



Research Article

Community based tourism management model in the Hoa DA rice paper craft village Vietnam

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Submitted: 15 October 2023

Revised: 23 December 2023

Accepted: 30 December 2023

ABSTRACT

In 2022, a significant milestone was reached for the rice paper craft villages of Phu Yen, as they were officially recognized as a national intangible cultural heritage. This prestigious designation, including the renowned Hoa Da village, solidified the unique craft's place in Vietnamese history and culture. Recognizing the craft's potential values, the Vietnamese government has shown strong interest in promoting the development of new rural areas, with community tourism playing a key role. Hoa Da, with its rich artisanal heritage and picturesque landscapes, has been earmarked as a prime destination for this initiative. While local enthusiasm and support for community tourism are high, one crucial challenge remains: establishing a suitable organizational management model for the project's practical implementation. To address this, a qualitative research study was conducted, involving in-depth interviews with 10 individuals from three key groups: local leaders, production households directly involved in the craft, and experts in tourism and cultural preservation. The research findings have yielded a promising model for managing community tourism in Hoa Da. This model emphasizes collaboration among local government, residents, and businesses, with a focus on achieving a sustainable balance between economic, cultural, and environmental aspects. This collaborative approach aims to ensure that the community tourism project benefits not only tourists and businesses but also preserves the village's cultural heritage and increases income for local residents, leading to a mutually thriving ecosystem. This study expects that Hoa Da can not only fulfill its potential as a community tourism destination but also serve as a valuable case study for sustainable cultural preservation and development in rural Vietnam.

Keywords: *Tourism Based - Community; Management Model; Rice Paper Craft Village; Vietnam*

1. INTRODUCTION

Traditional craft villages in Vietnam, both in general and specifically in Phu Yen province, hold a crucial position in sustaining a prosperous life, fostering socio-economic development, and contributing to the unique cultural identity of Vietnam. However, many craft villages are currently facing challenges, experiencing contraction, and even the risk of extinction by industrialization of rural areas. This leads to cultural shifts in rural areas, affecting the material and spiritual aspects of people's lives. It not only creates a generational gap but also elicits regret and concern for those interested in preserving Vietnamese culture and values. One of effective solutions applying popularly in several countries was community based tourism. In order to give visitors a satisfying experience through novel and engaging encounters, the suggested community-based tourism model integrates into management a procedural framework that is founded on endogenous and



sustainable resource enhancement (Vo Que, 2016). Traditional craft based tourism has emerged as a type of community tourism by potential values in both of culture and economic involvement. The suggested community tourism model has an assessment and continuous improvement method that enables system evaluation and improvement in accordance with the actual circumstances surrounding the system's development. It is based on the experiences offered by other models, but it has been modified to actual circumstances using available local resources to produce one-of-a-kind and unforgettable experiences.

Phu Yen province, with its fertile plains that provide abundant rice to support the population, has become a convergence point for various craft villages producing rice-based products, including rice paper. Rice paper serves as a substitute for rice, convenient for transportation, and easy to use and store. The process involves soaking and grinding rice into flour, spreading it into thin sheets, and sun-drying. The sheets are then dried in the shade to retain the gentle scent of sunlight, preserving the aroma of rice. The rice-papers are carefully stacked, preventing breakage, and transported to prevent damage. Each bakery has a unique flour mixing formula, creating distinct flavors for each item.

Once steamed to perfection, the rice paper can be eaten directly. Dipped rice paper can be enjoyed with fresh vegetables (herbs) together boiled meat; or grilled; rolled into small portions and dipped into various sauces such as fish sauce, soy sauce, fermented fish sauce, or roasted sesame sauce—all of which are delicious. Rice paper can also be toasted, crisped, and broken into pieces, serving as a delightful appetizer. Almost every household in Phu Yen has a stock of rice paper as conserving food at home. A typical stock usually consists of 100 pieces, ensuring immediate availability for a quick and satisfying meal when hunger strikes. Rice paper is also used to make "chả ram" in the southern region and "nem rán" in the northern region. In these dishes, the rice paper is cut into small pieces, rolled with spring onions, minced shrimp or meat, then deep-fried. When served hot, it is delicious, crispy, and aromatic. The rice flour is prepared and used the same day to avoid sourness, ensuring the rice paper remains fresh.

In 2022, the rice paper craft village of Phu Yen was officially recognized as a National Intangible Cultural Heritage. The distribution of rice paper craft villages in the province is primarily concentrated in the plains, with notable locations such as Đông Bình village (Hòa An commune, Phú Hòa district), Hoa Da village (An Mỹ commune, Tuy An district), Mỹ Lệ Tây and Mỹ Lệ Đông neighborhoods (Phú Thứ town, Tây Hòa district), Bình Thạnh village (Xuân Bình commune, Sông Cầu town), and Long Bình neighborhood (La Hai town, Đồng Xuân district). (Department of Culture, Sports, and Tourism of Phu Yen Province, 2021).

Among these places, the most prominent is the Hoa Da rice paper craft village (An Mỹ commune, Tuy An district), known by many Phu Yen residents for its age of over a hundred years. According to our survey, many people consider Hoa Da rice paper to be superior to that of other regions due to the rice flour preparation method, high rice flour ratio, and the chewy texture when dipped in water, accompanied by the aromatic scent of rice paddies. When dipped in water and left for 5 to 10 seconds, the rice paper becomes soft and can be rolled with various ingredients such as boiled meat, grilled fish, fried eggs, and eaten with different dipping sauces as mentioned above. And the craft of making rice paper has

become the main livelihood career for the people in Hoa Da and is a source of essential food for a large market throughout the country.

However, based on our survey, the craft village faces challenges related to labor and the economy. The diversity of career choices today and the relatively low income deter the younger generation from continuing the profession. Most rice paper makers are women and individuals of older age. The village's products are limited to local market (Phan & Tran, 2023).

While strategies and policies for rural development and craft village development have been issued, the National target program for new rural development for the 2021-2025 period was approved by the National Assembly on July 28, 2021, through Resolution No. 25/2021/QH15. One of the crucial objectives outlined is the development of the economy and improvement of people's livelihoods. In August 2022, the Vietnamese government issued Decision No. 922/QD-TTg approving the rural tourism development program within the framework of the new rural development for the 2021-2025 period.

In Phu Yen, on November 29, 2021, the People's Committee of Phu Yen province issued Decision No. 1732/QD-UBND approving the "Project to restore and develop some traditional craft villages and introduce new industries associated with tourism in Phu Yen province, for the period 2021 - 2030." On November 11, 2022, the People's Committee of Phu Yen province further issued Plan No. 200/KH-UBND to implement Decision No. 922/QD-TTg for the 2022-2025 period in the province. As part of this plan, the Hoa Da rice paper craft village was identified as a proposed tourism destination. However, currently, there is no organizational management model and no community tourism project has been implemented. Tourism in the craft village is currently carried out by individual efforts, with the Agricultural Extension Association introducing visitors to some representative households. The human resources and capacity to support management and tourism development in the commune are limited and scattered. There is a lack of investment, and services are still small-scale and self-organized (Nguyen & Phan, 2022).

Hoa Da community has not invested in establishing a tourist area, and no households have registered to adopt this model by much challenges. There is neither funding nor a guiding model available." (Official from the Agricultural Extension Association of An Mỹ Commune).

The community tourism model needs to do with upholding the rights to good social interactions, the means of subsistence, and freedom of choice and action. In addition, it is advantageous from the standpoint of the social and psychological sciences, which emphasize the value of social interaction and the achievement of an individual's subjective well-being.

Therefore, this study proposes a model that aligns with the current situation to assess the feasibility of implementation in future community tourism project.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. THEORETICAL COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM MODEL.

The significance of theoretical models is one kind of scientific finding. The general tourism model were illustrated by diagrams, classifying them as follows: (1) special-approach

models, (2) models that expressed their essential relationship parts, (3) models using a systemic approach, and (4) structural models.

According to the UNWTO, a rural tourism model or community based tourism model is any kind of activity where the visitor's experience is connected to a wide range of items relating to outdoor recreation, farming, traditional lifestyles, fishing, and sightseeing. A table outlining the historical development of the concept of community-based tourism from 1989 to 2011, including of cultural, social, environmental, and economic dimensions of operation, management, corporate organization, participation, associativity, and sustainability are a few examples of non-coinciding points of view. (World Tourism Organization, 2019).

Cabanilla (2018) and Cabanilla and Garrido(2018), suggests that the academic and scientific community need to reconceptualize tourism practices due to their recent development. As a result, there is a lack of consensus in the conceptual clarification that focuses on the fundamental and repeatable features that transcend the conceptual-methodological system of tourism because of its multidisciplinary nature.

According to Navas-Ríos (2019), community-based tourism has always been seen as a way to provide small, nonurban communities with sustainable, competitively-quality services that can serve as a source of income in addition to being a way to combat poverty through local economic benefits that subtly support just and equitable economic development.

In addition to designing, developing, implementing, and overseeing the tourism product to be offered, the local community also actively participates in it, respecting and conserving natural resources and socio-cultural wealth, meeting the needs of visiting tourists through high-quality experiences they have lived and shared with the community, and enabling them to become aware of and learn about local and community wisdom (Navas-Ríos, 2019; Khan et al., 2020). The local community does all of this by utilizing its natural and cultural resources as well as its social capital.

To assist countries in facilitating more favorable community tourism development, the United Nations Environment Programme UNEP (2004), and the United Nations World Tourism Organization UNWTO (2015) have, outlined three fundamental goals for ensuring sustainable tourism development: 1) Economic, 2) Cultural-Social, and 3) Sustainability of Resources and the Environment. Balancing these three factors is crucial to ensure long-term sustainable objectives. However, the term "sustainable" is often misused in various contexts, compromising its authenticity and full understanding. Therefore, another concept, "responsible tourism," is increasingly employed to associate responsibility with specific behaviors of stakeholders in the tourism chain, providing a clearer definition of responsibility in tourism activities overall. Responsible tourism adheres to principles of economic and social fairness, full environmental respect, and recognition of the central role of the local community and its rights in responsible and sustainable tourism development. Responsible tourism serves as a driving force for positive interaction among the tourism industry, local communities, and tourists (McKercher, 1993; Gossling et al., 2006; Naranjo Llupart, 2022).

When considering which economic tourism development model aligns with increasing demands and is linked to sustainable development, Goodwin and Santilli (2009),

conducted a study on the "Success of Community-Based Tourism Linked to Sustainable Development." The authors surveyed 23 project managers and experts in community-based tourism considered successful. The authors proposed that community-based tourism projects should focus on employment and poverty reduction, local management, local economic linkages, and community benefits. Joint venture models are an effective way to connect, and private sector investments in the area will benefit the community. Community tourism requires initial capital and a stable customer base; five years are often insufficient for a sustainable development project and may require longer-term support.

Community-based tourism models linked to rural development often rely on places with cultural or traditional craft characteristics to provide tourists with unique experiences while creating employment and increasing income for local residents. This approach is not unfamiliar to many countries (Naranjo Lluport, 2022). Examining research in the Asian region, recent results vividly reflect this model as follows. Arahi (1998), conducted a study on Rural Tourism in Japan, a strategy to change the quality of community life. It encouraged farmers to develop farms, innovate in the arts, and enhance the value of Japanese farmers to attract tourism and improve the quality of agricultural products. A specific example is the farmers in Inakadate village, Aomori Prefecture, who planted varieties of rice with beautiful purple and gold hues, creating picturesque paintings in the fields. This action aimed to honor the local heritage of rice cultivation and attracted around 204,000 visitors annually, including 10% from abroad.

Sum up, the review has contributed of vital importance because it allows understanding the concept in its dimensions and indicators linked to its evolution and configuration and integrates its essential repeatable features, which facilitates the scientific conceptual development of community-based tourism models.

2.2. EXPERIENCES OF COMMUNITY BASED-TOURISM IN PHU YEN PROVINCE, VIETNAM

In Phu Yen, the Community Tourism Development Project in Ngọc Lãng Vegetable Village, Tuy Hòa City, Phu Yen Province, falls within the framework of EU-ESRT projects approved by the People's Committee of Phu Yen province on June 5, 2015. However, after 8 years of implementation, the community tourism model in Ngọc Lãng Village has not been operational as initially planned. Through a general overview, the Ngọc Lãng community tourism model faces unresolved issues such as limited local potential, insufficient community support funding for tourism, challenging living conditions for residents, and a lack of financial autonomy to develop the community tourism model. The main problem is that the local community has not played an active role in tourism activities, relying entirely on local authorities and expecting financial support from them. Additionally, in Phu Yen, there is a community-based tourism model associated with the coral reef ecosystem of Hòn Yến under the United Nations Population Fund's community capacity development program (UNDP), approved by the People's Committee of Phu Yen province from August 2020 to September 2022. The provincial People's Committee, in collaboration with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), developed and implemented this community tourism model. The model includes a Steering Committee, an Executive Committee, and 4 cooperatives: Coral Reef Community Conservation Cooperative, Fishing and Traditional Processing Cooperative, Service Cooperative, and Thuận Thiên Agriculture Cooperative.

Currently, there are 20 members in each cooperative, 20 community propagandists, and officials within the political system of An Hòa commune, Tuy An district, serving as the core operators of this model. After 2 years of implementation, the model has started operating, contributing to enhancing the community's awareness and capacity in managing, exploiting marine resources, and protecting the coral reef ecosystem. The local community has been entrusted with the authority to manage and protect the environment and the coral reef ecosystem of "Hòn Yến". However, the community-based tourism model associated with the coral reef ecosystem of Hòn Yến has not attracted a large number of tourists. This is mainly due to the limited number of tourists visiting Phu Yen compared to the national and regional averages. Additionally, community tourism products have not been particularly appealing, and promotion and advertising efforts have been weak. There is also a lack of collaboration with many tourism businesses and travel companies to bring visitors to the area.

To enhance the operation of the community-based tourism model associated with the coral reef ecosystem of Hòn Yến, the local community in this area needs to optimize and effectively utilize support funding to develop livelihoods, promote sustainable community tourism, and protect the coral reef ecosystem of Hòn Yến. Additionally, it is crucial to maximize the role of the local community in organizing, managing, and operating the model. Furthermore, diversifying tourism products and enhancing the value of indigenous culture in organizing tourism activities according to tourists' needs are extremely important, contributing to the development of sustainable community tourism."

In sum up, community based tourism development in Phu Yen province has only focused on a few natural tourist attractions. There is no community tourism based on the cultural heritage value of craft villages. When community based tourism has been identified as a strategic policy to preserve heritage and sustainably develop the economy and resources, then the research and diversification of community tourism models in Phu Yen is very necessary to provide complete scientific and valuable information as a basis for further research as well as practical application.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed the qualitative approach. We conducted interviews 10 participants from three groups, consist of the leaders of the Farmers' Union, local authority leaders, and households reputed in making rice paper.

For local leaders, the interview topics revolved around the plans, development strategies for the craft village, advantages and challenges, as well as the solutions implemented, underway, and planned. Households participating in the interviews were introduced by the Farmers' Union of An My Commune, based on criteria such as having more than 20 years of experience and credibility in the craft village, producing and supplying a significant amount of rice paper to the market within and outside the province, and engaging in both new and traditional rice paper production methods.

The deeply interview implemented around one hour follow the self-developed interview protocol, structure in SWOT component and expectations of elements relations in the organizational management model. The contents were recorded and transcript for data analysis based coding technique and theme development.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1. FOUNDATION FOR BUILDING THE MODEL

Community tourism can develop under three models: a cooperative model between the community or community members and business partners; a model involving a part of the community or households; a model where the entire community actively participates in tourism. The level of community participation in a community tourism project can vary from place to place.

Regardless of the model, each community tourism destination must establish a management structure such as a management board, cooperative, or cooperative union. This board plays a coordinating role in local tourism activities. The relationship between the Community Tourism Management Board and the households involved in tourism and tourism businesses is a cooperative business relationship. The management board designs, builds, and manages tourism products.

The management team can be entirely selected from the community or may include external members such as non-governmental organizations or tourism companies. The most important factor is that the manager must be enthusiastic about community tourism development, have credibility within the community, and possess management skills. Within the management board, the cooperative or cooperative union will establish functional groups based on the services that the tourism destination provides to tourists. Diversifying the types of community tourism services to offer to tourists includes dining services, accommodation, souvenir shops, and local cultural performances.

The community based tourism model for the Hoa Da rice paper craft village needs to be the best way for people to engage in tourism while preserving cultural identity, using on-site services, developing culture, respecting local culture, and promoting the development of traditional professions while preserving cultural identity.

The community has not invested in creating a tourism area, and no households have registered for this model. There is no budget or guidance for the model. (Official from the Farmers' Union in An Mỹ Commune

Currently, only one household, Hai Thơm, has achieved a 3-star OCOP rating, while other households find it challenging to meet the criteria for OCOP or community tourism. According to our survey, implementing a new cooperative model with Hai Thơm's household as the nucleus and at least six other member households is not feasible because craft village households are reluctant to join a new cooperative due to concerns about economic disputes.

I don't want to follow the cooperative model because we tried it before, and everyone does their own thing, making it difficult to reach a consensus. If they are not as enthusiastic as I am, it will also affect me." (P1,3,7 - Residents)

Empowering local residents to manage the project will hinder operations as they lack management, operational, and tourism experience.

"Generally, we're good at making rice paper. But if they tell us to do tourism, we don't know how." (P4)

If management authority is given to a business, the advantage is that the business can promote the project and connect with tourism companies. However, the business will prioritize its profit, reducing the role and benefits that the community can receive.

"Some businesses also intended to invest. But the entrance to the craft village is narrow, and it's difficult to allocate land for tourism in the commune. There is no financial support. Therefore, businesses find it too challenging to continue." (P8,9 - officers)

In Thanh and Huy's study (2013), the authors also pointed out that if the organization of a project is entrusted to individuals without power, there will be difficulties in maintaining activities. However, if only the government manages it, it is challenging to implement because the local community lacks experience in tourism and cannot meet the diverse needs of the market.

"We really want to engage in community tourism but don't know where to start. There is no project, and no state funding, so we cannot implement it." (P10 – leader of authority).

4.2. THE COMMUNITY TOURISM MANAGEMENT MODEL IN HOA DA VILLAGE

Based on the community tourism model at cultural heritage sites (Thanh & Huy, 2013), we propose a model where households independently operate tourism activities in collaboration with local authorities and tourism businesses, under the coordination of the Tourism Management Board. The Department of Culture, Sports, and Tourism is responsible for directing cultural heritage management and providing specialized support for tourism. The district People's Committee assists with administrative procedures and project development. The management model is as follow (See Fig. 1):

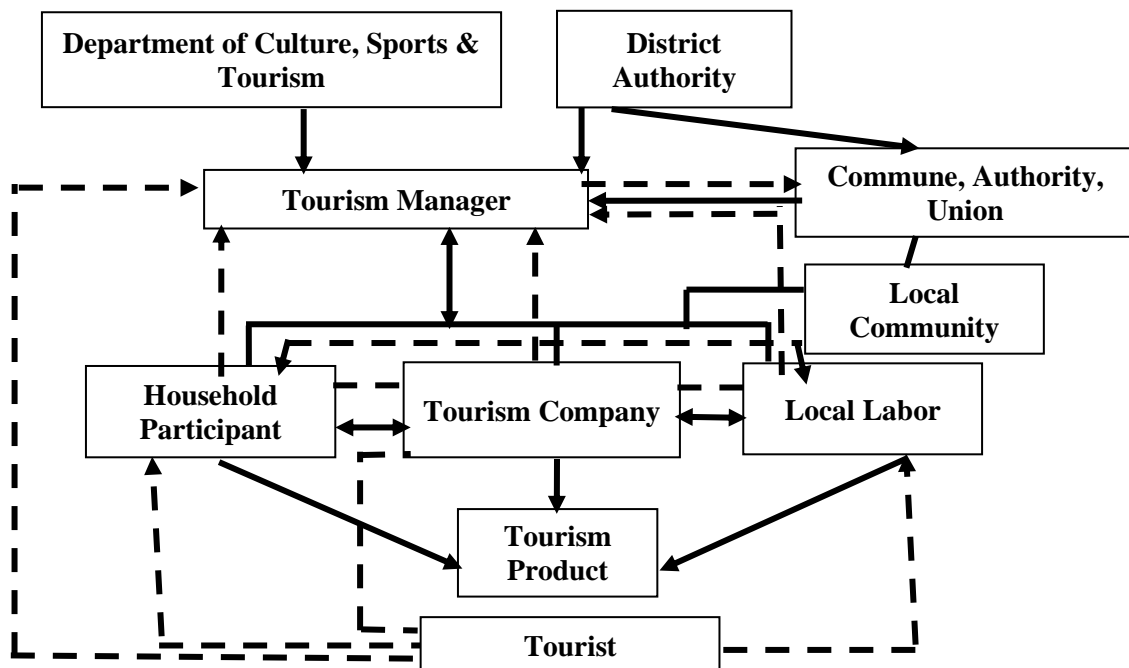


Fig. 1. Community tourism management model at Hoa Da Rice Paper Tourism Craft Village - Uncle Ho Fish Pond Tourist Site

Working relationship: ———→ Benefit division line: - - - ->

In this context, the Tourism Management Board comprises individuals from the local government, community-elected representatives, and representatives from tourism businesses. This structure aims to harmonize the interests of all participating parties. Personnel selection should prioritize individuals with experience in tourism/community tourism and management experience in business or equivalent organizations. The Tourism Management Board will serve as the central coordinating body, overseeing all tourism activities in the craft village.

The Tourism Management Board consists of the following departments: Operation and Marketing Team; Accommodation Department; Finance Department; Tour Guide Team; Cultural and Artistic Department; Culinary Team; Experience Department; Environmental Protection Department. The board will harmonize the list of specialized teams based on the capabilities and registration profiles of its members. Funding for the Tourism Management Board will come from tour ticket sales, management fees from households, tourism businesses, and labor contributions from the tourism workforce. Participating households, local labor, and businesses generate income directly from serving tourists and engaging in cooperative business activities.

4.2.1. Regarding responsibilities:

Head of the management board: Advises the leadership of An My commune on activity directions, sources of funding for community tourism development, and ensures proper, timely, and effective implementation, managing the activities of specialized teams.

Deputy Head of Operations and Marketing: Advises the board head on the operational model; responsible for marketing and creating communication effects to promote the brand; supports festival programs; connects with brand promotion partners.

Deputy Head of Finance: Advises the board head on financial matters; actively seeks funding sources for investment and manages revenue sources to prevent losses.

4.2.2. Members' rights and responsibilities:

- Receives financial support.
- Receives training to enhance community tourism skills (tour guiding, service, room, board, cuisine, etc.)
- Connects tours and destinations within the province to link Hoa Da Rice Paper Craft Village; contributes opinions on income and uses presentation materials to promote the shared brand for the craft village.
- Responsible for annual membership fees, participating in leadership elections.
- Adheres to legal regulations and craft village rules to ensure sustainable operation and development.

5. CONCLUSION

Community tourism is a new model gaining attention and investment from the tourism industry to diversify local tourism, create jobs, and increase income for residents, attracting more visitors to local areas. Among these, community tourism linked to traditional craft villages is becoming an effective trend, not only in Vietnam but also in many countries worldwide with developed agricultural sectors. Currently, most tourists tend to return to

nature, be close to natural environments, and enjoy learning about the distinctive customs and traditions of each region, especially the trend of ecological tourism, garden tourism, river tourism, and other new and attractive forms of entertainment containing folk elements.

Community tourism in Hoa Da Rice Paper Craft Village has a strength in exploiting the values of local cuisine. The strategies and policies for implementing community tourism in the craft village are already in place. Building the model must be based on the harmony of the interests of all participants, leveraging the advantages of local culture."

Author Contributions:

Phan Thi Thuy Linh offered to develop the interview protocol, conduct data collection, and write the first draft of the article.

Nguyen Thuy Van agreed to review relevant documents, revise the interview protocol, analyze the data, and re-check the article.

Doan Thi Nhu Hoa wrote parts of the reviews and participated in the research group for data collection.

Funding:

This research received funding by Phu Yen University, under the Decision No. 547/QD-ĐHPY dated December 1, 2022.

Institutional Review Board Statement:

To complete this research, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to thanks.

- Phu Yen University for approving the research proposal and agreed to assign the research topic according to Decision No. 547/QD-ĐHPY dated December 1, 2022; Decision No. 05/QD-ĐHPY dated January 2, 2024 on the establishment of the research evaluation committee and financial support
- The Office of Science Management for in supporting administrative procedures.
- The Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities for organizing the evaluation, feedback, and evaluation of the research at the faculty level.
- Dr. Le Duc Thoang, Chairman, for approving the research proposal.
- Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nguyen Van Thuong, Chairman, for approving of the research completion.
- The reviewers of MA. Le Van Dang and MA. Tran Thi Thuy Hang for having made valuable contributions to the completion of the research.
- The committee members, include of Dr. Tran Van Tau, MA. Doan Thi My Dung, Dr. Vo Thi Tam, Dr. Nguyen Thi Ngan for participating in feedback and evaluation of the research topic.

Informed Consent Statement:

All participants agreed and signed in the consent form before interviewing.

Data Availability Statement:

Data available

Acknowledgments:

Phu Yen University, under the Decision of No. 547/QD-ĐHPY dated December 1, 2022.

Conflicts of Interest:

None

Reference:

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