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Strategic Application of Sustainable Development Goals SDG#9 Innovation for Low Altitude Economy – Malan Lake Desert for Community Development

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore the steps of applying design thinking to identify wellness related business in desert areas, for example Melan Lake, Mongolia China for sustainable development. The aim of this paper is to explore the key factors for community development with culture with ISO elements for Sustainable Development Goal #4.7. Knowledge Transfer and #8 Economic Impacts. In order to define the possible variables that were connected to impacts with solutions, research was carried out. In the study, four articles on low altitude economy and drone applications for desert were examined. Based on the authors' visits on Malan Lake desert in the past few years and four selected articles published from 1996 to 2024 on drone and desert eco-tourism by using Nvivo for a text search. The search result showed that the key factors for Understanding Community Development with Culture (3,328 references) are 1) Drone Site Selection (423 references), 2) Sustainable Upcycled Concepts Application (907 references), and 3) Regulations with Quality Check (122 references). (Figure 1). This is managerial relevant to understanding community development with culture from a new perspective for skills development, curriculum planning and drone ecotourism /creative art and cultural event management. It is expected to have quantitative and qualitative research for drone event management programmes on Qualifcation Framework (QF) for competency building on service providers.

Keywords: Community development with culture, Low altitude economy, Malan lake desert, SDG.

1. Background

The rapid evolution of drone technology in low altitude economy (LEA) has opened new horizons across various sectors, particularly in entertainment and the burgeoning low-altitude economy. In Hong Kong and the broader Asian context, these advancements trigger to re-think innovative ways in service delivery, for example, entertainment with electronic fireworks display and delivery services under 1,000 meter, bringing transformations in green service supply chain management industries. Moreever, it provides ample opportunities for skills development and economic growth. This article explores the integration of drone and advanced technology, for example, AI within entertainment and low-altitude economic activities, emphasizing the role of design thinking with empathy, ideate, define, prototype and validation and inquiry-based learning models for higher education sector and workforce development so as to align the policy of HKSAR.

Based on information available on low altitude economy, "The LAE is one of the key policy initiatives announced in the "The Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address". The Working Group on Developing Low-altitude Economy was established under the leadership of the Deputy Financial Secretary, Mr Michael Wong, to promote institutional innovation, technology implementation, and industry ecosystem building. Speaking at the forum, Mr Wong said that developing a low-altitude economy has to be a joint effort. The Government will act as a facilitator and enabler, and will continue to move at a fast pace. He noted that the low-altitude economy has strong synergy with other sectors of the economy, stimulating growth and driving positive changes. The total impact and benefits to society, he said, will be greater than the sum of its parts." (Source: https://www.investhk.gov.hk/en/news/investhk-hosts-inaugural-low-altitude-economy-forum-government-industry-academia-and-research-join-forces-to-drive-development-of-hong-kongs-low-altitude-innovation-ecosystem/)

1.1. The Rise of Drone Technology in Entertainment Business and Low-Altitude Economy

Based on experiences of UNICEF 2021, it is realised that "UNICEF is using Uncrewed Aircraft Vehicles (UAV), commonly known as drones, to deliver life-saving medical supplies, to collect aerial imagery that helps map risks and save children's lives in emergencies, and to help bridge the connectivity gap." (UNICEF Office of Innovation & ICTD, 23rd and 24th Nov. 2021). They also mentioned that "Students from UNICEF Innovations Lab study UAV during drone testing for search and rescue operations in Kazakhstan, UNICEF Kazakhstan 2019." Besides using drones in life saving medical supplies and rescue operations, drones,

have been transitioned to mainstream commercial uses and entertainment business under the low-altitude economy. According to the Hong Kong Government's InvestHK portal, drone technology is seen as a catalyst for new business opportunities, particularly in media, tourism, and creative industries (InvestHK, 2023). Drones enable capturing stunning aerial footage for films, concerts, and live events, enriching entertainment experiences and creating novel content formats.

In the context of tourism, drones facilitate innovative marketing and promotional activities by providing immersive aerial views of Hong Kong's iconic skyline, beaches, and cultural sites. This not only elevates the city's profile globally but also stimulates local creative talent to develop new content, thus nurturing a vibrant entertainment ecosystem. Moreover, drones are integral to the development of low-altitude economies (LAE) — urban areas where activities and services operate at low altitudes—beyond traditional manufacturing or logistics. For instance, drone delivery services and aerial inspections are emerging sectors within this economy, promising efficiency and cost savings. The Hong Kong government actively promotes these sectors, recognizing their potential to diversify the economy and create high-value jobs (InvestHK, 2023).

1.2. Skills Development and Innovation in Hong Kong and Asia

The proliferation of drone applications underpins a pressing need for specialized skills and innovative talent. To capitalize on these opportunities, Hong Kong and Asia are investing in workforce upskilling and education programs. The government's emphasis on technology-driven talent development aligns with global trends towards digital literacy and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education. In Hong Kong, skills development initiatives focus on fostering expertise in drone piloting, maintenance, data analysis, and application development. The government encourages partnerships with universities, vocational schools, and industry stakeholders to create training programs that align with industry needs.

Asia's broader approach involves establishing innovation hubs and incubators that promote entrepreneurship in drone technology. (https://itif.org/about/) (https://www2.itif.org/2025-itif-chey-national-innovation-systems.pdf).

Lee & Kim, 2022). These initiatives aim to cultivate a skilled workforce capable of supporting advanced drone applications across entertainment, logistics, agriculture, and emergency services.

1.3. Design Thinking and Inquiry Learning Models in Skills Development

The proliferation of drone applications triggers the education sector to explore specialized skills and innovative talents for events involved with drone applications. To capitalize on these opportunities, Hong Kong and Asia are investing in workforce upskilling and education programmess, for example, global trends of applying drone in event management, entertainment business, and eco-tourism. Traditional flight and aviation programmes may not cater the needs of drone applications, focus on fostering expertise in drone piloting, maintenance, data analysis, and application development for new service management. It is time to explore and select a learning site with drone application for low altitude and green economy.

Based on a paper published in seven years ago in aim2flourish on SDG implementatin, the article mentioned that "in 2011, Mr Yuen established a company of "Alxa League Springfield Forest Limited" to continue the environmental project and pull people with different skill sets to help. ….. During the interview, Mr. Yuen highlighted that their main challenges for sustainable development were: Strong wind blows up the sand; Huge sand dune appears; Up to heights over 30 m; Moves forward up to 10 to 12 m per year; Strong wind can easily blow up the plants, even uproots the whole crops. Mr Yuen highlighted that there is a need to re-plant at lowest possible cost, find methods to avoid plants or crops being blown away as water is scarce and costly at high ground. Their team also needs to try to re-plant without irrigation. This relies on professional knowledge despite attempts to learn from local and international experts." (https://aim2flourish.com/innovations/evolution-from-ecology-to-social-peace-with-economic-impacts-1)

In recent years, the above issues have been tackled with experts from different disciplines. Zhu (2023) conducted a research of the Malan-Lake project, the author re-examined the social problem of desert control and introduce innovative exploration from the perspective of Design Thinking. The main contents that the author discovered are "(1) field investigation and problem definition; (2) methodology and the process of concept formation; (3) innovative scheme prototype based on the workshop; (4) innovative practices tests and the future. The aim is to provide new perspectives for desert control." The new perspective on desert control and innovative scheme is related to SDG#8 economic impacts, #9 innovations, and SDG#17 with innovative solutions and transformations from partners who have different background. For the Malan Lake desert, the team from Alxa League Springfield Forest Limited has developed multi-disciplinary knowledge through endless co-operation for an environmental project. And, the project provides a chance not only to survive, to innovate, but to explore the use of latest technology for green eco-tourism and art-cultural tourism under green low altitude economy to generate new service management opportunties. In fact, partnerships with universities, vocational schools, and industry practitioners are encouraged for green low economic activities to align with policy planned, needs fulfillment of service industry, and talents development for social inclusion.

1.4. Design Thinking and Inquiry Learning Models in Skills Development

To effectively nurture our young talents with transformative mindset and innovative problem-solving skills, the five steps of design thinking are crucial. Design thinking, characterized by user-based, scope defined, experimentation, and iterative problem-solving, motivates learners to develop creative solutions in the real-world contexts. In Hong Kong, curriculum designers in higher education institutes have to consider the qualification framework (QF) requirements of The Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) for quality assurance so as to prepare students for meeting future challenges in business, technology and social aspects.
(https://www.hkcaavq.edu.hk/en/accreditation/QF_Related_Accreditation/)

"HKCAAVQ is appointed under the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Ordinance (Cap. 592) as the Accreditation Authority and Qualifications Register (QR) Authority under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF). It is empowered to conduct accreditation activities for academic and vocational operators and their associated education and training programmes and assessment agencies."

Very often, higher education institutes and vocational institutions adopt design thinking into curriculum design, and assessment requirements, encouraging students to identify the root causes of problems, brainstorm solutions from different perspectives with prototypes, and test the proposed prototypes for desirable solutions. In fact, drone-related applications in desert eco-tourism and art-cultural tourism are a challenge for both educators and students. Hence, a project-based learning site in experimental approach involve students to design and test drone-based applications for new service management with selected targets under SDG# 9 innovative and SDG#13 climate change is needed to raise awareness for sustainable tourism services.

Besides, inquiry learning approach complements design thinking by promoting curiosity-driven exploration in the selected learning site, where students may have a chance to feel the real world experience in the desert, investigating new services with ISO standards, flight-related regulations, and ethical considerations. This holistic approach of design thinking with inquiry approach cultivate not only technical skills in drone applications, but also entrepreneurial mindset with innovative quality management concepts and values of resilience, and teamwork—the traits which are essential for thriving in the green low-altitude economy.

1.5. Regulatory Environment and ISO Implementation in Design Plans

A supportive regulatory environment is vital for the sustainable growth of drone-related industries. Based on ISO official website on ISO 21384-2:2021(en)Unmanned aircraft systems — Part 2: UAS components that "*The use of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) or drones, for commercial and recreational purposes has grown in popularity over the last several years. There are many application markets growing rapidly, such as motion pictures and film, security, inspections as well as many uses by organizations to increase public safety. It has been a challenge for operators to use these aircraft due to the lack of regulation and lack of common manufacturing methods a regulator would recognize as safe."For example, 3.5 flight plan is related to the five steps of design thinking and inquiry learning approach to consider safety and ethics in the design plan and prototypes under the scope of Low-Altitude Economy (LAE), leveraging drones for various economic activities, aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) by promoting SDG#9 innovation and SDG#11 sustainable city through drone and design plan in eco-tourism and art-cultural tourism.* (https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/en/#iso:std:iso:21384:-2:ed-1:v1:en). For SDG#13 climate change, a low-noise aircraft and sustainable operational models may be needed to support a green economy, aligning with broader environmental goals to drive a sustainable city.

The Low-Altitude Economy (LAE) has been mentioned by the HKSAR and this leverages drones for various economic activities, aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), e.g. SDG#8 – economic impacts/9 – innovations /11-sustainable cities by promoting eco-tourism and cretive art cultural events. A supportive regulatory environment is vital for the sustainable growth of drone-related event and tourism industries. For the event management with drone and SDGs, it is desirable to have ISO standard implementation for quality events. As we know, the definition for Low-Altitude Economy (LAE) refers to economic activities conducted in the airspace below 1,000 meters, with drones being a primary technological tool. This aligns with UNSDG#9 – innovation that technological advancements have been engaged, for example, drone applications and AI text/image-to-video implementation in promoting the event. (see Figure 1 AI implementation on Text and image for 3-D Video) Recently, a key initiative has been found in HKSAR to test various operational models for drones in a controlled environment, generating data for infrastructure planning and regulatory framework development.

Figure 1. AI implementation on Text and image for 3-D Video.

28th April, 2025

"The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA), in collaboration with the Hong Kong Cyberport Management Company Limited (Cyberport), announced today (28 April) the launch of the second cohort of the Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenA.I.) Sandbox initiative. The GenA.I. Sandbox aims to provide a risk-controlled environment for banks to develop and test innovative solutions using artificial intelligence (A.I.), further advancing the adoption of A.I. technology in the financial sector." (https://www.hkma.gov.hk/eng/news-and-media/press-releases/2025/04/20250428-5/)

2025-26 Budget Speech

During a latest budget speech 2025-26, papragraph 36, the role of AI has been further strengthened via research and development in industry-based approach "

"AI is at the core of developing new quality productive forces. We will leverage the edge of "One Country, Two Systems" and our internationalised characteristic to develop Hong Kong into an international exchange and co-operation hub for the AI industry. Through frontier research and real-world application, we will endeavour to develop AI as a core industry and empower traditional industries in their upgrading and transformation."
(https://www.budget.gov.hk/2025/eng/budget06.html)

Partnerships have also been found between universities for AI and Automation, developing AI and automation systems for drone navigation and airspace management which may be applied in eco-tourism and creativ art cultural related activities with skills development.

From Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to IMM (Impacts Measurement and Management) - Social Impacts and Leadership

The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) guidelines of ISO 26000 highlight that a socially responsible organization needs to be aware of seven dimensions in their operations of business: labor practices, consumer issues, fair operating practices, human rights, organizational governance, community involvement and development and the environment. The priority of the seven dimensions is subject to the strategic planning of the management and the expectations of their stakeholders. For example, the management of a banking organization may need to understand the expectations of their customers when designing and launching different kinds of financial products and services, may need to identify not only their responsibility but also that of their business partners in the supply chain, may need to think about the environmental issues affecting their operations, their customers and their suppliers, and may need to consider ethical issues in their decision-making process so as to balance the economic, social and environmental impacts of sustainability; and the seven dimensions of CSR. The ISO Working Group on Social Responsibility (WG SR) has a high level of consensus in considering the needs of stakeholders in the guidelines of ISO 26000 for the benefit of the community. According to Cajazeira (2008), the major principles for ISO 26000 are: accountability, transparency, ethical behavior, consideration for the stakeholders, legality, international standards, and human rights. It is the responsibility of organizations to consider the needs of the stakeholders in these seven aspects when designing work processes or executing business-related activities. In fact, ISO standard 26000 conveys a message that non-economic inputs and soft side of outcomes are the trend of quality management system (QMS). Building quality into products and services for continuous improvement has been mentioned for scholars in total quality management in the past. Today, people started to explore integrating CSR and sustainability related elements into organizational strategy for sustainable business. Deep (2007) mentioned that there was a growing number proponents of the 'stakeholder' or 'social responsibility' model of corporate governance holding that business was accountable to a broader populace who have a direct or indirect stake in the enterprise's activities. Although there is a lack of comprehensive evidence that

CSR and sustainability lead to improving financial performance, awareness to environmental and social concerns from different stakeholders is needed for the progress of organization

The IMM (Impact, Measurement and Management) framework emphasizes understanding, creating, and evaluating social impacts, which are critical for nonprofits organization. The aim of a growing number of impact investors is to be more intentional in maximising positive – and minimising negative – outcomes associated with their investments through well defined impacts creation with projects that can be qualitatively and quantitatively measured projects' imapcts and practices. Leaders need to understand their core strengths and organizational culture when creating projects with tangible benefits aligned with community needs and broader goals in UNSDGs. In the case study of Malan Lake Desert, Mongolia, leadership has prioritized from deforestation to ecotourism for competency development of local community with social inclusion. Previous research has found that UNSDG#4 quality of education and SDG# 9 Innovations in sustainable community development of desert on ecotourism via drones and advanced technology has not been comprehensively explored. This research explores further on the key elements for community developement for sustainable eco-tourism development.

1.6. Research Objectives (RQs)

1) What are the key elements for community development with culture in selected desert community, for example, Malan Lake Desert, Mongolia, China?

2) What is the steps of implementing design thinking for eco-tourism and art-cultural touirm for competency development?

1.6.1. Part 1 - Qualitative Analysis

A research was performed to analyze factors possibly related to chair yoga wellness model (2,942 references). Four articles published from 1996 to 2024 were discovered. By thoroughly delving into the articles, various relatable factors are identified to the topic. To further determine their relationship to the topic, by using Nvivo, a text search was performed for the mentioned keywords. The search result showed that a few of the factors for Understanding Community Development with Culture (3,328 references) : 1) Drone Site Selection (423 references), 2) Sustainable Upcycled Concepts Application (907 references), and 3) Regulations with Quality Check (122 references). (Figure 2). This is managerial relevant to understanding community development with culture from a new perspective for skills development, curriculum curriculum planning and drone ecotourism and creative art and cultural event management. However, quantitative and qualitative research for drone event management business framework on Qualifcation Framework (QF) is needed for competency building on service providers.

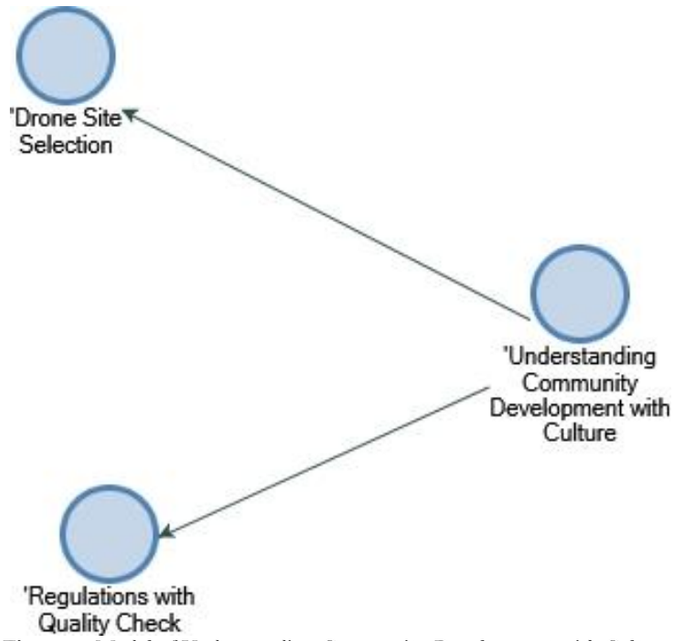

Figure 2. Model of Understanding Community Development with Culture.

Table 1. Nodes on Key Factors.

Name	Sources	References
'Understanding Community Development with Culture	4	3328
'Sustainable Upcycled Concepts Application	4	907
'Drone Site Selection	4	423
'Regulations with Quality Check	4	122

Table 2. Text Search on Understanding Community Development with Culture".

Name	In Folder	References
459080	Internals	1667
main	Internals	258
remotesensing-14-00702-v2	Internals	14
The Ecotourism Equation_ Measuring the Impacts	Internals	1389

Table 3. Text Search on Drone Site Selection.

Name	In Folder	References
459080	Internals	134
main	Internals	40
remotesensing-14-00702-v2	Internals	100
The Ecotourism Equation_ Measuring the Impacts	Internals	149

Table 4. Text Search on "Regulation on Quality Check"

Name	In Folder	References
459080	Internals	18
main	Internals	25
remotesensing-14-00702-v2	Internals	5
The Ecotourism Equation_ Measuring the Impacts	Internals	74

1.6.2. Part 2 - What is the Steps of Implementing Design Thinking for Eco-Tourism and Art-Cultural Touirm for Competency Development?

Research on drone simulation for desert cultural buildings and landscape with new services management combines drone-based 3D with AI technology is seldom explored for developing business curriculum planning with service management strategies and five steps of design thinking. Drones are used for aerial surveys, detailed mapping of archaeological sites like desert kites, and documenting the condition of existing buildings for conservation. For improving the competency of business teachers in LAE and related service management, it is recommended to have simulation software and 3D models to predict the kinds of services and skills to be needed for eco-toursm and cretive art tourism in a desert, like Malan Lanke, Mongolia. Here are the recommendations with design thinking for competency development and community improvement:

1) Empathy with Understanding of Ways to Apply Technolgy for Business Creation in Desert Cultures
   For example: Choosing a Focused Site to Study Eco-tourism and Creative Art tourism from the eyes of desert visitors.
   Drones capture high-resolution imagery of vast, hard-to-reach areas, allowing for the mapping of sites of Malan Lake with Chinese herbal plantation for eco-tourism with business impacts
2) Scope of Eco-tourism and Creative Art Tourism Documentation with reference to ISO Drone Standards and ISO 26000 CSR Guidelines
   For example, researchers who engaged in drone and AI technologies, teachers who teach business related courses and students may work togther for a pilot of eco-tourism tour in Malan Lake with detailed 3D AI video to demonstrate cultural buildings with conservation and restoration, if any.
3) Ideas on 3D AI models facilitate the identification of new service opportunities with documentation of curriculum and assignments for skills development for community development.
   For example, regulations and quality check with ISO standards on a specific site chosen un Malan Lake with drone simulation and performance analysis on SDG#13 energy efficiency in the harsh desert climate.
4) Prototypes on Design & Optimization:
   3D and AI simulation software for business teachers and students to try and evaluate different design options for new service management opprtunities in the surrounding landscape.
5) Testting Chosen Site with Proposed Prototypes with Integration of GIS System
   Drone data and simulation results are integrated with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to provide a holistic view of business – eco-cultural heritage for business teachers and students from a holistic point of view and improvement their competency in tackling technological tools & methods.

2. Conclusion and Discussion

Based on the qualitative analysis on Community Development with Cutlure in desert areas for sustainable development, it is found that UNSDGs amd 5 steps of design thinking served as guiding principles to measure social impacts of Malan Lake desert on new service management opportunities for social impacts mentioned by IMM, appealing investors' interest in supporting community projects with the key identified factors for Understanding Community Development with Culture (3,328 references) are 1) Drone Site Selection (423 references), 2) Sustainable Upcycled Concepts Application (907 references), and 3) Regulations with Quality Check (122 references). (Figure 1). This is managerial relevant to understanding community development with culture from a new perspective for skills development, curriculum planning and drone ecotourism /creative art and cultural event management.

It is time to explore the relevant skill sets, for example ISO standard on drone application with ISO 26000 CSR guidelines for improving the competency level of teachers and students in business discipline in Malan Lake community fr social inclusion. Hence, ongoing data collection from different channels and communications with different stakeholders are important in quality of business curriculum in relation to desert service management – eco-tourism and creative art tourism for social impacts.

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