a few participants in the community but if they will benefit well from the research, then this will be the best come-on for more participants.

3. Succeeding Participatory Communication Research Action cycles. Implementing the PCRA cycle once is already relevant and beneficial so how much more if the cycle is repeated infinitely. Implementing the cycle more than once, with each cycle building up from the previous in order to reach a bigger goal, will maximize the potentials of PCRA. It should not matter how many succeeding cycles will be implemented as long as all of it is working towards a bigger goal.

The goal of the Helical model of PCRA is the self-management of the beneficiaries or participants. According to UNESCO (1977), self-management is the most advanced form of participation. In this case, the public exercises the power of decision making within communication

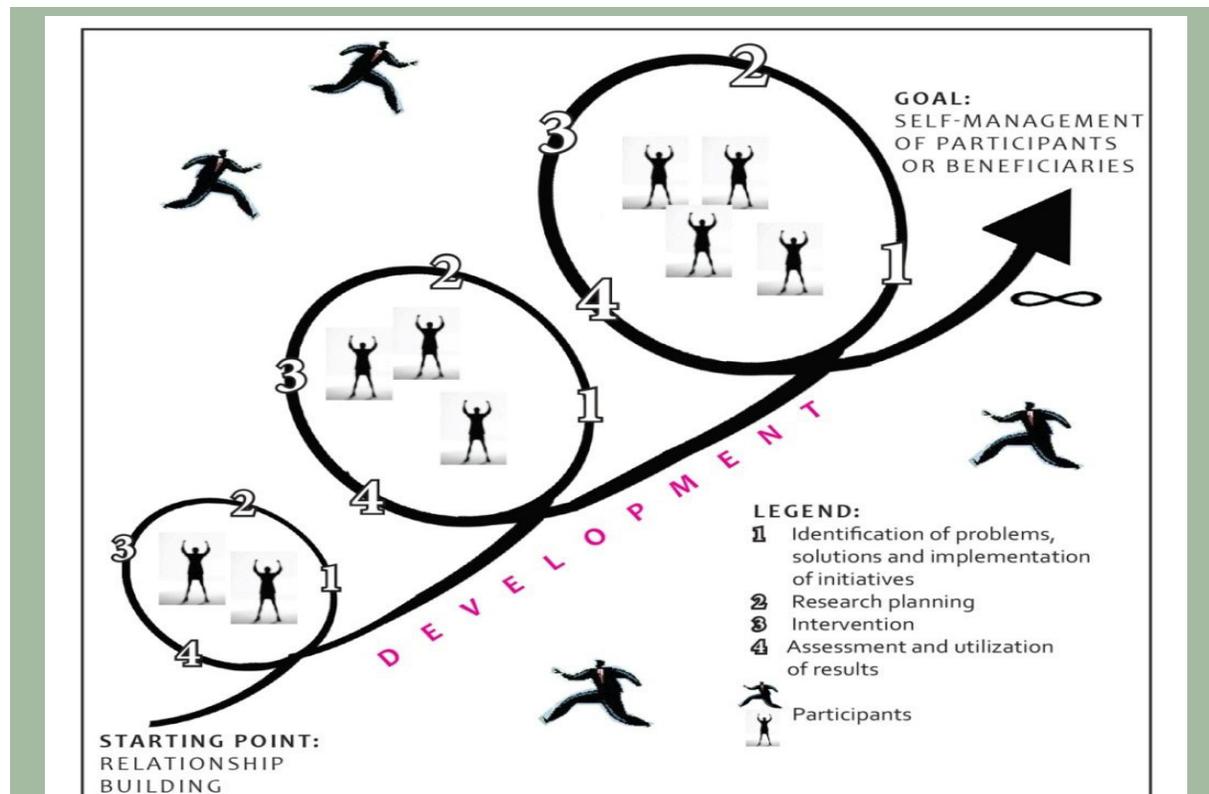


Figure 4. Model of Participatory Communication Towards Self-Management



enterprises and is also fully involved in the formulation of communication policies and plans. The model can be described as evolutionary and dynamic like its parent, the helical model of communication, simply because it starts from something small and builds up as it goes on. The model is also inclusive and long-term in order to reach its full potentials. Therefore, the PCRA model being frequently illustrated in a dead-lock circular cycle of steps does not do justice to the reality that PCRA is flexible, practical, dynamic, and inclusive. A helical illustration, on the other hand, fits these advantageous characteristics of PCRA.

Conclusions

The Strawberry Farm, Barangay Bineng and Barangay Bahong have enough resources and natural characteristics to support agri-tourism. However, there are also issues that come with these agri-tourism supportive characteristics and resources. The respondents have a moderate level of SMM skills, knowledge, and traits in promoting their farms as agri-tourism sites and have the potential of becoming good social media managers if their information needs are continually addressed. The conduct of a capacity building activity and a workshop, the development of an ideal template of a website that promotes agri-tourism, and the distribution of brochures successfully addressed the respondents' information needs in order to acquire additional relevant SMM knowledge, skills, and traits. The respondents and participants were able to come up with basic and functional SMM plans due to their past experiences and the lectures they had during the capacity building activity. However, the respondents and participants have not considered possible neighborhood impacts and competing interests within the agricultural community in their plans.

The use of PCRA in this study proves that it is flexible, practical, dynamic, inclusive and assuages research fatigue among research saturated areas. However, it is time-sensitive and the frequently circulated illustrations of the PCRA model does not give justice to its advantages. Thus, the Model of Participatory Communication Towards Self-management was crafted.

Recommendations

Further support from the government is needed to address the problems and issues that come along with the agri-tourism supportive characteristics and resources in the study areas. Since the respondents already have a moderate level of SMM knowledge, skills, and traits, future studies could look into further assisting the respondents to acquire a high level of SMM knowledge, skills, and traits. Government or non-government extension efforts may look into further addressing the needed additional SMM knowledge, skills and traits of the respondents as well as possible capacity building activities on product development. Future studies could look into the progress of the SMM plans developed by the respondents and include possible neighborhood impacts and competing interests within the agricultural community as factors for the respondents to consider.

Future studies could test the Model of Participatory Communication Towards Self-management to further improve it. Since the model also illustrates a phenomenon, future studies could document cases where this phenomenon happened already.

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