



Balancing Production Chains, Bridging Challenges: The Potentials of Coffee Tourism in Sarawak, Malaysia



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ABSTRACT: Coffee production in Sarawak has been facing numerous challenges, such as low productivity, limited market access, lack of professional assistance, and poor production quality. In response, coffee tourism offers an alternative source of income for local farmers and creates opportunities to improve coffee quality and promote sustainable production practices. Through a qualitative case study design, this study purposively sampled eight local coffee producers and conducted semi-structured interviews with them to explore the potential of coffee tourism in Sarawak, Malaysia. The findings reveal that coffee tourism provides opportunities for growers to diversify their revenue sources, improve their knowledge and skills, and increase their market access. Additionally, coffee tourism can raise awareness on the different coffee varieties unique to Sarawak as well as the destination's cultural heritage. The findings also highlight barriers to coffee tourism development in Sarawak, including limited infrastructure, inadequate government support, and lack of coordination among stakeholders. Addressing these challenges will require collaborative efforts among government agencies, coffee growers, and tourism stakeholders. Overall, this paper highlights the potential of coffee tourism as a means of balancing production and supply chains and bridging the challenges faced by coffee farmers to promote sustainable development in Sarawak, Malaysia.

KEYWORDS: coffee production; coffee supply chain; coffee tourism; Sarawak; grounded theory

Introduction

Malaysia has a long-standing tea-drinking culture, but western influence has changed consumption patterns, making coffee a staple drink in the country (Lee et al., 2018; Rahim et al., 2019). This shift, coupled with the burgeoning rise of local and international coffee chains, has made the coffee industry lucrative in Malaysia (Ramanathan & Ali, 2021). In fact, the country was listed as one of the top coffee-consuming nations globally, with an estimated 125% increase from 2020 to 2021 (Rahim et al., 2019; Statista, 2021). However, coffee production in Malaysia does not match its surging consumption. According to the Khazanah Research Institute (2019), coffee production in Malaysia accounted for only 1.0% of the world's total production in 2018. The report also highlighted that local coffee planters experienced an annual decline in production of around 16% between 2010 and 2018, mainly due to coffee's lack of

competitiveness compared to other cash crops such as coconut and sago. Despite the marginal cultivation of coffee in the country, regions like Sarawak provide opportunities for growth.

Sarawak, an eastern state within Malaysia located in the northwest of Borneo Island, is no stranger to coffee (Sarawak Government, n.d.). With its unique location and equatorial climate, characterized by temperatures ranging from 23°C to 32°C, Sarawak is suitable for growing Liberica and Robusta coffee (Ismail et al., 2014). In fact, recent efforts have been made to revive the Liberica coffee variant in Kuching, Sarawak (Perfect Daily Grind, 2019). This initiative, spearheaded by Earthlings Coffee, has included public exhibitions through specialty coffee shops, training on roasting and processing, and a Liberica roasting contest to showcase Sarawak's coffee production potential. The aim is to promote sustainable coffee-growing practices in Sarawak to address economic and environmental challenges. This aligns with Malaysia's Third National Agricultural Policy (NTNAP), which seeks to develop and increase the productivity and competitiveness of coffee in the country by establishing networks and collaborations between sectors, sourcing growth industries, and conserving environmental resources through sustainability (Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority, n.d.; Ramanathan & Ali, 2021).

In Sarawak, coffee sourcing provides opportunities not only for developing the agrarian economy but also for creating niche segments that celebrate local heritage, gastronomy, agriculture, and community (Chen et al., 2021). Nevertheless, there is an imbalance between the local supply and demand for coffee. Despite lucrative coffee consumption and the growing presence of coffee chains, Malaysia relies on foreign-produced coffee, often priced at double or triple its raw cost (Khazanah Research Institute, 2019). Therefore, the supply side of the coffee market faces challenges in maintaining its advantage and sustaining dominance in coffee extracts (e.g., coffee essence, coffee concentrate, and instant coffee) exported to China, Thailand, and Indonesia. In response to this issue, coffee tourism offers an avenue for networking and business growth in developing areas like Sarawak, thus providing an opportunity to distribute economic benefits among local stakeholders (Anbalagan & Lovelock, 2014; Kleidas & Jolliffe, 2010). However, limited studies have investigated the progress of NTNAP in Sarawak and the perspectives of local coffee bean suppliers in this emerging coffee-producing region. Furthermore, the contribution of coffee tourism to rural and community development in coffee-producing developing regions remains unexplored in current research. This highlights the need to examine how coffee suppliers in these regions can innovate and respond to the growing potential of capitalizing on coffee as a niche segment in tourism.

Thus, this study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the challenges facing local coffee production chains in Sarawak?
2. What are the potentials of coffee tourism to bridge these challenges in Sarawak?

Literature Review

The Historical Development of Coffee in Malaysia

Coffee has become ingrained in people's daily lives as it has long been embedded in their socialization, work, and leisure (Jolliffe, 2010). This can be traced back to the rich history of coffee production and consumption. Rahman (2010) recounts the historical developments of coffee in the 19th century when colonial powers such as the Dutch and the English established extensive plantations across their controlled territories in the Americas, Africa, and Asia for cultivating this product. Gradually, coffee became a valuable commodity, ranked as the second

most exported product from the Southeast Asian (SEA) region to Europe, America, and China until the pre-World War I era (Bulbeck et al., 1998). Countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam have been competing in the market and enriching their own coffee cultures from the 1990s until the present (Potter, 2008; Ha & Shively, 2008; Sunderlin et al., 2001). Over time, the act of drinking coffee has evolved from a simple beverage consumption practice (Manzo, 2010) into an attraction for visitors and an emerging "gastronomic culture" that plays a significant role in reflecting the historical and cultural perspectives of the region, while also shaping the tourism experiences in the destination (Kleidas & Jolliffe, 2010). This is because coffee has the ability to embody the character, narrative, and symbolism of these destinations, suggesting a connection between coffee and tourism (Lyon, 2013a).

According to Changsong et al.'s (2021) study, some well-known local coffee brands in Malaysia were actually created by immigrant Chinese businessmen many decades ago. One example is Ipoh White Coffee, which has gained recognition in the Asian region. The term "white coffee" does not refer to the color of the beverage but rather to its distinctive roasting method, which was invented by the Hainanese people who migrated to Malaysia (known as Nanyang) during the late stages of the Qing dynasty. While drinking coffee is seen as a way of socializing when conducting business with Western people, the Chinese have always been a tea-drinking culture, and the bitter taste of Western-style coffee is not acceptable to them. The innovative Hainanese coffee roasters have therefore adapted the taste to suit their palate by blending the coffee with Robusta and Liberica varieties, which are then roasted in a wok with margarine, sugar, corn, or wheat. During the roasting process, the sugars caramelize, resulting in a slightly lighter roast color, which led to the name "white coffee." Other places, such as Antong in Malaysia, follow a similar roasting practice (see pictures below). Nonetheless, the specific recipe of white coffee varies today as it is closely guarded by each company.



Figure 1: Examples of the process of making white coffee

The Potential of Coffee Tourism

Kopitiam ('coffee shop' in Malay) is a compound word combining the Malay word for 'coffee' (*kopi*) with the Chinese vernacular word for 'shop' (*tiàm*). This feature is unique to Malaysian culture, as the name itself is a combination of the Malay and Chinese languages. *Kopitiam* businesses have rapidly grown and become ingrained in the culture and social needs of Malaysia as a whole (Rahman, 2010). They cater to average- to low-income workers and typically feature similar basic white marble tables and green floral porcelain ware. The menu

has also persisted over time, showcasing the fusion of Hainanese cooking skills with British and Peranakan Nyonya influences through items such as toast with butter and coconut jam, soft-boiled eggs, and sometimes chicken chop with green peas and tomato sauce. Apart from kopitiam, white coffee has also been highly promoted by the Malaysian government for many years as one of the country's trade and tourism features.

As the connection between coffee, culture, and tourism became evident, various typologies of coffee tourism destinations emerged in the literature (Yun, 2014). For instance, Jolliffe (2010) classified coffee destinations based on their involvement in the history, production, and culture of coffee. Lyon (2013b) then expanded on the various forms of coffee tourism (e.g., visits to coffee-producing destinations, experiences in coffee culture establishments, and visits to coffee history sites) by enumerating specific types of activities that can be enjoyed in coffee tourism, such as trips to coffee plantations, hands-on experiences in coffee farming and cultivation, coffee processing, and coffee tasting. Notably, Smith et al. (2019) mapped out coffee tourism destinations using four categories: natural attractions; manmade attractions not originally designed to attract tourists; manmade tourist attractions specifically built for coffee tourism; and coffee-related events and festivals. The second and third categories involve built environments associated with coffee, such as coffee shops and establishments. The main distinction between the two is that the latter was intentionally created for tourism purposes. The last category focuses on experiential events that celebrate coffee. Similarly, Wang et al. (2019) classified Taiwanese coffee estates as traditional, educational, and comprehensive, based on the different experiential activities they offer.

Supply and Demand of Coffee Tourism

The existing body of knowledge on coffee tourism is predominantly focused on the demand side, examining the consumption, attractions, and experiences of customers and tourists in coffee-related enterprises (see Dinis et al., 2021; Opoku et al., 2023; Setiyorini et al., 2023). The prevalence of this research theme may be attributed to the recent growth in coffee production and consumption, evident in the proliferation of coffee-related establishments and shifting consumer preferences (Anbalagan & Lovelock, 2014). In response, the third wave of the coffee industry has emerged, with local coffee shops elevating the conventional coffee-drinking experience by drawing inspiration from international brands and providing customers with an understanding of coffee production (Manzo, 2010; Rahman, 2010; Setiyorini, 2019). Coffee destinations, on the other hand, offer guests rich narratives that reflect the authenticity of the visited destination (Kleidas & Jolliffe, 2010). These destinations have developed coffee festivals to enhance experiences, not only educating tourists about the history and production of coffee but also generating positive impacts for culture-based urban regeneration benefiting both tourists and local communities (Candelo et al., 2019; Seo, 2019).

Similarly, literature on the supply side of coffee tourism has been fairly substantial. However, scholars have focused mostly on the production and livelihood aspects of coffee tourism in destinations that are significant coffee producers (Joyce & Paquin, 2017; Sedana & Estawa, 2019; Tan et al., 2018; Woyesa & Kumar, 2020). Studies have also examined the business relationships between coffee-importing countries like Vietnam, Taiwan, Jamaica, and Hawaii and coffee-importing countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Korea, and Japan (Jolliffe et al., 2009; Yun, 2014). In contrast, there is a lack of literature on the challenges and potentials of developing coffee tourism from the perspective of emerging coffee-producing regions like Sarawak, which is a valuable avenue for exploration amidst the growing popularity

of coffee tourism. Thus, this area of research warrants further attention not only from academia but also from governmental agencies and people's organizations (Sitikarn et al., 2022).

Methods

Qualitative methodology was employed to address the research questions. Specifically, a case study research design was adopted to explore the experiences and attitudes of supply-side coffee industry stakeholders regarding the potential and role of coffee in responsible tourism in Sarawak. Through continuous data collection and analysis, the case study approach allowed for the emergence of theoretical concepts without the influence of pre-existing frameworks or theories (Bowen, 2006; Yin, 2014).

Given the focus of this study on local coffee production, it drew upon the experiences of coffee producers in Sarawak, Malaysia. Accordingly, the participants in this study were farmer-business owners and local community leaders. A total of eight participants were selected using purposive sampling (see Table 1). Among them, five were farmers who began planting coffee trees in 2020 during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, while three were community leaders who have played a crucial role in facilitating coffee production in Bau, Sarawak, an emerging coffee destination.

Table 1: Background information of the participants

Participants	Background	Farm Location
Participant A	Farmer	Tringgus Lama, Bau
Participant B	Farmer	Lundu
Participant C	Farmer	Ulu Tinji Baram
Participant D	Farmer	Batu Kawa
Participant E	Farmer	Lundu
Participant F	Head of Local Community	Tringgus Bong, Bau
Participant G	Community Leader	Bau
Participant H	Community Leader	Taiton, Bau

Primary data was collected using individual, semi-structured, in-depth interviews with all eight participants. The collected data was analyzed thematically to construct codes based on emerging patterns from the interviews. Following the criteria set by Braun and Clarke (2012), the data was first examined thoroughly before being grouped according to recurring thoughts and phrases. Codes were then generated from common ideas and classified into themes. The authors reviewed and counterchecked the themes independently to ensure that appropriateness and trustworthiness of the analysis. Data saturation occurred in the sixth interview, as no new themes or patterns emerged after that point. The identified themes are discussed in the following section.

Results and Discussion

The findings reveal that farmers view coffee planting as a tool to balance the local supply and demand for coffee in Sarawak. For the participants, coffee helps not only in generating economic gains for themselves, but also in building social capital among community members

and expanding the market for coffee producers and consumers. These beliefs are evinced in the following excerpts:

I found planting coffee interesting and started doing it on my suitable empty land. The coffee is growing well and it has become an alternative source of income by selling it to my partner who supplied me with the seedlings. I hope it can expand and become one of the main tourism products in Sarawak. (Participant D)

Learning about the potential benefits of planting coffee in Sarawak, I researched Reka Jaya Plantation online and started planting coffee on the land I bought. Being the first in the area to do so, I hope to earn alternative income from selling the coffee and eventually make it my main source of income. (Participant B)

In line with the participants' beliefs, previous studies have demonstrated that coffee production can effectively enhance social capacity and generate income for local communities (Auliah et al., 2022). While previous generations of farmers mostly focused on cultivating oil palm, current generations have begun exploring possibilities to diversify their crops in order to increase their income. Consequently, many individuals have recognized the potential of coffee and commenced its cultivation.

According to the participants, they gradually started to believe that coffee production and consumption could be a game changer for Sarawak as it had led to unexpected revenues and partnerships among local stakeholders. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government distributed seeds to assist farmers in growing coffee. Although many of the participants had limited prior experience in coffee cultivation, this initiative by the government enabled them to embark on their coffee production journey. Subsequently, other stakeholders, including community members and organizations, began forming partnerships among themselves to engage in coffee production. The participants explained this phenomenon as follows:

Our village joined in the Agriculture Facility Funding, which was led by local government agencies. I as the leader was guided and told to plant the coffees with my communities...and realized that coffee planting has the potential to contribute to our income and coffee tourism. (Participant F)

I think it is a good alternative source of income...Besides that, I want to try to create job opportunities for the youngsters in my area. As most of them are leaving to big cities for work and only the elderly are left. For me this is a big issue as we really need young people to stay here to take care of the place and hopefully develop the place together. (Participant C)

The social partnership fostered by local communities aligns with existing viewpoints (e.g., Candelo et al., 2019) on the importance of cooperation among stakeholders for the success of coffee tourism. Community involvement is indeed crucial in responsible management (Chen et al., 2021). However, barriers from other stakeholders continue to pose significant obstacles to fully realizing the benefits of coffee tourism (Degarege & Lovelock, 2021). As a result, the partnership among Sarawak farmers has led them to recognize the need for further collaboration to address this important social issue. Moreover, in response to the lack of technical training and funding from institutional stakeholders, such as the government, the farmers' growing interest in coffee has motivated them to take the initiative to independently

learn coffee farming practices through various methods. This represents a major challenge for coffee plantations in Sarawak. Many of the participants shared similar experiences, as described below:

Lacking support from experts, professionals, and the government, I had to learn everything about coffee planting from scratch. Experimenting on my own, I discovered the best ways to maintain and increase the coffee quality. (Participant C)

No one taught us how to maintain it, how we should plant it. So, what we did was just plant it and observe the growth of the coffee plants. Since we did some fruit planting, so we just try to do what we know and try it on coffee plants too. Our leader just gave us the coffee seedlings and asked us to plant them, but never taught us how to plant them or how to maintain them. (Participant E)

Based on the preceding excerpts, the participants have highlighted the impact of the absence of social partnerships in coffee planting. Consequently, they have to invest more time in adjusting and refining their methods of planting coffee seedlings. As noted by Rhiney et al. (2021), establishing partnerships with government agencies can enhance the effectiveness of coffee plantations and potentially lead to innovative approaches. Furthermore, this finding emphasizes the importance of good governance and knowledge management to achieve overall effectiveness in all aspects.

The findings likewise reveal that farmers view coffee as a representation of what Sarawak can offer. The participants expressed that the coffee variant and flavor produced locally has great potential for enhancing Sarawak's destination image, tradition, and legacy. According to the participants:

Talking and sharing about coffee's history in Sarawak could increase the knowledge of consumers. As it is rarely known by the public, the importance of coffee in Sarawak can be shared for education purposes through tourism activities as well (Participant F)

I personally think that planting Liberica in Sarawak can produce unique coffee due to our weather and abundant tropical fruits. By combining the flavors, we can create something new and special that contributes to our coffee bean's aroma. (Participant D)

The statements above complement Jolliffe's (2010) assertion that coffee is an indispensable component of the tourism experience at the producing destination. In fact, the findings of this study show that farmers view coffee to be an integral part of the tourism experience, as it is a daily necessity for locals and tourists. Given its pervasive importance, coffee production and consumption cannot be alienated from the tourism experience. Some participants supported the potential of coffee tourism, stating that:

Coffee is more than just a drink; it's an experience. Why don't we create a natural coffee experience that allows people to enjoy and try it for themselves, in line with the current trend of simpler and more natural tourism. (Participant A)

... if coffee farms can be the same as [other destinations] ...[it will allow] the tourists to experience something different and pick their own coffee beans, cook (roast) them and make their own coffee. (Participant B)

The participants agreed that “experience” has become a crucial element in modern tourism. This signifies that experiencing local culture and traditions has become a popular trend among tourists. Several studies have pointed to the rising prominence of gastronomy tourism and agri-tourism in particular (Gheorghie et al., 2014; Testa et al., 2019). Consequently, developing coffee tourism in Sarawak holds the potential to establish the state as a renowned destination for tourists seeking agricultural and gastronomic experiences. This would add value to Sarawak’s tourism, especially since Sarawak is already promoted as a popular spot for nature and eco-tourism enthusiasts. To achieve this, coffee tourism can be encouraged through collaborations with various stakeholders and government agencies such as Sarawak Tourism Board, Ministry of Tourism, and local travel agencies.

Furthermore, the findings of this study suggest that the farmers are highly supportive of coffee tourism in Sarawak. Recognizing the immense potential of coffee, they expressed that it is one of the key reasons they started cultivating coffee on their own land. According to the participants:

Sarawak presents a fresh and unique opportunity to serve as a platform for farmers to promote and market their coffee and expand their knowledge and experiences. (Participant B)

I started to plant coffee hoping that it can be developed into a tourism spot one day. And like I said, I hope this can create more job opportunities at my place, my hometown, so the youngsters can stay here to develop our hometown together. (Participant C)

Since we have our homestay ready here, we are glad to develop this coffee farm and coffee tourism in our area so we can add value to tourism products. Moreover, this can become a platform for everyone to learn as well so we can improve our quality and quantity of coffee plantation. (Participant E)

The excerpts above illustrate how coffee has evolved from being a routine beverage to becoming an emerging attraction and a symbol of gastronomic culture, embodying the historical and cultural narratives of Sarawak (Kleidas & Jolliffe, 2010; Manzo, 2010). This transformation can be attributed to the third wave of coffee culture, which places significant emphasis on extending insights and practices related to coffee cultivation (Setiyorini, 2019). Therefore, tourism can serve as a viable means to enhance Sarawak as a special interest destination, with coffee at the heart of the tourism experience.

The local community leaders also commented on what the government, professionals, and local authorities should prioritize in order to address the challenges faced by local farmers. They expressed their concerns as follows:

This lack of support has made it difficult to convince others to participate in or support coffee tourism. The challenge is further compounded by the lack of trust among local communities in coffee plantations. (Participant G)

Seeking help from government agencies or professionals can be challenging as they prioritize benefits over resolving issues faced by local communities. Furthermore, youth disinterest in agricultural activities and difficulty educating the elderly about new ventures such as coffee farming add to the challenge. (Participant H)

Based on these excerpts, local community leaders have articulated the significance of social partnerships and highlighted the impact that the absence of such partnerships can have. From the leaders' perspective, social partnerships are essential for long-term success. Prior research corroborates that partnerships enhance management effectiveness and generate stable income over time (Rhiney et al., 2021; Gebreselassie & Ludi, 2007). Additionally, Nandakishor et al. (2022) indicated that government bodies' collaboration in coffee agroforestry or coffee plantation can lead to a stable annual income, which instills confidence and trust among local communities to actively participate in and support coffee tourism. Rhiney et al. (2022) also reinforced that support from government agencies and professional bodies effectively alleviates the challenges faced by local communities, which can realize the crucial role of labor and maintain healthy ecosystems for generating and sustaining profits. Although the aforementioned studies were conducted in different countries, they demonstrate similarities in local farmers' and communities' need for assistance from government agencies or professional bodies in order to succeed. Ultimately, locals should see the tangible benefits and future development of coffee plantations so as to resolve issues such as lack of support and youth disinterest in agricultural activities.

Conclusion

While existing literature has predominantly focused on the perspective of coffee consumers, this study sought to explore how Sarawak's coffee suppliers can harness the potential of coffee as a niche segment of tourism. Based on the premise that coffee tourism bridges the gaps between a destination's coffee supply and demand while also addressing responsible tourism challenges, our aim is to provide recommendations for balancing coffee production and promoting coffee tourism in Sarawak. Therefore, using individual semi-structured interviews with Sarawakian coffee producers and community leaders, we answered two research questions related to the challenges faced by local coffee production chains and the potential of coffee tourism.

Throughout the interviews, the primary issue highlighted by coffee suppliers is the need for a balanced support system from stakeholders. The findings reveal that without technical knowledge in growing and maintaining seedlings to achieve good quality, farmers have had to rely on self-learning for most planting techniques. Meanwhile, the response and assistance from government authorities have been slow, indicating an imbalance in the value chain. Training and capacity-building initiatives, which farmers view as essential, have also been lacking. Furthermore, government and private sector professionals who can provide training and consultation on coffee cultivation remain inaccessible. Despite these challenges, coffee producers in Sarawak are actively striving to move forward by seeking opportunities to expand and improve their coffee plantations. They are diversifying their coffee varieties to create unique and marketable products in Sarawak, which in turn creates more job opportunities and sources of income. Additionally, they aim to establish a coffee education hub near their hometown to provide training and knowledge transfer to those interested in coffee cultivation. Such initiatives can serve as a starting point for promoting coffee planting, thereby contributing

to the development of Sarawak's image and the betterment of the surrounding communities (Candelo et al., 2019; Seo, 2019).

This research has found that coffee tourism in Sarawak demonstrates great potential. However, its success requires significant efforts from various parties, including government agencies, stakeholders, professionals, and farmers. Collaboration among these parties is crucial to achieving both short-term and long-term goals for coffee tourism in Sarawak. A study conducted by Dodds et al. (2018) highlights that collaboration with stakeholders or professionals is a key factor in the success of ecotourism development. Therefore, it is especially imperative for government agencies to work closely with professionals in providing training and knowledge transfer to local farmers. By doing so, the overall quality of coffee crops can be guaranteed, ensuring long-term success. This will enable the coffee plantations to be showcased and open for visiting to national and international tourists.

Implications

Theoretically, this study contributes three key rationales on why suppliers see coffee as a game changer for coffee-producing destinations like Sarawak: coffee is an indispensable element in stakeholder collaborations for social entrepreneurship; coffee is a symbol of a destination's heritage; and coffee is an integral part of the tourism experience (Jolliffe, 2010; Kleidas & Jolliffe, 2010). Practically, this study suggests that coffee producers in emerging coffee-producing regions like Sarawak can benefit by transforming their coffee branding from a mere agricultural commodity into an emblem that represents their destination's legacy and elevates the overall tourism experience through its flavor. This can be achieved by promoting Sarawak as a coffee tourism destination that offers creative coffee-centered experiences (Opoku et al., 2021), such as do-it-yourself coffee picking and roasting, immersive plantation tours, and storytelling through coffee.

On the other hand, the findings of this study also underscore the need to enhance capacity-building for enterprises by addressing training needs and funding concerns, which can be spearheaded by destination management organizations and people's organizations. Therefore, we suggest that local authorities and government agencies take the initiative and play a critical role in supporting coffee tourism by providing assistance and resources to coffee producers. By providing farmers with the necessary resources and technical assistance, local authorities can help them overcome common challenges such as lack of access to finance, inputs, and markets. Effective knowledge transfer can also promote sustainability in coffee production and preserve the environment. Ultimately, investing in knowledge transfer through cross-collaboration among stakeholders is an investment that can shape a bright and lucrative future for coffee farming, while also generating livelihoods for locals and promoting responsible tourism management in developing nations (Chen et al., 2021). Therefore, it is essential for local authorities and government agencies to recognize the value of coffee farming and support farmers' efforts towards sustainable and profitable production.

Limitations and future research

Despite the contributions of this study, it is not without its limitations. First, data collection was limited to Sarawak, following the case study design. Future research should consider expanding to other destinations with similar coffee production value chains to allow for comparisons. Second, data was gathered from a sample of five coffee farmer-producers and three community leaders. Subsequent studies should aim to include a broader range of

stakeholders and increase the sample size. Specifically, the development of coffee tourism necessitates cooperation among farmers, the coffee industry, and the government. Involving more participants from these three parties in future studies would provide insights for the improvement of coffee supply chains in Sarawak. Further investigations of these stakeholders are also recommended to establish a platform for communication and resource integration, which can empower coffee farmer communities and upgrade the tourism industry in Sarawak.

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Appendix

Semi-Structured Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about your coffee production process.
2. What is your role in the coffee production process?
3. What are your reasons or motivations for doing so? Why so?
4. How would you describe the current coffee production in Sarawak?
5. What are your expectations for the future of coffee production in Sarawak?
6. How do you think these expectations can be achieved?
7. What are your thoughts about coffee tourism in Sarawak?
8. What can you say about the potential of coffee tourism in Sarawak?
9. Do you think coffee tourism can help meet your expectations for the future of coffee in Sarawak? Why or why not?
10. Can you describe some activities you (or your organization) can do to support coffee tourism in Sarawak?
11. What do you think are the outcomes of these activities for the status of coffee in Sarawak?



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