



Current Situation of Hung Yen Longan in Vietnam: Implications for Lifelong Innovation and Sustainable Rural Livelihoods

Thi Thu Trang Nguyen*, Bussagorn Leejoeiwara ; Chuanchen Bi

College of Graduate Study in Management, Khon Kaen University, Khon Kaen, Thailand

*nguyen.thi@kkumail.com

Abstract. Hung Yen longan is one of Vietnam's most distinctive agricultural products, recognized for its unique flavor and long-standing cultivation tradition. This study aims to examine the current situation of Hung Yen longan production, marketing practices and export circumstances. The research adopts a descriptive approach based on secondary data. The findings indicate that Hung Yen longan possesses significant strengths, including a rich diversity of indigenous varieties and increasing adoption of quality standards like Vietnamese Good Agricultural Practices (VietGAP), Global Good Agricultural Practices (GlobalGAP) and organic farming. The domestic market remains the primary consumption channel, supported by diversified distribution systems and expanding digital marketing platforms. However, the export scale is still relatively limited compared to production capacity, facing challenges related to post-harvest preservation, inconsistent quality and fragmented production. In order to promote sustainable market expansion, the paper suggests enhancing processing capacity, improving traceability systems and strengthening value chain linkages. Future research should focus on market-specific strategies and consumer behavior to support long-term export development. Beyond its economic significance, the development of Hung Yen longan depends on the continuity of farming knowledge, adaptation to new market demands across generations and the ability of rural households to sustain livelihoods over time. Innovation in this sector should be understood not just in terms of export growth and commercialization, but also in terms of how training, standardization and participation in the digital market can preserve and transfer the experience of older farmers to younger generations.

Keywords: Hung Yen Longan, Vietnam, Lifelong Innovation, Rural Aging.

1 Introduction

Longan is one of the most important fruit crops in Vietnam, with a cultivation area exceeding 80,000 hectares and an annual production of approximately 600,000 tons. The fruit has been exported to several markets, such as China, Australia, Japan, Thailand, etc. and ranked as the second-fastest-growing fruit export of Vietnam after durian.

Despite this potential, most longan production is still consumed domestically and export volume of fresh longan remains relatively modest. Within Vietnam, longan production is mainly concentrated in Mekong Delta in the South and several northern provinces, particularly Hung Yen. Hung Yen longan is widely considered as one of the most 50 famous fruits in Vietnam. This longan has a long historical and cultural significance and was granted Geographical Indication (GI) in 2017. In addition, the traditional knowledge of cultivating Hung Yen longan has been recognized as a national intangible cultural heritage. Despite its strong reputation, Hung Yen longan faces several challenges that limit its export potential. Production is largely based on small-scale household orchards, leading to inconsistent product quality, while the number of export-certified growing areas remains limited. Therefore, understanding the current production, marketing and export situation of Hung Yen longan is essential for evaluating its development potential.

This paper aims to examine the current state of Hung Yen longan in Vietnam as a basis for further studies on its market expansion. The development of Hung Yen longan can also be viewed from the perspective of lifelong innovation. Agricultural knowledge in this sector is accumulated over time through practical experience, especially among elderly farming households who preserve cultivation techniques and orchard management practices. At the same time, the future competitiveness of the industry increasingly depends on whether such knowledge can be transferred to younger generations and integrated with new innovation such as standardized production, traceability systems, digital marketing and value-added processing. Thus, examining the current situation of Hung Yen longan is also relevant for exploring how rural livelihoods, inter-generational learning and age-inclusive innovation can be sustained over time.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Supply Chain Management

Supply Chain Management (SCM) refers to the coordination and integration of activities from suppliers to final consumers with the aim of optimizing the performance of the entire system [1]. SCM contains several key business processes such as customer relationship management, customer service management, order fulfillment, manufacturing flow management, procurement, and product development and commercialization [2]. In agricultural sectors, effective supply chain management is critical because of the product perishability and the need for efficient distribution systems.

As environmental awareness increase, green supply chain management (GSCM) has become a significant approach in modern supply chains. It is a tool taking into account the environmental impacts in supply chain operations for increasing organizations economic performance and their competitiveness [3]. It involves practices such as green design, green operations, green procurement, green logistics, waste management and green production [4]. Environment, strategy and logistics form the core of agriculture GSCM, involving recycling, reprocessing and monitoring environmental standards [5].

Furthermore, value chain analysis looks at every step involved in getting a product from production to final consumption [6]. In agriculture, the value chain typically includes input supply, production, trading, warehousing, processing, wholesale or export, and retail [7]. Analyzing these stages helps identify inefficiencies and opportunities for value creation in perishable products such as fruits, where post-harvest handling and marketing channels have a big impact on competitiveness.

2.2 Geographical Indication

Geographical Indication (GI) agricultural products now hold a steady place in the world's food markets. GI is a label used to identify products that originate from a particular geographical origin and possess quality, reputation or other characteristic attributed to that locality [8]. In the European Union, GI schemes are better known as protected geographical indication (PGI) and protected designation of origin (PDO). These labels not only convey the origin of a product but also guarantee product-specific qualities by codifying product requirements. GI labels support value creation for agri-food products by enhancing consumer perception and purchase-related outcomes [9]. However, adoption among small and medium-sized enterprises remains limited due to lack of awareness and concerns about efforts required to adopt such labels [10].

2.3 Marketing Strategy for Vegetables and Fruits

Marketing is the process of planning, coordinating and managing the movement of horticultural products from the farm to the customer. It consists of several procedures that ensure the successful and seamless transportation of agricultural goods from the production site to the consuming site. Effective marketing strategies and marketing channels are essential for reducing post-harvest losses and improving farmers' income [11]. Research indicates that direct producer-to-consumer channel is the most efficient marketing channel adopted by farmers for their vegetable produce [12]. There are several suggestions to improve agribusiness and marketing efficiency such as promoting farmer cooperatives, enhancing market transparency, developing infrastructure and strengthening value chain coordination.

2.4 Lifelong Innovation and Rural Aging

Lifelong innovation in rural development should not be understood only as the adoption of new technologies, but also as the ability of communities and producers to learn, adapt and transfer knowledge across different stages of life. In agricultural sectors based on local specialization, competitiveness often depends on both inherited experience and new market-oriented capabilities. While older farmers frequently play an important role in preserving cultivation knowledge, varietal selection experience and local production practices, younger generations are typically more involved in digital communication, e-commerce and service innovation. Therefore, the sustainable development of GI-based agricultural products requires age-inclusive innovation mechanisms that connect traditional knowledge with modern standards, processing and marketing systems.

3 Research Method

This study adopts a qualitative and descriptive research design to understand the production, marketing and export situation of Hung Yen longan as a geographically indicated agricultural product. The study primarily relies on secondary data collected from 2022 to 2026 from official national government reports such as Ministry of Agriculture and Environment and General Statistics Office of Vietnam, provincial reports from Hung Yen authorities, reputable national and local news as well as industry publications. Data sources were selected based on three main criteria: relevance to the research topic, credibility of the source and recency of publication, with a focus on information published within the last five years. The collected data are analyzed using content analysis. The data were coded into key themes, including production trends, marketing channels and export performance. These themes were interpreted to identify patterns and overall trends in the development of Hung Yen longan.

4 Result

4.1 Plantation and Production Situation

Hung Yen province currently preserves approximately 50 longan genetic varieties, of which more than 40 are indigenous and originate from genetic lines of an ancient longan tree that is over 300 years old. This place currently has roughly 5,800 hectares of longan cultivation area, of which around 15–20% is dedicated to specialty longan varieties such as Ancient and Duong phen. These plantations are mainly concentrated in communes and wards such as Hong Chau, Tan Hung, Duc Hop, where soil and climatic conditions are ideal for growing longan. Farmers in these areas also possess extensive experience in cultivation techniques, fertilization management and pest control practices. Among these areas, Tan Hung commune, which is known for its high-value varieties, has the greatest longan cultivation area in the province, with approximately 330 hectares, including 240 hectares certified under VietGAP standards. Although premium varieties generally have lower productivity, their market price can be three to four times higher than regular longan varieties. Consequently, farmers must possess detailed knowledge of each variety's biological characteristics and apply appropriate cultivation techniques to achieve optimal economic returns.

In terms of production output, Hung Yen was expected to harvest more than 50,000 tons of longan in 2025, a 15% increase over the previous year, of which over 60% met VietGAP or organic production standards. The three main phases of the longan harvesting season are as follows: early-season longan harvested before July 30, accounting for approximately 10% of the cultivation area; main-season longan harvested from August 1 to August 30, representing around 50% of the area; and late-season longan harvested from August 30 to September 20, accounting for about 40% of the area. With the ongoing growth in cultivating areas and productivity, Hung Yen longan plays a vital role in agricultural economics and helps thousands of smallholders make a better living. In a lifespan perspective, these production improvements are also important since they

help sustain rural livelihoods over time and reduce dependence on tacit knowledge held by only a limited number of experienced growers. Training, cultivation guidelines and standardization make it easier for younger farmers and family successors to learn and carry on longan production.

Hung Yen longan produced in accordance with standards like VietGAP typically features thin skin, thick pulp and a naturally sweet aroma. Farmers commonly use composted organic fertilizers and certified plant protection products, under the supervision of agricultural cooperatives and the Hung Yen Regional Agricultural Technical Center. In many areas of the province, safe and high-quality longan production models have demonstrated positive economic outcomes, improving farmers' income by approximately 15–20% compared to traditional cultivation methods. To facilitate export activities, the Plant Protection Department has granted 27 planting area codes for longan production areas meeting VietGAP standards.

4.2 Marketing Practices

Currently, Hung Yen longan is distributed through various traditional marketing channels, including gift products, supermarkets, clean fruit stores and markets in major Vietnamese cities such as Hanoi, Hai Phong and Ho Chi Minh City, while a smaller portion is exported to several foreign markets. Global consumption trends have increasingly shifted toward value-added processed products, such as dried longan, frozen longan, longan juice and longan jam. Nonetheless, the production of those products in Hung Yen is still largely conducted at the household scale, which restricts production volume, market visibility and overall product value. Expanding the local processing industry could significantly increase value-added products, extend the product shelf life and ease the seasonal pressure associated with the short harvest period.

To encourage farmers in reaching broader markets, the Hung Yen provincial government has implemented various initiatives to promote market growth. These efforts include supporting the development of product brands and collective trademarks, issuing planting area codes for fruit crops including longan, and enhancing transparency in product information for consumers. In addition, government agencies have assisted cooperatives and orchard owners in taking part in various agricultural trade promotion events organized by ministries and national agencies. Hung Yen longan producers have also participated in agricultural fairs and exhibitions held in many provinces and cities across Vietnam.

In domestic market, Hung Yen longan is distributed through major retail chains such as VinMart, Big C, AEON and Co.opmart. Beyond traditional methods, Hung Yen has utilized digital marketing and social media platforms, including TikTok, Facebook and Zalo. Local authorities have organized livestream sales sessions directly from longan orchards, enabling farmers to introduce fresh products to consumers in real time. Longan products are also distributed through major e-commerce sites, including Shopee, Lazada, Sendo and Voso. In parallel, Hung Yen has encouraged the development of agro-ecotourism associated with longan orchards, allowing visitors to experience local agricultural culture while promoting direct consumption of fresh fruit. These marketing strategies create a strong communication effect that accelerates consumption during the

harvest season. These approaches create opportunities for intergenerational collaboration within households. Younger family members contribute through online branding, livestream selling and e-commerce operations, while elders make contributions through cultivation experience, quality assessment and orchard management knowledge.

Hung Yen is one of the leading provinces in organizing longan weeks and longan festivals, which connect supply and demand in major markets such as Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. In recent years, the province has proactively coordinated with the Ministry of Industry and Trade to participate in several online trade promotion conferences with foreign markets. The province has focused on strengthening brand protection and product identity through the development of logos, packaging designs, product declarations and traceability systems. Hung Yen has implemented a provincial traceability system connected with the national traceability system, ensuring transparency in product origin and enhancing consumer trust. Through these efforts, Hung Yen has gradually affirmed its reputation as the “longan capital” of Vietnam.

4.3 Export Situation

Hung Yen has 19 planting areas granted export codes for markets such as China, United States, Japan, Singapore, etc. which cover nearly 220 hectares with an estimated production of more than 3,000 tons. Among these markets, China remains the largest consumer. The market is gradually shifting from informal border trade to official export channels with stricter requirements for registered planting area codes, standardized packaging and clear labeling. Other markets such as Japan and South Korea are considered high-value but demanding about pesticide residue levels and product quality control, although the selling price in these markets can be significantly higher than in traditional markets. Similarly, markets such as the United States and the European Union prioritize products that meet organic production standards, clear traceability systems and internationally recognized certifications. Additionally, markets in the ASEAN region and the Middle East also present promising opportunities due to their geographical proximity, diverse consumer demand and relatively fewer technical barriers.

To meet export regulations, cultivation, harvesting and post-harvest handling must adhere to technical standards, including proper pruning practices, the use of organic fertilizers, integrated pest management, and standardized sorting, packaging and processing procedures. However, due to unfavorable weather, longan may easily develop skin blemishes, cracking or visual defects, which reduce their suitability for export markets. Furthermore, production costs for export-oriented longan are estimated to be about 20% higher than those for domestic consumption due to stricter quality requirements and certification processes. Nevertheless, export prices are often 50% higher, which can generate significant profit margins for farmers and exporters. The sustainability of export upgrading depends not only on infrastructure and market access but also on whether producers of different ages are able to receive training, comply with standards and remain included in upgraded value chains. If innovation is not age-inclusive, some older farming households may face difficulties in adapting to new export requirements.

Hung Yen longan is widely appreciated for its natural sweetness, aromatic flavor and thin peel. However, these characteristics also create challenges in post-harvest

preservation. Maintaining fresh longan quality during international transportation, which can take between 14 and 30 days, or extending storage for two to six months for export purposes, remains technically difficult. To address these challenges, the provincial Department of Industry and Trade has been cooperating with logistics providers to optimize transportation costs and cold-chain preservation systems, ensuring that longan quality is maintained during both sea and air transportation for export markets.

In addition, traditional habits in cultivation and production practices in some areas make it challenging to meet export standards, particularly in terms of traceability and standardized production procedures. Another challenge arises from the large number of longan varieties cultivated within the province, resulting in differences in quality and making it difficult to supply large volumes of products with consistent standards for export. Many farming households still depend heavily on intermediary traders with limited direct linkage to export enterprises, which restricts their ability to capture higher profit margins within the value chain. The provincial authorities have promoted sustainable linkages between production, processing and consumption to improve product quality, ensure food safety and meet the requirements of high-standard markets.

5 Conclusion and Discussion

This study highlights the current situation of Hung Yen longan in terms of production capacity, marketing strategies and export potential. The findings indicate that while Hung Yen possesses strong advantages in indigenous varieties, product quality and growing market recognition, the industry remains constrained by limited processing capacity, inconsistent quality and challenges in meeting international standards. These findings suggest that improving value-added processing, strengthening standardization and traceability system, and enhancing farmer-enterprise linkages are critical to increasing the competitiveness of this longan. In addition, expanding into high-value and geographically proximate markets such as Thailand could provide a strategic direction for sustainable export growth. More importantly, for the theme of lifespan innovation, the development of Hung Yen longan should also be understood as a process of sustaining rural livelihoods over time, preserving accumulated cultivation knowledge and enabling innovation that can be adopted by farmers across generations.

This study is limited by the lack of detailed quantitative data on market share and export performance. Future research can focus on comparative market analysis, consumer preferences and specific entry strategies to optimize the export potential of Hung Yen longan in regional markets. The sustainability of Hung Yen longan production is intimately related to the generational shift in agriculture within the framework of life-long innovation. The current farming population is gradually getting older, and new generations need to be more involved in order to preserve indigenous longan varieties and traditional agriculture skills. In order to maintain product quality as well as the long-term sustainability and resilience of the local agricultural system, it is crucial to encourage youth participation, innovation uptake and knowledge transfer. In the context of aging agricultural workforce, this also supports sustainable rural livelihoods and enhances the quality of life for farmers.

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