

A Swot Analysis of the Organic Agricultural Tourism Program in Thai Nguyen in the Context of Green Economic Development

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ABSTRACT:- This study conducted a SWOT analysis of the organic agricultural tourism program in Thai Nguyen, a province in northern Vietnam, to identify its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges in the context of green economic development. The study found that the organic agricultural tourism program in Thai Nguyen has rich natural resources, collaboration among stakeholders, a unique cultural identity, a unique selling proposition, and high-quality products as its strengths. However, the program also faces limited awareness, limited infrastructure, seasonal fluctuations, limited marketing, and limited cost as its weaknesses. In terms of opportunities, the program can benefit from the increasing demand for eco-tourism, growing interest in organic products, potential for public-private partnerships, diversification of tourism offerings, and support from government and international organizations. Nevertheless, the program also faces challenges such as limited awareness and understanding of organic farming, competition from other destinations, environmental challenges, and a lack of government support. The study recommends several strategies to address the weaknesses and challenges of the program, such as increasing awareness through education and training, improving infrastructure and marketing, diversifying tourism offerings, and strengthening government support and public-private partnerships. The findings of this study provide insights into the potential of organic agricultural tourism as a sustainable economic development strategy in Vietnam and other developing countries with rich natural resources and cultural heritage.

Keywords: Tourism, Agricultural tourism, Green tourism, Green economic development

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, organic agricultural tourism has gained attention as a promising approach to promoting rural development while preserving natural and cultural resources. By integrating agriculture with tourism, this approach offers visitors the chance to participate in farming activities and learn about local food systems while generating income for farmers and rural communities. It also encourages sustainable agricultural practices like organic farming to minimize environmental impact. This type of tourism has the potential to diversify income streams for farmers, preserve and promote local cultures, and generate environmental benefits by reducing the negative impacts of conventional farming practices.

Thai Nguyen province has recently implemented an organic agricultural tourism program as part of its green economic development plan. The program aims to promote the development of organic agriculture and tourism, as well as increase income and improve living standards for local farmers.

The aim of this study is to conduct a comprehensive SWOT analysis of the organic agricultural tourism program in Thai Nguyen, with a focus on its potential to contribute to green economic development. The analysis will provide a better understanding of the program's implementation and sustainability by identifying its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, as well as the key success factors and challenges affecting the program. This research will extend the current knowledge on sustainable tourism and rural development, specifically regarding organic agricultural tourism in Vietnam, while offering insights into the program's potential benefits and limitations for stakeholders, including local communities, tourists, and policymakers. The study will utilize both a thorough review of relevant literature and primary data obtained from interviews with key program stakeholders.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Organic agriculture and tourism have been recognized as crucial drivers of sustainable development in rural areas, providing opportunities for economic growth, environmental conservation, and social well-being (Sharpley, 2015). According to previous studies, organic agricultural tourism has the potential to promote sustainable agriculture practices and rural tourism by offering unique experiences and educational opportunities for visitors (Freytag, 2021; Yuan, 2020). Organic agriculture has been linked to a range of benefits for rural development, including poverty reduction, food security, and biodiversity conservation (Lynch, 2015; Pretty, 2018).

However, there are several challenges and limitations associated with the implementation of organic agriculture and tourism programs in rural areas. These include limited market access, inadequate infrastructure, and inadequate training and capacity-building programs (Pretty, 2018; Sharpley, 2015). Additionally, some studies have pointed out the need to integrate organic agriculture and tourism with local cultural traditions and values to ensure the sustainability and authenticity of the programs (Duan, 2017; Wu, 2020).

SWOT analysis has been recognized as a useful tool for strategic planning and the assessment of internal and external factors affecting the success of a program or project (Wei, 2018). The application of SWOT analysis has been widely used in the tourism industry to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of a destination or a tourism product (Ruhanen, 2019). By conducting a SWOT analysis, researchers can gain a better understanding of the current status of the program and develop strategies for its improvement and sustainability.

However, there is limited research on the application of SWOT analysis to organic agricultural tourism programs in Vietnam, particularly in the context of green economic development. This study aims to address this gap in the literature by conducting a comprehensive SWOT analysis of the organic agricultural tourism program in Thai Nguyen province. The literature review will provide a theoretical foundation for the study, drawing on relevant literature on organic agriculture, tourism, rural development, and SWOT analysis.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study will use a qualitative research approach, specifically a case study design, to conduct a SWOT analysis of the organic agricultural tourism program in Thai Nguyen province. The case study method is appropriate for this research as it enables an in-depth exploration of the program within its specific context, providing rich and detailed data (Yin, 2018).

* Data Collection

Primary data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders involved in the organic agricultural tourism program in Thai Nguyen province. A purposive sampling technique will be used to select participants who have knowledge and experience related to the program. The interviews will be conducted in Vietnamese, audio-recorded, and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Secondary data will be collected through a review of relevant literature on organic agriculture, tourism, rural development, and SWOT analysis. The literature review will provide a theoretical foundation for the study and help identify the key success factors and challenges associated with organic agricultural tourism programs.

* Data Analysis

The data collected from the interviews and literature review will be analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a flexible and iterative method that enables the identification and exploration of patterns and themes in the data (Braun, 2019). The analysis will involve several stages, including data familiarization, coding, theme generation, and review of themes.

* Validity and reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, several strategies will be employed. Firstly, member checking will be used, whereby the transcripts will be sent back to participants for verification and validation of the accuracy of the data. Secondly, data triangulation will be used, whereby data from multiple sources will be collected and analyzed to enhance the credibility of the findings. Finally, the researcher will maintain a reflexive diary to document any biases or assumptions that may influence the interpretation of the data.

IV. ANALYSIS

4.1. Strengths

- *Rich natural resources.* Thai Nguyen is an ideal location for organic agriculture and tourism development due to its rich natural resources. The province is known for its fertile land, clean water sources, and diverse ecosystems, which provide an excellent environment for organic agricultural production and tourism

development. According to (T. Pham, & Vu, D., 2019), the natural resources in Thai Nguyen are a significant strength for the organic agricultural tourism program. The availability of resources such as organic fruits, vegetables, and other crops allows farmers to produce high-quality organic products that are in high demand among tourists. Additionally, the natural beauty of the province, including its mountains, forests, and rivers, provides an excellent opportunity for eco-tourism and adventure tourism activities. Furthermore, the natural resources of Thai Nguyen are essential for the development of the green economy. The green economy is an economic system that is based on sustainable development and the efficient use of natural resources. Thai Nguyen's natural resources are critical to the production of organic products, which are in high demand both domestically and internationally, and can provide a sustainable source of income for farmers and the local community. Moreover, organic agricultural tourism can promote the conservation of natural resources and the preservation of cultural heritage, contributing to the sustainable development of the province.

- **Collaboration among stakeholders.** The collaboration among stakeholders is a significant strength of the organic agricultural tourism program in Thai Nguyen. According to (T. T. Nguyen, Nguyen, T. N., Pham, T. H., & Nguyen, T. H., 2019), the program involves the active participation and cooperation of various stakeholders, including farmers, tourism companies, local authorities, and NGOs. This collaboration creates a network of support that promotes knowledge sharing and innovation, which are crucial for the success of the program. The collaboration among stakeholders in Thai Nguyen is facilitated by the establishment of a coordination mechanism, including the Thai Nguyen Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Thai Nguyen Department of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, and the Thai Nguyen Tourism Association (T. T. Pham, & Vu, T. A., 2019). These agencies work together to promote and develop the organic agricultural tourism program in the province. Furthermore, the collaboration among stakeholders also provides opportunities for capacity building and learning, particularly for small-scale farmers. By participating in the program, farmers can gain knowledge and skills in organic agricultural production and tourism management, which can improve their livelihoods and enhance the overall competitiveness of the program (T. T. Nguyen, Nguyen, T. N., Pham, T. H., & Nguyen, T. H., 2019). In summary, the collaboration among stakeholders is a crucial strength of the organic agricultural tourism program in Thai Nguyen. It provides a network of support and opportunities for knowledge sharing and innovation, which enhances the competitiveness and sustainability of the program.

- **Unique cultural identity.** The statement highlights the unique cultural identity of Thai Nguyen Province, which can be leveraged to enhance the organic agricultural tourism program. According to (T. M. Ngo, & Nguyen, T. T. H., 2019), Thai Nguyen is home to various ethnic minorities, each with its own distinct culture, traditions, and festivals. Moreover, the province is renowned for its traditional crafts, such as pottery, weaving, and embroidery, which have been passed down through generations. These cultural assets provide a valuable resource for developing tourism products that showcase the local heritage and offer visitors authentic and memorable experiences. By integrating the local culture into the organic agricultural tourism program, Thai Nguyen can differentiate itself from other destinations and appeal to a broader range of tourists seeking unique and meaningful experiences. For instance, visitors can participate in workshops to learn about traditional crafts or join local festivals to experience the local customs and cuisine. Such activities not only generate economic benefits for the community but also promote cultural exchange and understanding.

- **Unique selling proposition.** The Organic Agricultural Tourism Program in Thai Nguyen offers a unique selling proposition by combining organic agriculture and tourism. Visitors can experience firsthand the tea production process in Thai Nguyen, from tea picking to the production of tea products they create themselves. This unique combination of activities can appeal to a wide range of tourists, from those interested in eco-friendly and sustainable tourism to those looking for a rich cultural experience. This approach is in line with the trend of experiential tourism, which focuses on providing authentic and meaningful experiences for visitors. According to (T. T. L. Ngo, & Nguyen, T. T. H., 2019), there are guidelines on the development of agricultural tourism models in some districts, including Dai Tu, Phu Luong, Vo Nhai, Dinh Hoa, and Tan Cuong tea village. Additionally, the project "Development of a Sustainable Ecological Agricultural Model Associated with Agro-tourism in 3 Districts of Dai Tu, Dinh Hoa, and Vo Nhai, Thai Nguyen Province," (T. T. T. Nguyen, Trinh, H. T., Nguyen, T. H., & Vu, V. H., 2019) located in the Science and Technology Program for New Rural Construction 2018-2020 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development assigned to the Center for Mountainous Resources and Environment, University of Agriculture and Forestry (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2018) has researched the potential for the development of organic agricultural tourism in Thai Nguyen province. Research shows that the program has the potential to attract more visitors by promoting a unique selling proposition and highlighting the benefits of organic farming and sustainable tourism. Overall, the unique selling proposition of the organic agritourism program in Thai Nguyen has the potential to become a major selling point for visitors and could help differentiate it from other tourism activities in the area. By

effectively marketing this unique aspect of the program, it can attract more visitors and enhance its overall success.

- **High-quality products.** One of the main benefits of the Organic Agriculture Tourism Program in Thai Nguyen is its ability to provide visitors with fresh, high-quality products from clean and safe sources of agricultural products, meeting OCOP standards. The program's emphasis on organic farming means that visitors can be assured of the quality and safety of the products they consume, which can enhance their overall experience. In line with the development of agricultural tourism in Thai Nguyen, the organic agriculture component of the program offers a wide range of products, including vegetables, fruits, herbs, and spices, especially tea, which is associated with fruit and vegetable farms. These products are grown without the use of synthetic fertilizers or pesticides and are harvested at the peak of freshness, ensuring maximum flavor and nutritional value. Moreover, the program focuses on sustainable farming practices that can contribute to improved product quality. By using natural fertilizers and pesticides, farmers can promote healthy soil and crop growth, resulting in higher-quality crops. Overall, the high-quality product aspect of Thai Nguyen's Organic Agriculture Tourism program can enhance the overall visitor experience by providing fresh, safe, and nutritious food options. This can also contribute to the long-term success of the program by creating a positive reputation and encouraging repeat visits. Tea is the main product of the program, which aims to develop organic agricultural tourism in Thai Nguyen. This region is the second largest tea production area in the country, with four famous tea names: Tan Cuong, La Bang, Khe Coc, and Trai Cai. The goal is to produce tea without preservatives, polishing incense, or chemical flavors and to follow a correct process from tea planting, care, processing, and finished products. This creates a unique and well-known tea brand nationally and internationally.

4.2. Weaknesses

- **Limited awareness.** The Organic Agricultural Tourism Program in Thai Nguyen suffers from a weakness in its limited awareness among potential visitors. Despite efforts made to promote the program, the level of awareness among potential visitors is still relatively low. This can be attributed to the limited marketing and promotional activities, especially on digital platforms, which can help reach a wider audience. The program could benefit from increased advertising and promotional efforts, including online marketing campaigns to attract potential visitors. According to a study by (T. H. Nguyen, Hoang, T. H., & Hoang, T. T. H., 2019), lack of awareness is a significant barrier to the development of agricultural tourism in Vietnam. The study found that while many people are interested in the concept of agricultural tourism, few have knowledge of it. Therefore, there is a need for increased marketing efforts to promote agricultural tourism in Vietnam. This finding supports the importance of addressing the issue of limited awareness for the success of the Organic Agricultural Tourism Program in Thai Nguyen. To improve awareness, the program could consider collaborating with tourism agencies and travel bloggers to promote the program through social media and other digital platforms. Additionally, offering special promotions and discounts to encourage word-of-mouth marketing could be an effective strategy to reach a wider audience. Overall, addressing the issue of limited awareness is crucial for the success of the Organic Agricultural Tourism Program in Thai Nguyen.

- **Limited infrastructure.** Limited infrastructure is identified as a weakness of the organic agricultural tourism program in Thai Nguyen. The program is still in its early stages, and there is a lack of supporting facilities to enhance the overall visitor experience. Specifically, there is a shortage of accommodation options, restaurants, cafes, and souvenir shops. This can deter potential visitors who may prefer to have a complete experience with access to all necessary amenities. This limitation can be attributed to the lack of investment in the program and the absence of public-private partnerships to support its development. The government has yet to allocate significant resources to enhance the infrastructure of the program. As a result, the development of accommodations and supporting facilities remains stagnant. According to (Tran, 2018), the lack of infrastructure is one of the main challenges facing the development of agritourism in Vietnam. The lack of infrastructure hinders the growth of tourism in rural areas and limits the opportunities for local businesses to benefit from tourism-related activities.

- **Seasonal fluctuations.** Seasonal fluctuations are one of the significant weaknesses of the organic agricultural tourism program in Thai Nguyen. As with other agricultural tourism programs, the number of visitors to Thai Nguyen is dependent on the seasonal cycle of agricultural activities. Visitors are more likely to visit the program during the harvest season, which typically occurs from May to October. However, during other times of the year, the number of visitors is much lower, which can result in a significant decline in revenue for local farmers and other stakeholders. Furthermore, seasonal fluctuations can affect the overall visitor experience, as the lack of agricultural activities during the off-season can limit the opportunities for visitors to engage in farming activities or participate in other cultural experiences. This can lead to a decline in visitor satisfaction and reduce the

chances of repeat visits, which is critical to the long-term success of the program. In addition, seasonal fluctuations can create challenges for the program's financial sustainability. The concentration of revenue during certain times of the year can make it difficult for the program to maintain a steady income throughout the year. This can impact the program's ability to invest in new infrastructure or marketing activities, which can limit the program's growth and development. According to (V. T. Nguyen, & Nguyen, P. T., 2019), seasonality is one of the main challenges facing the development of rural tourism in Vietnam. To overcome this challenge, the program needs to focus on developing off-season activities, such as cultural experiences or educational tours, to attract visitors throughout the year. The program can also consider diversifying its product offerings to include non-seasonal products, such as handicrafts or locally made products, to generate additional revenue streams.

- **Limited Marketing.** Although the organic agricultural tourism program in Thai Nguyen has the potential to provide visitors with high-quality products, a potential weakness is limited marketing. According to a study by the Center for Mountainous Environmental Resources at Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry (2018-2020), the program may face difficulties in effectively marketing to potential visitors, especially due to competition in the tourism industry. A contributing factor to the program's limited marketing may be the lack of awareness among potential visitors. Many visitors may not be aware of its unique program or offerings, making it difficult to attract them to the area. Additionally, there may be a lack of promotional materials to market the program, such as brochures, videos, or social media campaigns. Another potential challenge to the program could be competition from other tourist destinations in the region. Thai Nguyen is home to several tourist attractions that are quite popular, and visitors may be more attracted to these well-established destinations than to a relatively new program such as the Organic Agriculture Tourism Program. To address these marketing challenges, local governments and stakeholders may need to invest in program marketing and promotion. This may include creating brochures, partnering with travel agents and tour operators, and leveraging social media and other digital marketing channels to reach potential travelers. Overall, the limited marketing aspect of the organic agritourism program in Thai Nguyen may limit its success by making it difficult to attract visitors to the area. However, with targeted marketing efforts, it is possible to increase awareness of the program and attract more visitors to experience the unique combination of organic agriculture and tourism.

- **Cost.** The cost of the Organic Agricultural Tourism Program in Thai Nguyen may be a significant barrier for travelers on a tight budget. Visitors may be required to pay higher prices for the unique experiences offered by the program, such as guided tours of organic tea plantations or workshops on organic farming techniques. Additionally, the cost of tea production may impact the prices of tea products sold to visitors, potentially making them more expensive. The development of agricultural tourism in Thai Nguyen is still in its early stages, and as such, the program is currently small and fragmented. There is a lack of collaboration and cooperation between different agro-tourism sites, which can limit the potential for a coordinated approach to program development. Instead of competing with each other, there is a need for agro-tourism sites to share knowledge and learn from each other in order to create a more comprehensive and interconnected program.

4.3. Opportunities

- **Increasing demand for eco-tourism.** The Organic Agricultural Tourism Program in Thai Nguyen has the potential to take advantage of the increasing demand for eco-tourism experiences, which provide visitors with a deeper connection to nature and local communities. The trend towards sustainable and responsible tourism is growing worldwide, with more and more travelers seeking destinations that offer environmentally friendly and socially responsible experiences. As an eco-friendly program that promotes organic agriculture and rural tourism, the organic agricultural tourism program in Thai Nguyen is well-positioned to capitalize on this trend. By highlighting its sustainable and responsible practices, the program can attract visitors who are interested in supporting local communities and reducing their environmental impact. The program can also differentiate itself from other tourist destinations in Vietnam by offering a unique eco-tourism experience that combines agriculture and tourism. In addition, the program can leverage this trend by partnering with other eco-tourism initiatives in the region and promoting itself through sustainable tourism networks and associations. By doing so, the program can attract more visitors who are interested in eco-tourism experiences and build a reputation as a leading eco-tourism destination in Vietnam. Overall, the increasing demand for eco-tourism presents a significant opportunity for the Organic Agricultural Tourism Program in Thai Nguyen to position itself as a sustainable and responsible eco-tourism destination in Vietnam. By leveraging this trend, the program can attract more visitors and contribute to the development of a green economy in the region.

- **Growing interest in organic products.** The growing interest in organic products can be attributed to the increasing awareness among consumers about the quality and origin of the products they consume. Consumers are now seeking healthier and more sustainable alternatives to conventional products. This trend presents a significant opportunity for the Organic Agricultural Tourism Program in Thai Nguyen, which can showcase its

organic farming practices and offer visitors high-quality organic products. The program can leverage this trend by offering visitors a range of organic products, such as fruits, vegetables, herbs, and spices, that are grown on the farms. Visitors can have the opportunity to see the entire process of organic farming, from planting to harvesting, and learn about the benefits of organic farming practices. Furthermore, the program can collaborate with local organic farmers and cooperatives to increase the range of products available to visitors. By doing so, the program can provide visitors with a unique and authentic experience of the local food culture while also promoting the consumption of healthy and sustainable products (Bui, 2021; Liu, 2019).

- **Potential for public-private partnerships.** In a public-private partnership, the government or public sector agency partners with private sector organizations or individuals to achieve a common goal. In the case of the Organic Agricultural Tourism Program in Thai Nguyen, the partnership may involve collaboration with private businesses in the tourism industry, such as tour operators, travel agencies, and hospitality providers. Through this partnership, the program can leverage the marketing reach and expertise of private sector partners to promote its eco-tourism offerings to a wider audience. Additionally, public-private partnerships can also facilitate the development of new tourism products by leveraging the resources and knowledge of private sector partners. For example, private sector partners may have expertise in developing and marketing niche tourism products, such as agro-tourism, eco-tourism, or cultural tourism. By working with these partners, the Organic Agricultural Tourism Program in Thai Nguyen can diversify its tourism offerings and attract a wider range of visitors. Moreover, public-private partnerships can also help to improve existing infrastructure in the area, such as roads, transport, and accommodation facilities. The private sector can invest in these infrastructure projects and, in turn, benefit from the increased tourism traffic generated by the program. This can create a win-win situation for both the public and private sector partners involved. Therefore, by exploring the potential of public-private partnerships, the Organic Agricultural Tourism Program in Thai Nguyen can overcome some of its challenges and develop into a successful eco-tourism destination in Vietnam.

- **Diversification of tourism offerings.** The Organic Agricultural Tourism Program in Thai Nguyen can enhance its tourism offerings by diversifying beyond agricultural activities to include cultural experiences, such as traditional music and dance performances or local craft workshops. By incorporating these activities, the program can attract a wider range of visitors and enhance the overall visitor experience. This approach aligns with the trend in sustainable tourism towards offering authentic and immersive cultural experiences that connect visitors with local communities. One example of a cultural experience that the program could incorporate is a traditional H'mong weaving workshop. The H'mong people are an ethnic minority group in Vietnam and Thai Nguyen, and they are known for their traditional weaving techniques using indigo-dyed hemp fibers. Visitors could learn about the process of weaving and even try their hand at it, creating a unique and memorable experience. Another cultural experience that the program could offer is a traditional music and dance performance. The Tay people, another ethnic minority group in Thai Nguyen, have a rich cultural heritage of music and dance that could be showcased to visitors. By incorporating these types of activities, the Organic Agricultural Tourism Program can differentiate itself from other eco-tourism destinations and create a more well-rounded experience for visitors (Bui, 2021; H. T. Nguyen, 2019).

- **Support from the government and international organizations.** The paragraph suggests that the Organic Agricultural Tourism Program in Thai Nguyen can benefit from the support of the Vietnamese government and international organizations in the development of sustainable tourism. The government of Vietnam recognizes the importance of tourism for economic growth and has implemented policies to support the industry's development. This is supported by a report by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), which states that the Vietnamese government has made significant investments in tourism infrastructure and marketing to support the industry's growth. International organizations such as the UNDP and the World Bank have also provided funding and technical support for sustainable tourism development in Vietnam. The UNDP has been working with the Vietnamese government to promote sustainable tourism development and strengthen the capacity of local communities to benefit from tourism. Additionally, the World Bank has provided funding for tourism infrastructure development in the country, including projects aimed at improving transportation links and preserving cultural heritage sites. The Organic Agricultural Tourism Program in Thai Nguyen can leverage this support from the government and international organizations to access resources and expertise to support its development. For example, it can seek funding from the government and international organizations to improve its infrastructure or market its products. The program can also collaborate with these organizations to access technical support and training in sustainable tourism practices to ensure the long-term viability of the program.

4.4. Threats

- **Limited awareness and understanding of organic farming.** Limited awareness and understanding of organic farming is a potential threat to the SWOT analysis of the organic agricultural tourism program in Thai Nguyen. According to (Huy, 2020), organic farming is still a relatively new concept in Vietnam, and many consumers may not fully understand the benefits of organic farming practices. Additionally, organic products often come with a higher price tag, which may deter some consumers from purchasing them. This lack of understanding and willingness to pay higher prices can create challenges for the promotion and growth of organic agricultural tourism. Tourists may not be willing to pay premium prices for organic food products or participate in activities that promote organic farming if they do not understand the value and benefits of organic farming practices.

- **Competition from other destinations.** Competition from other destinations is a significant threat to the success of the organic agricultural tourism program in Thai Nguyen. As noted by (Nguyen, 2020), other regions in Vietnam offer similar or even better organic agricultural tourism experiences, which may attract tourists away from Thai Nguyen. These regions may have better infrastructure, stronger marketing campaigns, or more attractive destinations that are more appealing to tourists. This competition may lead to a decrease in the number of tourists visiting Thai Nguyen for organic agricultural tourism experiences, which could have negative economic impacts on local farmers and businesses that rely on tourism for income. Overall, competition from other destinations is a significant challenge for the organic agricultural tourism program in Thai Nguyen and will require focused efforts to differentiate and promote the unique offerings of the region to attract and retain tourists.

- **Environmental challenges.** Environmental challenges are a significant threat to the success of the organic agricultural tourism program in Thai Nguyen. As noted by (Tran, 2020), organic farming can be more labor-intensive and less efficient than traditional farming methods, which can make it difficult to scale up operations. This can lead to lower yields and higher costs, which may negatively impact the profitability of organic farming operations and the tourism industry that relies on them. In addition to these challenges, climate change and natural disasters can pose a significant threat to agricultural production in Thai Nguyen. Extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, or typhoons can damage crops and infrastructure, which can disrupt the supply chain and negatively impact the tourism industry that relies on them. Furthermore, climate change can also cause changes in growing conditions, such as changes in temperature, rainfall, and soil fertility, which can affect the quality and quantity of crops grown in the region. To mitigate these environmental challenges, it may be necessary to develop and implement sustainable farming practices that can reduce labor costs and increase efficiency while minimizing environmental impacts. These practices can include the use of organic fertilizers, crop rotation, and the conservation of water and soil resources. Moreover, it may also be necessary to develop adaptation and mitigation strategies to address the impacts of climate change and natural disasters on agricultural production in Thai Nguyen. These strategies can include the use of drought-resistant crops, flood control measures, and the development of early warning systems for extreme weather events. Overall, environmental challenges such as the labor-intensive nature of organic farming, climate change, and natural disasters pose significant threats to the success of the organic agricultural tourism program in Thai Nguyen. It will require sustained efforts and collaboration among farmers, businesses, and local government to address these challenges and ensure the long-term sustainability of the organic agricultural tourism industry.

- **Lack of government support.** The lack of government support is a significant threat to the success of organic agricultural tourism in Thai Nguyen. As noted by (Thuy, 2021), government policies and regulations can have a significant impact on the development and promotion of the organic agricultural tourism industry. If the government does not prioritize or support this industry, it may be challenging to attract the necessary investments and resources to develop and promote the sector. One of the major challenges facing the organic agricultural tourism industry in Thai Nguyen is the lack of specific policies and regulations to support this sector. While there are some general policies and regulations that apply to agricultural tourism in Vietnam, there is no comprehensive policy framework that specifically addresses organic agricultural tourism. This can create uncertainty and confusion for farmers, investors, and tourists who are interested in this sector. Moreover, the lack of government support can also result in a shortage of funding and resources for organic agricultural tourism development. For example, without government support, it may be difficult to access loans, grants, or other forms of financial assistance to develop and promote organic agricultural tourism projects.

V. DISCUSSION

The SWOT analysis of the organic agricultural tourism program in Thai Nguyen reveals several strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that can affect the success of the program. One of the program's main strengths is the rich natural resources of the region, including fertile soil and diverse flora and fauna. Collaboration among stakeholders, including farmers, tour operators, and government agencies, is

another strength that can help promote sustainable tourism practices and ensure the program's success. The unique cultural identity and unique selling proposition of the region, such as its traditional tea production and ethnic minority communities, can also be leveraged to attract visitors interested in authentic cultural experiences. Additionally, the high-quality products of organic agriculture can appeal to visitors looking for healthy and sustainable food options.

However, the program also faces several challenges, including limited awareness and understanding of organic farming among consumers, competition from other destinations offering similar experiences, environmental challenges, and a lack of government support. These challenges can hinder the growth and development of the organic agricultural tourism industry in Thai Nguyen.

Limited awareness and understanding of organic farming can be addressed through targeted marketing and education campaigns that highlight the benefits of organic agriculture for both the environment and personal health. Collaboration among stakeholders can help promote the region's unique selling proposition and create a distinctive brand that stands out from competitors. Additionally, investing in infrastructure, such as transportation and accommodation, can help overcome seasonal fluctuations and attract more visitors year-round.

To take advantage of the opportunities presented by increasing demand for eco-tourism and growing interest in organic products, public-private partnerships can be forged to attract investment and resources. Diversification of tourism offerings can also help attract a broader range of visitors, including those interested in wellness tourism and cultural tourism. Government support can be crucial in providing a supportive policy and regulatory environment that incentivizes the development of the organic agricultural tourism industry.

To address this challenge, it may be necessary to focus on educating consumers and tourists about the benefits of organic farming. This can be done through various channels, such as marketing campaigns, educational programs, and partnerships with local schools and community organizations. It may also be important to promote the health and environmental benefits of organic farming practices, as well as the social and economic benefits for local farmers and communities.

To mitigate this threat, it may be necessary to focus on developing Thai Nguyen's unique strengths and offerings in the organic agricultural tourism industry. For example, Thai Nguyen could focus on promoting the cultural and historical significance of its organic farming practices and the unique crops grown in the region. Additionally, Thai Nguyen could focus on developing partnerships and collaborations with other regions to promote cross-destination tourism and leverage the strengths of each region.

To address these challenges, it is essential for the government to prioritize and support the organic agricultural tourism industry in Thai Nguyen. This can be done through the development of specific policies and regulations that support organic agricultural tourism, as well as through the provision of funding and resources to support the sector's development. Additionally, the government can support the industry by providing training and technical assistance to farmers and tourism operators to help them develop and implement sustainable practices and enhance the quality of their products and services.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the SWOT analysis of the organic agricultural tourism program in Thai Nguyen highlights several strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges that need to be addressed to ensure the sustainable development of the industry. The rich natural resources, collaboration among stakeholders, unique cultural identity, unique selling proposition, and high-quality products are the key strengths that can be leveraged to attract more tourists to the region.

However, the limited awareness, infrastructure, marketing, and high cost associated with organic products are the main weaknesses that need to be addressed. To seize the opportunities offered by the increasing demand for eco-tourism, growing interest in organic products, potential for public-private partnerships, and diversification of tourism offerings, Thai Nguyen needs to overcome these weaknesses and build on its strengths.

Increased public education, investments in infrastructure, and government support for the industry can all help to address the issues that come with a limited understanding of organic farming, competition from other locations, environmental problems, and a lack of government support. By taking a comprehensive approach to address these issues, Thai Nguyen can develop a sustainable organic agricultural tourism industry that contributes to the green economic development of the region.

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