

T.C.
IŐIK UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

DOCTORAL THESIS
IN CONTEMPORARY
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Anda Elvan AK

AGRITOURISM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT
OF IMPOVERISHED RURAL REGIONS:
GENERATING VALUE-ADDED
FOR THE REGION

SUPERVISOR
Prof. Dr. Dilek TEKER

ISTANBUL, December 2025

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ISTANBUL, December 2025

ÖZET

YOKSUL KIRSAL BÖLGELERİN GELİŞİMİ İÇİN TARIM TURİZMİ: BÖLGESEL KATMA DEĞER SAĞLANMASI

Kırsal yoksulluk, köylerden kentlere göçü tetikleyen, en acil küresel sorunlardan biri olmaya devam etmektedir. Bu eğilim, tarım işgücünü azaltırken, ekilebilir arazileri işlenmemiş bırakmakta, erozyonu hızlandırmakta ve gelecekte yaşanabilecek gıda güvensizliği risklerini artırmaktadır. Bu nedenle, kırsal yoksulluğun ele alınması, kırsal alanların kendi içinde çözümler gerektirmektedir.

Tarım, bu sorunun üstesinden gelinmesinde önemli bir rol oynamakta ve turizmle birleştirildiğinde kırsal canlanma için yeni fırsatlar yaratmaktadır. Tarım uygulamalarını tüketici deneyimleriyle birleştiren yeni bir turizm türü olan agriturizm, son yıllarda küçük ve orta ölçekli çiftçilerin gelirlerini artırırken kırsal ekonomi için katma değer yaratma konusunda önemli bir potansiyel olduğunu kanıtlanmıştır.

Bu tez, Türkiye'deki potansiyel agriturizm müşterileri ve çiftçilerle yapılan iki ayrı anket aracılığıyla agriturizmin kırsal kalkınmadaki rolünü incelemektedir. Elde edilen bulgular, tüketicilerin otantik çiftlik koşullarını tercih ettiklerini, yerel ürünleri satın almaya istekli olduklarını ve agriturizmi sağlık, eğlence ve çevresel faydalarla ilişkilendirdiklerini göstermektedir. Çiftçiler ise agriturizm uygulamalarına açık olmakla birlikte, teşvik, eğitim ve dijital pazarlama desteğine ihtiyaç duymakta ve genellikle günlük ziyaret modellerini tercih etmektedirler.

Bulgular, destekleyici bir agriturizm ekosisteminin oluşturulması için hedef odaklı eğitim programlarının, ürün tanıtımı için bölgesel platformlar oluşturulmasının ve çiftçiler ile akademisyenler arasında işbirliğinin gerekli olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu tez, agriturizmin Türkiye'nin kırsal bölgeleri için

yenilenebilir bir yol olarak potansiyelini vurgulamakta ve yoksulluğun azaltılmasına, kültürel mirasın korunmasına ve sürdürülebilir turizme katkıda bulunmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: agriturizm, tarım, kırsal yoksulluk, kalkınma

ABSTRACT

AGRITOURISM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF IMPOVERISHED RURAL REGIONS: GENERATING VALUE- ADDED FOR THE REGION

Rural poverty remains one of the most pressing global challenges, often driving migration from agricultural villages to urban centers. This trend reduces the agricultural workforce, leaves arable lands uncultivated, accelerates erosion, and heightens risks of future food insecurity. Addressing rural poverty, therefore, requires solutions rooted in rural areas.

Agriculture is a very important element to overcoming this challenge, and when combined with tourism, it creates new opportunities for rural revitalization. Agritourism—an emerging form of tourism that integrates agricultural practices with the experiences of consumers—has demonstrated significant potential over the past decades to increase the incomes of small and medium-sized farmers while generating value-added for rural economies.

This thesis explores agritourism’s role in rural development through two separate surveys conducted with potential agritourism consumers and farmers in Türkiye. Findings indicate that consumers while preferring authentic farm-based experiences, express their willingness to purchase local products, and associate agritourism with health, leisure, and environmental benefits. Farmers, on the other hand, while open to agritourism practices, require encouragement, training, and digital marketing support, and they generally prefer short-term, day-visit models.

Obtained results suggest that fostering a supportive agritourism ecosystem requires targeted training, regional platforms for product promotion, and collaboration between farmers and academic researchers. This thesis highlights agritourism’s potential as a regenerative pathway for Türkiye’s rural regions,

contributing simultaneously to poverty alleviation, cultural preservation, and sustainable tourism.

Key Words: agritourism, agriculture, rural poverty, development

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am grateful to Prof. Dr. Dilek Teker, my thesis supervisor, whose invaluable guidance, encouragement, and mentorship have helped me navigate challenges and stay on course. My sincere thanks also go to my thesis follow up jury members Assoc. Prof. Aslı Tuncay Çelikel and Assoc. Prof. Evrim İldem Develi whose guidance and advice provided the foundation for my doctoral thesis' development. I would also thank Prof. Dr. Elçin Aykaç Alp and Assoc. Prof. Yeşim Pınar Soykut Sarıca, members of my thesis defense jury, who by their final advices shaped my thesis definitely.

I am deeply thankful to my family — especially my husband Bekir and my children Yasemin and Can — for their patience, understanding, and unfailing support during this demanding process.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Prof. Dr. Siddık Binboğa Yarman for his unwavering belief in me and the constant love and support he has shown throughout my academic journey.

Finally, I dedicate my profound gratitude to my parents, Volkan Yiğit Yarman and Elçin Yarman, who taught me perseverance and self-belief. From where they are now, I hope they look upon me with pride, seeing their daughter progress along this path.

Completing this thesis has been both a challenging and deeply rewarding journey. It represents not only an academic endeavor but also a personal milestone shaped by perseverance, learning, and growth. I am grateful to everyone who, in different ways, contributed to this process—through guidance, encouragement, or simply their presence along the way. This work is dedicated to all those who believe that rural communities hold within them the seeds of resilience and renewal, and to the hope that agritourism may serve as one of the pathways toward a more sustainable and equitable future.

Anda Elvan AK

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ABBREVIATIONS

- ACs:** Agricultural Cooperatives
- AAFN:** Alternative Agrifood Networks
- CAP:** Common Agricultural Policy
- CTT:** Classical Test Theory
- CDF:** Cumulative Distribution Function
- DEP:** Differential Economic Performance
- DORA:** Dynamics of Rural Areas
- EAFRD:** European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
- EDF:** Empirical Distribution Function
- EEC:** European Economic Community
- EU:** European Union
- FoWo:** Federation of Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms Organizations
- GAK:** National Investment Programs for Rural Development
- GEF:** Global Environment Fund
- GDP:** Gross Domestic Product
- IPARD:** Pre-Accession Assistance in Rural Development
- KST:** Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test
- KOSGEB:** Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization
- LRRs:** Lagging Rural Regions
- MWUT:** Mann-Whitney U Test
- OECD:** Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
- POMMARD:** Targeted Policy Model of Multifunctional Agriculture and Rural Development
- RBDG:** Rural Business Development Grants
- RDPs:** Rural Development Programs
- SEF:** Self-employed Farmer
- SGP:** Small Grants Program
- SMSF:** Small and Medium-sized Farms/farmers

SMSFFs: Small and Medium-sized Family Farms
SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SWOT: Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats
SWT: Shapiro-Wilk Test
TaTuTa: Agricultural Tourism and Volunteer Knowledge and Experience Exchange in Ecological Farms
TOP-MARD: Towards a Policy Model of Multifunctional Agriculture and Rural Development
UN: United Nations
UNDP: United Nations Development Program
USA: United States of America
USD: United States Dollars
USDA: United States Department of Agriculture
VAPG: Value-Added Producer Grants
VAT: Value-Added Tax
VNC: Valdres Nature and Culture Park
WWOOF: Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

The Second Industrial Revolution, while a monumental leap forward for humankind, inadvertently triggered significant socio-economic decline in rural regions. As industrialized areas became the focal points of investment and migration, rural communities experienced depopulation, leading to economic stagnation and social challenges (Ammirato and Felicetti, 2014). As a result of the migration of peasants to cities, rural regions were labeled "Lagging Rural Regions (LRRs)" due to their high unemployment rates, poor incomes, and poverty (Volpentesta and Ammirato, 2007).

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2021), more than two-thirds of the world's impoverished population resides in rural areas (see Table 1.1). Mostly, this impoverished population is deprived of essential services such as modern healthcare, quality education, cultural opportunities (e.g., theaters, sports facilities, and events), and fundamental infrastructure, including water, electricity, and sanitation. Consequently, they struggle to meet their basic needs, perpetuating a cycle of hardship and economic stagnation.

Decades have passed without any improvements or feasible proposals to develop rural regions because authorities who propose suggestions to solve rural poverty problems are not living in those regions where the population endures rural impoverishment and are unaware of those regions' existing and mostly challenging conditions. On the other hand, there is this selfishly hardhearted fact that countries' economic development opportunities are mostly intended for urban areas, neglecting rural regions and the population living there.

Solution seekers have mostly thought about building factories and opening new facilities to create employment opportunities in rural regions facing the fact of impoverishment, yet have always ignored the existing conditions of these

areas. They never considered revitalizing local agriculture, which is the number one resource for the development and improvement of rural regions. As a matter of fact, selecting proper development programs can be achieved by engaging local communities in decision-making about development programs and plans to be adopted (Chaudry, 2007).

Table 1.1 Percentage of rural population of certain European countries

Percentage of Rural Population of Some European Countries		
Country	Population (2024)	Rural Population (2024)
Austria	9,18 million	40.18%
Belgium	11,88 million	1,78%
Denmark	5,98 million	11,37%
Finland	5,64 million	14,13%
France	68,52 million	17,96%
Germany	83,51 million	22,10%
Greece	10.39 million	19,02%
Italy	58,99 million	27,71%
Netherlands	17.99 million	6,55%
Norway	5,57 million	15,68%
Portugal	10,70 million	31,58%
Spain	48,81 million	18,20%
Sweden	10,57 million	11,02%
Switzerland	9,03 million	25,67%
Türkiye	85,52 million	22,11%

Source: The Global Economy. theglobaleconomy.com. January 2025

Thankfully, there are researchers like Van der Ploeg (2000a) and Marsden et al. (2002) who emphasize the crucial importance of agriculture in rural development. Swagemakers et al. (2019) pointed out that new strategies that are based on cooperation and collective actions, which shall be adopted by farmers,

will be transformed into contributions in terms of providing sustainable rural development. Therefore, agricultural cooperatives (ACs), which have been long neglected, must be studied, established, managed, and maintained carefully to promote rural development in less developed regions of a country to beat impoverishment and encourage urban-rural migration.

Agritourism, which is defined by Mahaliyanaarachchi (2015) as a fusion model, unifying tourism and agriculture, is relatively a new tool for rural development (Phillip et al., 2010). It diversifies agricultural activities and thus income sources, and increases farm profitability, supporting rural development (Van Sandt and McFadden, 2016), by uniting agriculture and tourism as a business (Arroyo et al., 2013), becoming an alternative resource of economic benefits (Jayawardena, 2002), involving mainly small and medium-sized farms and farmers (SMSFs) (Lupi et al., 2017) and self-employed farmers (SEFs).

Agritourism is the key to opening the door to the economic and social development of less favored rural regions. It is a sub-employment alternative contributing to socio-economic development of the rural regions by creating employment for the communities surrounding a farm also (Gilbert, 1989; Adamov et al., 2020). According to the same researchers, agritourism activities carried out on a farm can increase the interest of consumers in agricultural products. This increased interest can provide an extra income for the farmers.

Lost amid the hectic pace of so-called modern urban life, the number of citizens appreciating and preferring the authenticity of rural regions and their considerably slower-paced daily life increases (Bosmann et al., 2021). Especially in recent years, people, influenced by external circumstances such as pandemics and political crises that often lead to wars, have preferred distant locations to spend their holidays, making agritourism more attractive than in previous years. During the Covid-19 pandemic, this fact has been observed closely as an impact on the travel choices of tourists in favor of rural domestic regions.

As recent studies provide evidence, agritourism, due to the multifunctionality of agriculture, is a reliable source for economic growth of

farmers and decrease of rural impoverishment (Harcombe, 1999; Kumar et al., 2015; Patterson, 2011), and it creates employment in the rural regions providing an opportunity for job diversification (Hamilpurka, 2012). Agritourism is a risk decreasing factor for farmers in terms of their income (Schilling et al., 2014), thus can be a tool to fight rural poverty and contribute to rural development this thesis will seek replies to questions such as; How agritourism be a solution for small and medium-sized farmers to recover from economic difficulties caused by rural impoverishment, how agritourism be a tool to defeat rural poverty and to contribute to rural development, can agritourism be a value-added product for rural regions and generate employment?

The primary objective of this thesis is to support farmers in Türkiye, particularly those in Hatay province who, despite suffering unprecedented destruction due to the February 6, 2023 earthquake, are striving to maintain their agricultural activities with great dedication. Beyond its economic goal, this thesis also encompasses a deeper philosophy: to listen to those whose voices are often unheard and give them a voice, to appreciate their perseverance in continuing to produce despite the conditions they encounter, and to contribute to restoring them to their former level of prosperity, however modest it may be. Farmers in Hatay need more than just financial support and opportunities. They also need their voices to be heard, the challenges they face to be acknowledged, to be respected, and to interact with competent institutions that understand their circumstances. This thesis aims to highlight feasible ways for renewal, inclusive development, and restored hope by examining agrotourism as a sustainable and locally-based development model in one of the regions most affected by the February 6, 2023 earthquake in Türkiye, yet one of the most resilient in its struggle for survival.

CHAPTER 2

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of agriculture and its importance for national economies will be discussed in the following subsections. A general overview of rural poverty and its consequences will be presented and evaluated in the context of the challenges faced by rural communities. Finally, this section will examine agriculture's role as a driving force for rural development and highlight its potential to reduce poverty and support sustainable regional growth.

2.1. AGRICULTURE AND ITS IMPORTANCE FOR THE ECONOMY

Since the very beginning of civil life, the agriculture sector has always been the most important one for humans' alimentation, the element number one that feeds the population and contributes to the development of societies (Calabrò and Vieri, 2015). Men can have discovered, initiated, and implemented agriculture, but this is the agriculture that developed and civilized mankind. Men, who were foragers in the early times of history, had a settled life when they got involved in agricultural activities and planted the first seeds of urban civilization along with the seeds of their food.

As Mehta (2009) highlights, agricultural activities—once regarded primarily as a means of subsistence for farmers—are now increasingly recognized as a vital component of national economies. The agricultural sector is a key pillar in promoting sustainability and inclusive growth. For instance, in Russia, agricultural product sales have elevated the sector to the position of the country's second-largest source of export revenue (Sheresheva and Kopiski, 2016). This example alone underscores the strategic importance of agriculture in fostering rural development. In fact, agriculture is often the primary focus of rural development initiatives in economically disadvantaged regions (Chaudhry,

2007). Empirical studies indicate that countries that fail to achieve an agricultural transformation are frequently trapped in cycles of poverty, economic dependence, and food insecurity. The decline of agricultural productivity and income generation directly contributes to the socioeconomic disintegration of rural communities. Gustavo and Kostas (2007) emphasize the critical role of agriculture in rural development, while McGehee and Kim (2004) observe that farmers—central actors in rural regions—continuously seek innovative strategies to enhance the profitability of their enterprises, which is essential for attaining sustainable regional development.

The importance of agriculture in promoting sustainable rural development in Europe is becoming increasingly apparent. But postproductivist and agro-industrial logics and dynamics have generally tended to downplay its importance. Because the rural economy is a part of the national, European, and global economies, it must refer to these broader political, regulatory, and commercial domains when looking for new opportunities and the still-emerging paradigm of sustainable development (Marsden et al., 2002).

The Italian government, considering the importance of agriculture for the country's economy following World War II, implemented reform steps (Sonnino, 2004). This land reform intended to create a farming pattern, covering autonomous and organic economic units, to provide each family with a needed livelihood (Moschini, 1958). However, the limited scale of newly established farms rendered them incapable of generating sufficient revenue to meet market demands or diversify their operations. As a result, many young individuals from these rural regions opted to migrate in search of more lucrative employment opportunities in non-agricultural sectors. This trend of rural-urban migration had significant consequences: between 1961 and 1990, the city of Poderi witnessed the disappearance of approximately 4,500 farms, leading to the abandonment of nearly 22,000 hectares of arable land (Regina, 1996).

Research conducted on summer farms in the mountainous regions of Norway and Austria highlights the enduring importance of seasonal agricultural activities to the economies of agrarian mountain communities. This is

particularly evident in the case of milk-producing farms, which have historically played a central role in sustaining local livelihoods during the summer months. Furthermore, the continued existence of these summer farms contributes significantly to regional tourism by enhancing the cultural and landscape value of the area (Bryan and Daugstad, 2001).

There is no doubt that the abandonment of arable land poses significant threats, both economically and environmentally. From an economic perspective, two primary consequences can be identified. First, the migration of rural populations to urban areas leads to a reduction in the agricultural labor force, thereby diminishing food production capacity, placing urban centers under increasing pressure to provide services to a growing population with limited resources. Second, the irreversible conversion of arable land into residential or commercial construction sites—intended to accommodate urban expansion—further jeopardizes food security by displacing agricultural activity (Demirel and Kaçmaz, 2023).

To contextualize the economic significance of agriculture for both rural regions and national economies, the following Table 2.1 presents the percentage of employment in the agricultural sector across selected European countries. Table 2.1 provided as follows, indicates that Türkiye occupies the first rank in terms of employment percentage in the agricultural sector at 14.64%, followed by Greece, with 11,48% and Spain with 3,62%, Finland by 3,61%, and Italy, with 3,59%. The country with the lowest employment rate in the agriculture sector is indicated as Belgium with a rate of 1,09%.

Table 2.1 Percentage of employment in the agriculture sector in certain European countries.

Percentage of Employment in Agriculture in European Countries as per 2023	
Country	Employment in Agriculture (2023)
Austria	3,12%
Belgium	1,09%
Denmark	2,02%
Finland	3,61%
France	2,51%
Germany	1,20%
Greece	11,48%
Italy	3,59%
Netherlands	1,91%
Norway	2,50%
Portugal	2,95%
Spain	3,62%
Sweden	1,77%
Switzerland	1,91%
Türkiye	14,64%

Source: The Global Economy. theglobaleconomy.com. January 2025

To provide further insights into the economic role of agriculture, the following table presents data on the gross domestic product (GDP) and value added generated by agricultural activities in selected European countries.

Table 2.2 Percentage of GDP share and Value Added of agriculture in European countries, indicated in United States Dollars (USD).

Percentage of GDP Share and Value Added of Agriculture in European Countries		
Country	GDP Share of Agriculture (2023)	Value Added (2024)
Austria	1,3%	6,41 billion USD
Belgium	0,77%	5,32 billion USD
Denmark	0,76%	3,19 billion USD
Finland	2,31%	7,39 billion USD
France	1,74%	45,27 billion USD
Germany	0,84%	38,50 billion USD
Greece	3,37%	8,53 billion USD
Italy	1,87%	48,06 billion USD
Netherlands	1,72%	20,62 billion USD
Norway	2,08%	9,86 billion USD
Portugal	2,11%	6,09 billion USD
Spain	2,50%	43,74 billion USD
Sweden	0,99%	7,00 billion USD
Switzerland	0,62%	5,89 billion USD
Türkiye	6,16%	74,00 billion USD

Source: The Global Economy. theglobaleconomy.com. January 2025

Table 2.2 indicates that Türkiye leads the list both in GDP and Value Added generated in the agriculture sector with 6,16% and 74,00 billion USD consecutively. It is followed by Greece, in GDP with 3,37%, however generating only 8,53 billion USD of value added from agricultural sources. Spain occupies the third rank in GDP with 2,50%, while its Value Added is 43,74 billion USD generated by agricultural sources. France is the second country in terms of value

added generated by agriculture with 45,27 billion USD although its GDP based on agriculture is only 1,74 %.

The decline of economic activity in rural regions is closely associated with a deterioration in the psychological well-being and self-esteem of local populations (Alston, 2000). Residents often experience a sense of marginalization, as they are deprived of essential elements of well-being, including access to reliable infrastructure such as water, electricity, and sanitation services. Moreover, the lack of modern healthcare, quality education, sports facilities, and opportunities for cultural engagement further exacerbates this sense of exclusion.

One of the primary factors contributing to the decline in agricultural activity in Türkiye is the fragmentation of arable land through inheritance. Typically, land that was once owned and cultivated by a single farmer is divided among multiple heirs—often two or three children—upon the owner's death. These heirs, many of whom lack interest or capacity to continue agricultural work, frequently leave the land uncultivated or sell it to third parties. However, such small parcels of land often prove economically unviable, as they do not generate sufficient income to offset operational costs, leading to further abandonment of agricultural practices. In response to this issue, the Republic of Türkiye enacted Law No. 6537 on Soil Conservation and Amendments to Land Use, which came into effect following its publication in the Official Gazette No. 29001 on May 15, 2014. This legislation aimed to prevent the subdivision of arable land through inheritance. Nevertheless, the agricultural sector continues to face significant challenges due to the persistent lack of productive activity on inherited lands, particularly when multiple heirs are involved.

To further contextualize the role of agriculture in Türkiye's national economy, the following export figures of agricultural products are presented.

Table 2.3 Registered export figures of Agricultural Products of Türkiye for the years 2020-2021-2022-2023-2024 (USD 1.000).

REGISTERED EXPORT FIGURES OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS OF TURKIYE FOR THE YEARS 2020-2021- 2022-2023-2024 (USD1.000)					
SECTOR	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
I. AGRICULTURE	24.343.663	29.705.558	34.246.492	35.164.253	36.232.902
A. CROP PRODUCTS	16.329.877	19.318.140	21.739.680	23.693.611	24.474.448
Cereals, Pulses, Oilseeds and Products	7.291.851	9.146.823	11.473.748	12.378.672	11.914.564
Fresh Fruits and Vegetables	2.729.986	3.080.372	2.953.662	3.492.314	3.402.917
Fruit and Vegetable Products	1.682.477	2.026.778	2.525.539	2.416.443	2.728.089
Dried Fruits and Products	1.398.471	1.568.816	1.573.464	1.610.304	1.856.211
Hazelnut and Products	1.939.566	2.255.836	1.751.055	1.866.735	2.639.346
Olive and Olive Oil	271.127	309.435	495.838	871.666	813.567
Tobacco	910.291	782.478	829.174	922.337	978.690
Ornamental Plants and Products	106.108	147.602	137.201	135.139	141.065
B. ANIMAL PRODUCTS	2.449.812	3.398.253	4.066.046	3.486.857	3.863.099
Aquaculture and Animal Products	2.449.812	3.398.253	4.066.046	3.486.857	3.863.099
C. WOOD AND FOREST PRODUCTS	5.563.974	6.989.164	8.440.766	7.983.785	7.895.355
Furniture, Paper and Forest Products	5.563.974	6.989.164	8.440.766	7.983.785	7.895.355
Total	73.030.989	89.116.674	102.739.476	105.492.758	108.698.707

Source: Turkish Exporters Assembly, January 2025

Table 2.3 presented above outlines an increase in the export of Türkiye's crop products, between the years 2020 and 2024, although a slight slowing down is witnessed from 2022 to 20203, from (USD1.000) 11.473.748 to (USD1.000)

12.378.672, followed by another slight increase in 2024 to (USD1.000) 24.474.448. The same table presents another critical outcome in the export of Türkiye's animal products which outlines an obvious decline since 2022. Animal products' export figures, which were (USD1.000) 4.066.046 in 2022, declined to (USD1.000) 3.486.857 in 2024 and proved a slight increase in 2024 (USD1.000) 3.863.099, but still remained lower than the figures reached in 2022. Another fact seen in Table 2.3 is that Wood and Forest Products export figures are also in decline since 2022 when they were presenting an outcome of (USD1.000) 8.440.766, which decreased to (USD1.000) 7.983.785 in 2023 and to (USD1.000) 7.895.355 in 2024.

Table 2.4 presents an obvious decline in agricultural products' export between January 2024 and 2025, with export figures (USD 1.000) 9.280.484 and 9.055.820 consecutively. An obvious decline in export figures is witnessed for agricultural crop products with (USD 1.000) 2.135.976 and 2.124.902 for January 2024 and January 2025 consecutively. There is also a decrease in animal products export, indicating (USD 1.000) 355.960 for January 2024 and 283.881 in January 2025. Only export of wood and forestry products indicates a slight increase from (USD 1.000) 301.559 in January 2024 to 609.821 in January 2025. As per the date of the writing of this thesis, the figures of 2025 have not been made public by the Turkish Exporters Assembly. Therefore, the comparison of the following months of 2025 could not be carried out.

Table 2.4 Registered Export Figures of Agricultural Products of Türkiye comparing January 2024 and January 2025 (USD 1.000).

Registered Export Figures of Agricultural Products of Türkiye comparing January 2024 and January 2025 (USD 1.000)		
SECTORS	2024	2025
AGRICULTURE	3.093.495	3.018.607
A. CROP PRODUCTS	2.135.976	2.124.902
Cereals, Pulses, Oil Seeds and Products	1.010.019	1.030.716
Fresh Fruit and Vegetables	365.786	353.527
Fruit and Vegetables	232.093	210.753
Dried Fruit	160.122	164.775
Hazelnut and Products	206.128	209.172
Olive and Olive Oil Products	83.437	51.263
Tobacco	64.406	86.327
Ornamental Plants and Products	13.985	18.370
B. ANIMAL PRODUCTS	355.960	283.884
Aqua and Animal Products	355.960	283.884
C. WOOD and FORESTRY PRODUCTS	601.559	609.821
Furniture, Paper and Forestry Products	601.559	609.821
Total	9.280.484	9.055.820

Source: Turkish Exporters Assembly, January 2025

Even just these few tables represent the importance of agriculture for a country's economy.

For our country, around a hundred years ago, conscious of the importance of agriculture for a country, our founding father Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk cited as follows;

“Agriculture is the core of the national economy. That is why we place great importance on agricultural development. Programmed and practical works to be spread to the villages shall facilitate the achievement of this goal. However, to accomplish this very important task, it is first necessary to determine an agricultural policy based on thorough studies and to establish an agricultural regime that every peasant and every citizen can easily comprehend and implement. The main important points that can be included in this policy and regime can be as follows:

First, there should be no farmer without arable land in the country. More importantly, the land that sustains a farmer's family must be indivisible for any reason and under any circumstances, and the land that can be cultivated by large farms and farm owners must be classified according to the size of the land, the population density of the regions of the country where the land is located and the fertility of the soil. Measures to increase, renew and protect the machinery of all farmers, small and large, should be taken without delay. The country should be divided into agricultural regions according to climate, water and soil fertility. In each of these regions, efficient, modern, practical agricultural centers should be established so that peasants can see with their own eyes and use them as examples of their work.

To ensure that the existing agricultural centers, as well as those to be re-established for all the agricultural regions of the country, can operate in full efficiency without interruption and that they can manage and develop their assets, based on their own revenues, without relying heavily on the state budget, as has been the case until now, all these institutions should be united and a large business institution should be established. In addition, all technical and legal measures necessary to increase the quantity, improve the quality, reduce production costs, and deal with diseases and pests in each and every one of our various products, especially wheat, which provides all our food needs and the various raw materials on which our industry is based and which constitute the basis of our foreign trade, must be taken without delay.”

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's far-sighted vision of a productive, equitable, and regionally tailored agricultural system forms a historical cornerstone for contemporary rural development strategies — a theme this thesis revisits through a modern analytical lens, examining agritourism as a value-generating tool to revitalize impoverished rural regions and empower local communities.

2.2. UNDERSTANDING RURAL POVERTY AND ITS THREAT TO A COUNTRY'S ECONOMY

Poverty is defined as the inability to meet basic daily needs (Alston, 2000). Rural poverty remains a significant obstacle to a country's development (Liu et al., 2017; Deng et al., 2020). It emerges when individuals or communities lack the necessary resources to meet their basic living conditions, leading to limited access to infrastructure such as clean water, basic living amenities, and fundamental rights (Chaudhry, 2007) and eventually unemployment and social marginalization.

Lucha et al. (2016) note that due to persistent resource constraints, which is very common in impoverished rural regions, SMSFs have been unable to realize scale efficiencies. As a result, many farmers are compelled to seek additional income resources other than agriculture. The characteristics of less-favored regions, struggling with poverty, are considerably low standards of living, a population of advanced ages, very low chances of employment, a lack of adequate education, and almost zero investment (Hutárová et al., (2021).

Over the past several decades, impoverished rural regions have been affected by a series of compounding challenges, including rural out-migration, falling commodity prices, and overall economic decline (Hjalager, 1996; Lane, 1994). Such persistent socioeconomic pressures deepen rural–urban disparities, reinforcing the urgent need for integrated strategies aimed at overcoming rural poverty and stimulating inclusive rural development.

2.2.1. Rural-Urban Migration and Its Consequences

Rural poverty is often a key driver of rural-urban migration, which is described as an unresolved problem (Gava et al., 2020). It encompasses all the aforementioned definitions combined with an unavoidable, uncontrollable, and irrepressible migration from rural areas to urban locations. Peasants migrating due to prevailing conditions leave their land, and their homes by moving to urban areas in search of egalitarianism in terms of getting the benefit of state resources which they have lacked for decades (Alston, 2000). As one of the inevitable consequences of peasants' migration from rural areas to cities, villages that once profited from having a hospital, school, police stations, and other public services, find themselves lacking in all those services, since the governments find no profit in keeping those services functioning in remote locations with fewer population. The first ones migrating to cities in search of improved economic and social opportunities, unwillingly condemn the ones who remain in the rural areas to worse conditions. The poorest ones who cannot migrate, face eventually much more severe poverty.

Several nations have launched targeted development initiatives. In Austria, for instance, six municipalities within the Valdres region responded to rural population decline by forming a rural development alliance in 2007, resulting in the creation of the Valdres Nature and Culture Park (Valdres natur- og kulturpark, VNC). The primary aim of the VNC was to enhance the sustainability and economic vitality of local communities, placing particular emphasis on summer farms as key regional assets. To support this, the VNC initiated multiple projects and strategic actions focused on strengthening the role of summer farming. One of the most notable programs was the Farm and Summer Farm Tourism Project, active from 2006 to 2011, which supported 26 businesses involved in agricultural and summer farm tourism (Daugstad and Kirchengast, 2013).

Following the study carried out by Karampela and Kizos (2018) in two regions of Greece, in Lesvos Island and in Plastiras Lake, they stated that

population decline due to economic downturns is a recurring problem, indicating the need for economic diversification to counteract rural poverty.

Ogunmakinde et al. (2015), stated that rural-macro society levels. urban migration in Nigeria caused economic problems, leading to infrastructural decay, housing challenges both in micro and macro society levels. They also indicated that rural-urban migration is causing manpower loss which is a must to maintain agricultural activities and production.

Mini (2001) states that rural-urban migration's impact is an immediate deterioration of the rural economy, resulting in chronic poverty and food insecurity in most rural zones. The unbridled rural-urban migration leads to a deepening of rural-urban disparities and ends in an inevitable collapse.

2.2.2. Economic Threats of Rural Poverty

The United Nations' (UN) Report on Reconsidering Rural Development (2021) estimates that 18 percent of rural residents suffer extreme poverty, and emphasizes the impossibility of sustainable development without considering rural inhabitants' engagement and well-being as a top priority. This report points out that rural development can play a significant role in accomplishing sustainable development in general and sustainable development goals in particular if the right policies are implemented. It continues by asserting that there are two ways to look at rural areas' contribution to sustainable development. One is the limited perspective, which emphasizes how rural development relates to the sustainable development goals for equality, hunger alleviation, and poverty. The other is a more comprehensive perspective that highlights the greater number of links between rural development and sustainable development goals.

United Nations Development Program (UNDP) which works in 170 countries and regions, helps to eradicate poverty. It works on building resilience to allow countries to sustain their progress. UNDP's Sustainable Development Goals Report (2024) further reports that compared to the year 2019, 23 million more people were pushed into extreme poverty. According to the same report

over 100 million people suffered from hunger in 2022, again compared to 2019. And that since decades, since 1998 to be precise, the global poverty rate increased for the first time in 2020. The report states that by 2030, around 590 million people may still be enduring extreme poverty conditions, if the actual conditions are not going to be changed.

It is a fact that small farms, having limited quantities of land, capital, and skilled labor, are often unable to adopt improved technology, new managerial practices, and intensive cultivation (Khanal and Mishra, 2014). This fact causes, apart poverty in rural areas, another crucial concern which is the imbalance between food production and consumption. According to the UN (2022), 1 billion edible meals are wasted daily, while 783 million people suffer from hunger. This disparity underscores the inefficiencies in global food distribution and the direct consequences of rural poverty on food security.

2.2.3. The Agricultural Connection: How Rural Poverty Threatens National Economies

The most important aspect that makes rural poverty a threat to a country's economy is that it doesn't stand alone (Marsden et al., 2002). For, the rural areas are the pillars of a country's economy. A decline in rural agricultural productivity leads to:

- Reduced food supply, causing inflation and food shortages.
- Weaken agricultural industries, disrupting national economic stability.
- A domino effect on other sectors, including manufacturing and trade.

It is known for decades that rural communities continue to rely heavily on farm operations, and it is well known that a significant portion of small and medium-sized farms are struggling financially as a consequence of low commodity prices, increased input costs, and worldwide tendencies toward concentration. All leading to rural communities' welfare concerns.

That's why the concerns about rural residents' human rights and the quick disintegration of rural communities are the results of agriculture's declining fortunes (Alston, 2000). When a rural area is defeated by poverty, causing a halt in the production of food, forestry works, or even aquaculture production, the economy of the country will suffer a lack of the essential raw material it needs to survive: food. And this will cause a domino effect for the worse.

That's why the uncontrollable and irrepressible rural-urban migration of peasants, apart from multiple other concerns it creates, causes a major but always very much neglected outcome: the future hunger of the population. As peasants migrating into cities leave their arable lands behind, not cultivated, not planted, and not included in the food production chain, the result comes out to light as more people require food but fewer people work in the production of the food. Taking into consideration the UN report (2004) indicating that 50 percent of the world's population lives in cities, the gravity of this fact can be perceived better. The same UN report estimates that by 2030, this figure will rise to 60 percent. This urban expansion places even greater strain on food production systems, exacerbating global hunger crises.

2.2.4. Environmental and Social Consequences of Rural Poverty

Beyond economic concerns, rural poverty also encompasses a wide range of issues, including insufficient health services, environmental risks, and losses, difficulty in controlling epidemics, if not impossibility, decreasing quality of food that is produced (Marsden et al., 2002), and the disappearance of indigenous culture and traditions as a consequence of migration to urban areas. Assimilated in big cities, peasants lose their culture, and their bonds to their ancestors' traditions and these very important social and anthropological elements of a nation vanish from the scene. A monotype, one-colored culture replaces the multicolored, diversified culture of the population.

On the other hand, rural poverty, causing rural-urban migration, has another crucial effect on the environment. As indicated by the United Nations Report on Reconsidering Rural Development (2021) Agriculture is closely

related and reliant on nature and the environment, and it is the hallmark economic activity in rural areas. The ecosystem is always directly and extensively impacted by what happens to agriculture. Regretfully, this effect has not been positive. Extreme environmental harm has resulted from the massive global growth in food production and security. Due to the constantly decreasing number of agricultural producers who were producing so much-needed food, efforts are made by the remaining ones and big agricultural producers to boost agricultural productivity. Growers have focused on growing high-yielding crop types, which necessitate extensive use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and regulated irrigation. However, the depletion and deterioration of water sources have resulted from the growing demand for agricultural water, and the rising usage of chemical pesticides and fertilizers has contaminated water sources.

Another important consequence of rural poverty causing rural-urban migration is erosion. For, not cultivated lands give way to erosion, decreasing groundwater levels and surface plantation habitat, becoming a factor of climate change and consequently global warming gets worse each year.

From an environmental perspective, the abandonment of arable land contributes to a range of ecological challenges, including soil erosion, declining groundwater levels, reduced surface vegetation, and ultimately, rising local and regional temperatures. Lanfranchi and Giannetto (2014) highlight the dual imperative of environmental conservation and rural development, proposing social farming initiatives as a viable strategy to address both objectives simultaneously.

According to the United Nations Report on Reconsidering Rural Development (2021) deforestation is another peril that results from poverty-induced rural-urban migration. Caused by the swift expansion of agriculture, approximately 30 percent of global forest cover has been eradicated, and 20 percent of existing forests have been degraded from 1990 to 2015. A direct outcome of deforestation, instigated by agricultural expansion, is the diminution of biodiversity. Historically, the transformation of natural habitats into

agricultural land has exerted the most substantial adverse effect on biodiversity, accounting for 60–70 percent of total biodiversity loss.

When these environmental and socioeconomic concerns are considered collectively, the necessity not only to maintain but also to expand agricultural activities—particularly in small and medium-sized family farms (SMSFFs)—becomes increasingly evident.

2.2.5. Addressing Rural Poverty: Policy and Development Strategies

Anríquez and Stamoulis (2007), claimed that the struggle to attain the global community's declared goals on hunger and poverty alleviation will be determined in the rural regions of developing nations.

Researchers (Fan et al., 2013; Grubbström and Sooväli-Sepping, 2012; Wegren and O'Brien, 2018) emphasize that agriculture is a vital means of overcoming rural poverty. Reducing rural poverty would be significantly supported by small-scale farms becoming more productive, profitable, and sustainable.

According to Grubbström and Sooväli-Sepping (2012) viability of rural regions is due to small farms. Yet, due in large part to low incomes and pensions, seasonality in their work, double production, inadequate structure, limited access to information, and insufficient power over negotiations, which can raise transaction costs and make it more difficult for them to access markets, small farmers are a noticeable group of people who are at risk of poverty (Augère-Granier, 2017; Barrett, 2010).

Summing up all the aforementioned points, we must perceive that rural poverty is not an isolated issue; it is a fundamental economic threat. If left unaddressed, it will:

1. Weaken national economies by reducing food production and agricultural output.
2. Increase rural-urban inequalities, leading to further instability.
3. Worsen environmental degradation, causing irreversible damage.

Sustainable rural development is essential for national economic stability, food security, and long-term environmental sustainability. Governments and policymakers must prioritize investment in rural economies to prevent the worsening crisis of rural poverty. In this context, agriculture is a critical sector for reducing poverty. Policies to support agricultural production must be deemed as effective tools in terms of assisting rural economies and preventing further impoverishment. When supported through direct subsidies, credit schemes, and rural development programs, agriculture plays an important role in alleviating poverty and ensuring sustainable development (Yasar and Tasar, 2019).

2.3. THE ROLE OF AGRICULTURE IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural development is a multidimensional process that integrates small communities into the national economy, ensuring their active participation in development initiatives. The UN defines rural development as a process aimed at enhancing the economic and social conditions of rural communities by aligning their contributions with national development efforts (UN, 2021). The UN's Report on Reconsidering Rural Development highlights its critical role in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Rural development nowadays is a complex concept, for it has to be carried out without overexploiting natural resources, destroying landscape and devaluing present tangible and intangible assets of rural regions (Ammirato and Felicetti, 2014). These scholars describe tangible assets of rural regions as local food, historical landmarks and infrastructure while intangible assets include cultural heritage, traditions, and local history. Reintegrating agriculture into a diversified rural economy and increasing its contribution to both the sustainable rural economy and sustainable development in general is the current "rural development" problem (Marsden et al., 2002).

2.3.1. The Economic Role of Agriculture in Rural Development

There is no doubt that rural development is essential for overcoming economic, social and environmental problems of a region. Nowadays, it is accepted that a regional approach is the only remedy to solve rural development issues, but not a central approach (Avcu and Yayla, 2021).

Although agriculture has always been a key element in rural development throughout human history, its importance for the rural economy has been neglected for decades. However, it continues to be a key driver of economic activity for rural regions and a solution to rural poverty (Altınbıçak, 2019). It is the starting point for rural development, especially in least-developed countries (Anriquez and Stamoulis, 2007).

Agriculture and rural development are deeply linked. By improving rural standards of living through agricultural income, education, health, and infrastructure services, rural poverty can be addressed. (Avcu and Yayla, 2021). Its importance in creating employment opportunities must be taken into account (Van Huylenbroeck et al., 2007), as well as in reducing poverty and becoming a factor that promotes rural development (Arias Segura, 2010). Researchers suggest that incorporating local agricultural traditions into rural development policies ensures sustainability and enhances the economic viability of rural areas (Chiffolleau, 2009; Allen et al., 1991).

Rural development encompasses strategies aimed at enhancing the value of agricultural outputs by establishing innovative connections between producers and markets (Van der Ploeg et al., 2000a). Additionally, the scientific management of agricultural ecosystems can contribute positively to the rural economy, ultimately leading to improved living conditions for farmers (Chen and Hu, 2021).

It is also stated that farms looking for a different approach can start concentrating on providing public goods and services instead of producing inexpensive food (Darnhofer, 2005).

Other researchers (Mojo et al., 2017) underline the importance of establishing agricultural cooperatives which have proven that they have a positive effect in defeating rural poverty. Studies demonstrate that cooperatives empower farmers by increasing their negotiating power, facilitating market access, and enhancing economic stability (Bijman et al., 2012; Chagwiza et al., 2016; Mojo et al., 2017; Wynne-Jones, 2017); Cooperatives also play a role in gender inclusivity and social capital development, as they enable farmers to connect with supply chains and share knowledge (Fan et al., 2013; Ma and Abdulai, 2016; Zheng et al., 2012); they can facilitate the development of local social capital and expertise (Barham and Chitemi, 2009). Additionally, by acquiring inputs and shared machinery, cooperatives can boost the productivity and efficiency of agricultural processes (Abate et al., 2014; Ji et al., 2019).

2.3.2. Agriculture's Contribution Beyond Economic Growth

It is well known that agriculture not only produces fresh food or other products for the market, such as fiber, seeds, and even fuel but also presents non-marketed commodities to a country. National food security is one and most important of these non-marketed commodities (Refsgaard and Johnson, 2010). This is thanks to the agricultural activities carried out on lands where a nation's food is preserved and secured. On the other hand, all agricultural activities that are carried out contribute to preserving the cultural landscape, land conservation, flood control, and biodiversity (Prestegard, 2004).

A study conducted in China emphasized agriculture and farmers among the pillars of rural development by running a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis in rural areas and highlighting the elimination of poverty in those areas by rural revitalization (Han, 2020). Similarly, diversified agricultural activities, including multifunctional farming, contribute to sustainable rural development by supplementing household incomes and enhancing environmental resilience (Barbieri et al., 2017; Galluzzo, 2017; Calabrò and Vieri, 2016). Research has also emphasized that pluriactivity—engaging in both intra-farm and off-farm activities—has become a key strategy

for farm holders across Europe (Sharpley and Vass, 2006; Karampela et al., 2016).

Darnhofer (2005), pointed out that as new relationships are formed with various rural and urban population sectors, as well as with other farm operations, participation in rural development activities leads to new kinds of social cohesion.

2.4. THE CONCEPT OF MULTIFUNCTIONAL AGRICULTURE

It is believed that this crucial concept of agriculture will serve as the new unifying paradigm to bring post-modern agriculture into compliance with the expectations of society. Multifunctional agriculture extends beyond food production to include contributions to economic growth, social structures, cultural heritage, and environmental sustainability (Prestegard, 2004; Renting et al., 2008). Although the international appearance of “multifunctional agriculture” premiered during the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, the studies that were conducted during the last few decades didn’t sufficiently discuss the relationships between the multifunctionality of agriculture and rural development, leading to the life quality of peasants (Refsgaard and Johnson, 2010).

Multifunctionality also offers potentially significant synergy impacts and interrelationships, and it is far removed from the monocultural productiveness of industrial agricultural production. (Marsden et al., 2002).

Multifunctional agriculture is hard to define as it consists of several aspects which are provided by agricultural entities and grouped under four main functions (Aldington, 1998; Dobbs and Pretty, 2001; Harwood, 2003; Jongeneel and Slangen, 2004) which are;

1) Green functions

Activities such as managing rural landscapes, preserving scenic features, supporting wildlife populations, enhancing natural habitats, promoting animal

welfare, conserving biodiversity, optimizing nutrient cycles, and reducing carbon emissions all contribute to sustainable land stewardship.

2) Blue functions

Efficient use and regulation of water resources, enhancement of water purity, flood prevention strategies, collection of rainwater, and the generation of renewable energy through wind power.

3) Yellow functions

Strengthening the social fabric and economic vibrancy of rural areas, enhancing local character and growth, promoting cultural and historical legacies, shaping a distinct regional identity, and providing recreational opportunities such as hunting, agritourism, and farm-based entertainment.

4) White functions

Food security and safety

In light of all the above-indicated aspects of the multifunctionality of agriculture, it may be considered a fact that agriculture is an economic activity providing not only food for society but also several non-market goods (Hediger, 2004). Since these non-market outputs are often public goods, joint products or externalities, they are potentially market failure sources, and causing arguments in terms of theory for public intervention (Maier and Shobayashi, 2001). Here public goods means that the holder of this good's property cannot prevent other people to use and get benefit from it, joint products or "jointness" means that a good or a service is produced interrelatedly with another one, and externalities mean that the producer of this good or service is not remunerated for its production or she or he is not paying for it.

On the other hand, while the multifunctionality of agriculture has received considerable attention and devoted studies have been carried out on the subject, traditional economic policy models have not taken into account critical aspects of regional systems. Models of agricultural production have left unnoticed the relationships between the decisions made by families running farms and the economic conditions of the regions. These models expect the farmers to react to price changes and subsidies only (Refsgaard and Johnson, 2010).

However, as indicated in a study conducted in the United States of America (USA) (Bagi and Reeder, 2012) rural development programs were not considering the farm-related economy, neglecting that farms are the income sources for most rural workers. Thankfully, changes have been made in the Rural Development Programs of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), providing a considerable increase of focus in rural development based on farm-related activities.

Multiple Rural Development programs that are implemented by the USDA have been emphasizing the importance of business activities of farms in the United States of America starting the commencement of the second millennium. These programs, including the one that is titled “Business and Industry Loan Guarantee Program, concentrate on farm-related business activities that are associated with the use of natural resources of farms as well as with the local food industries, and renewable energy (Bagi and Reeder, 2012). The same study also determined that farmers’ involvement in one or more farm-related business activities depends on their age and education, farm size and typology, the geographical location of the farm and also internet access.

The TOP-MARD (Towards a Policy Model of Multifunctional Agriculture and Rural Development) Project of the European Commission, which lasted between March 1st, 2005 and May 31st, 2008, conducted in 11 European countries, was the first project that took “multifunctionality of agriculture” subject seriously. The project aimed to create a policy model of multifunctional agriculture and rural development associating agriculture’s multiple functions to rural regions’ development and quality of life, exploring at the same time different policies’ influence on the outcomes of rural development. It explored the interaction between the market and non-market agricultural functions and households of the farms and the economic development process and life quality. It also focused on how these relationships are affected by policies that differ from each other (Refsgaard and Johnson, 2010). Unfortunately, this correlation is very vulnerable and is highly affected by changing agriculture policies. The study came to the conclusion that cutting back on agricultural subsidies can boost

local economies by diverting resources and manpower to more lucrative endeavors and by boosting the standard of living and the environment overall.

The TOP-MARD project provided a tool for policymakers, “POMMARD” (Targeted Policy Model of Multifunctional Agriculture and Rural Development) which is a sensitive tool for the regional and rural conditions of Europe.

DORA (Dynamics of Rural Areas), which is another joint research project funded by the European Commission, based on qualitative research mostly, working to explore the reasons for Differential Economic Performance (DEP) of European rural regions and investigate rudimentary causes, revealed the importance of tangible and less tangible factors (Courtney et al., 2001) which are classified as 10 factors, having 38 variables in total.

DORA project revealed some complexities in terms of rural regions’ development. It showed that these complexities and the inter-relationships between affecting factors must be comprehended by local people. This comprehension will allow the locals to design their own future. The project also provides a guide for policymakers to plan correctly on the integrated aspects of development in rural areas.

Egypt, the third most populous country of Africa, after Nigeria and Ethiopia, with 114.981,048 people living around the prosperous river Nile, is an agriculture-based country. The agriculture sector employs 19,8% of the country’s employment and the GDP share of agriculture is 11,83% (The Global Economy, 2021). The country is carrying out agricultural activities on 3,4% of its land. Seeing the prominent menaces such as the constantly growing population of the country, irrigation problems, using just a little of modern agriculture technologies if not any, division of vast lands into small farms and not using machines in agriculture, standing against the agriculture sector, the government initiated some corrective measures. The aim was to increase and maintain sustainable food production in farms, preserving food security and provide rural development by improving the living conditions in rural areas (Shalaby et al., 2011). The settlement of the Agricultural Extension Service helped not only to improve agricultural performance, it was also involved in

community development initiatives (Rivera et al., 1997). Despite all the problems that occurred during the application of Extension Services, it proved to have a potential in achieving sustainable rural development (Shalaby et al., 2011).

Under the light of the above, it is no wonder to see that agriculture is considered the leading factor in achieving rural development. Agricultural activities carried out in an area promote the development of this very area and enhance the rural environment (Barbieri et al., 2017). It provides employment and while providing employment provides food as well, which is necessary for every and each member of the nation. Therefore, it is the sector most focused on for rural development in poor regions (Chaudhry, 2007).

Viable rural areas of a country are due to continuous agricultural activities (Refsgaard and Johnson, 2010) and as researchers have demonstrated previously rural communities' active participation is a must for sustainable rural development (Sabet and Khaksar, 2020).

However, as the agriculture sector is very vulnerable to natural and economic instability, it cannot be the only remedy relied on for rural development (Bui and Hoang, 2021). The studies showed that when in a country agricultural revolution couldn't be achieved, that very country finds itself in poverty, economic dependence to other countries and most importantly in hunger. The decline in agricultural activities and the income earned by these activities, eventually, lead to rapid disintegration in terms of rural communities. Gustavo and Kostas (2007) point out the importance of agriculture for the development of rural areas by studying the correlation between these two elements.

As stated above in the section depicting the importance of agriculture for a country's economy, due to their lack of access to necessities like modern healthcare, adequate education, sports facilities, and cultural events, as well as infrastructure for water, electricity, and sanitation, people in rural areas who experience reduced economic activity also experience low self-esteem (Alston, 2000).

One of the most important reasons for Türkiye to face decreased agricultural activities is, apart from economic problems faced by the agriculturist, the split of arable lands due to inheritance. For instance, an arable land once owned by a farmer, having two or three children at least, is divided into two or three lots when he passes away. The heirs who are mostly not willing to continue in the agriculture sector, either leave these lands uncultivated or sell it to third parties, who, as a consequence, give up on agricultural activities due to the small land that does not cover even their expenses most of the time. Although by the Law with number 6537 on the Soil Conservation and Amendments to the Land Use (Official Gazette, 2014) which has been enacted on the date of 30/4/2014 following its publication on Official Gazette with number 29001, dated May 15, 2014, the Republic of Türkiye has prevented those arable lands are divided by heritage, agriculture is still threatened by lack of rural agricultural activities on inherited lands due to the multiplicity of heirs.

There is no doubt that uncultivated arable lands are a threat both economically and environmentally.

The economic aspect also covers the migration of peasants from rural areas to urban regions. This continuous, unbridled rural-urban migration is causing a decrease in the population. When it is recalled that this migrating population is mostly working in the food production sector, it is obvious that food shortage will be one of the consequences of rural-urban. Another consequence will be an increase of population in urban areas needing more services with fewer resources. A study conducted by researchers suggests that development in the agricultural sector can decrease migration from rural areas to cities (Gamso and Yuldashev, 2018). These researchers believe that the development of agricultural sectors can provide sustainable status to economic development.

The environmental aspect covers uncultivated arable lands' erosion, a decrease in groundwater levels and surface plantation and eventually an increase in climate heat. Brune et al. (2018) while describing the benefits of agritourism operations, point out wildlife habitat improvement and water conservation which will lack when there is no agricultural activities at all and lands are left

uncultivated. Lanfranchi and Giannetto (2014) emphasize importance of environment protection along with rural development and point out social farming activities as a remedy for these two main objectives.

When all of the aforementioned considerations are carefully considered, the significance of continuing agricultural activities in SMSFs becomes evident. Because rural communities experiencing poverty will benefit economically from the expansion of agriculture, which will ultimately lead to a decrease in poverty. Resuming and promoting agricultural activities in SMSFs is necessary to boost rural economies and combat poverty, but policies pertaining to this endeavor must also take "sustainability" into account in order to protect and maintain the resources for economic development as well as the environment, habitat, and biodiversity that it depends on. It goes without saying that without the sustainability of SMSFs' agricultural operations, there can be no economic growth, no rural development, and no fight against poverty.

In agriculture, sustainability is defined as using land and natural resources in a way that ensures biodiversity, ecosystems, landscapes, and natural resources are available in the future. The biophysical aspect of agricultural production and its strong reliance on regional ecosystems' unique features should be considered (environmental dimension); resources are used effectively, aiding in the growth of rural areas (economic dimension); employment opportunities are guaranteed, as is access to farmers' resources and services (social dimension) (Ammirato and Felicetti, 2014).

Sustainable rural tourism, which is defined as tourism that does not alter the natural environment or social and artistic heritage while promoting the growth of other social and economic activities in the rural area, is directly related to the development of sustainable agriculture.

In this regard, "tourism" is viewed by rural communities as a chance to diversify their economies and provide life to their villages. In actuality, the industry for rural tourism is expanding and presents intriguing prospects due to its capacity to address some of the new developments in traveler desire. Two

primary orientations can be used to summarize these developments (Ammirato and Felicetti, 2013).

Since it fully reflects the principles of quality production, local development, short agrifood chains, and new trends in tourism, agritourism is the commercial activity that best exemplifies the recently mentioned elements in this context (Ammirato, 2010).

CHAPTER 3

3. AGRITOURISM

Literature depicts farm-related touristic, recreational, or educational activities under various words such as agritourism, agrotourism, farm tourism, farm-based tourism or rural tourism. Those words are used interchangeably for the first one which is agritourism (Wall, 2000; Roberts and Hall, 2001; Barbieri and Mshenga, 2008; Gil Arroyo et al., 2013) Meanwhile, those words are used as well to highlight the differences between those concepts which look like similar (Iakovidou, 1997; Sharpley and Sharpley, 1997; McGehee and Kim, 2004; Phillip et al., 2010).

On the other hand, Mahaliyanaarachchi (2015) who defines agritourism as a fusion model, combining tourism and agriculture, uncovering lucrative innovative markets in terms of agricultural products and services, and delivering rustic tourists' demands, states that agritourism is generally discussed under the category of rural tourism. However, the term rural tourism must not be considered among the names to identify agritourism activities for its meaning covers not only rural farm activities but includes all tourism activities carried out in natural or archeological sites (Clarke, 1996; Nilsson, 2002; Phillip et al., 2010).

According to Maxfield and Wiltshier (2018) people are in search of alternative types of tourism which are different from standardization and anonymity. Barbieri et al., (2019) point out that domestic agritourism has risen in European countries since the 80s. Tourists, nowadays, are more interested in nature because they are in search of a time out of their hectic city life. They want to experience the conditions of rural regions during their holidays, to discover a new territory and get in direct touch with the local population. They stay for a day, or for the weekend or even for a short period to experience rural life.

Eventually, the citizens coming to visit a farm become consumers or tourists, and the farmers become hosts.

In the early years of agritourism activities, the concept was only accommodation and catering. Now it is about the rural environment, natural resources, and historical and cultural aspects of the agritourism facilities' locations. And it is defined as a global phenomenon (van Huylenbroeck et al., 2006). Passing holidays in an agritourism facility allows urban tourists to experience a different way of living, which is not possible in big cities (Carpio et al., 2008).

The Italian Parliament described agritourism in 2006 as “a business of reception and hospitality practiced by farmers through the use of their company concerning the connection with the activities of cultivating the land, forestry, and animal husbandry”.

A compilation of definitions drawn from the literature, illustrating how researchers have emphasized different dimensions of the agritourism concept, is provided in Appendix A.

The table provided in Appendix-A of this thesis highlights that the most important aspect of agritourism activities is to be carried out on a “working farm”, a farm where crops are produced and harvested, animals are bred, and people operating or running the farm make their living by afore afore-mentioned activities. For agritourism's capital is the natural resources of farms as well as their amenities (Bagi and Reeder, 2012). By agritourism natural resources are used at an optimal level (Baum and Gramzow, 2009; Rokniddin-e-Eftekhari and Ghaderi, 2002). These natural resources combined with the untraditional agricultural activities on a farm, supported by local institutions, can become a source of additional income for the microbusiness of farmers (SgROI et al., 2018). The use of resources that are available in the countryside is also emphasized by other researchers (Roberts and Hall, 2001; Cawley and Gillmor, 2008).

These aspects constitute the most important purpose of agritourism, which is to provide value added to the farm and its surrounding region by diversifying the income sources. This alternate business activity connects value

added with farms (Maetzold, 2002). In recent decades, SMSFFs in Europe took advantage of farm activities diversification to gain incomes for their farms in different ways. For, although they were keeping their regular agricultural activities, effects such as low productivity, pests and most importantly climate change affected the income of SMSFFs and they touched lesser revenues. Diversification in family farms through agritourism provides an additional income source for the family that operates the farm. This supplementary income will not only allow the family to ameliorate their quality of life but also will help to provide a sort of insurance for the risks arising from unstable agricultural markets (Barbieri, 2010; Blay-Palmer et al., 2016). Eventually, the region's welfare will be affected positively. This new method also increased awareness of the importance of agricultural activities in rural areas (Prayukvong et al., 2015).

On the other hand, McGehee and Kim (2004) and also Tew and Barbieri (2012) point out another important benefit of agritourism, which they call educational benefits. They state that farm operators who are in the agritourism business can educate their visitors about farm products and how agricultural activities are handled. Barbieri and Valdivia (2010) emphasize the educational effect of agritourism on people about the importance of agriculture and natural resources.

Agritourism is also important for a country because of its cultural and socio-cultural aspects. For, local traditions can be preserved by the activities of agritourism businesses, while in the meantime a relationship between the rural regions and the cities can be consolidated (Lupi et al., 2017). Especially, summer farms are the representation of traditional agriculture particularly in Norway and Austria. They are in general considered as heritage of Norwegian and Austrian culture (Daugstad and Kirchengast, 2013).

Agritourism activities are classified under three concepts which are;

- the activities of agritourism that are carried out in active, working farms,
- the nature of the contact between the tourists and the agricultural activity carried out in the agritourism facility;

- the degree of authenticity in the tourism experience.

Diversification in the agritourism sector is classified (Haghiri and Okech, 2011) under two main branches; the presence of recreational and cultural services and the preservation and enhancement of the territory where agritourism activities are carried out. Accordingly, it is pointed out (Mastronardi et al., 2015; Lupi et al., 2017) that agritourism has effects on the social, economic, and environmental presence of the area. On the other hand, it is underlined (Forleo et al., 2017) that the job offers possibilities of agritourism, especially in areas where job alternatives are very limited. In this context, Lupi et al. (2017) emphasized the economic effects of agritourism on farms by becoming a supplementary income and for the region by promoting regional produce. The same researchers also underlined that agritourism activities prevent women and young people from migrating to big cities, for it creates employment opportunities.

In recent decades the importance of agritourism as a diversification factor in favor of small farmers' socioeconomics has been valued with respect to the multifunctionality of agriculture (Pérez-Olmos and Aguilar-Rivera, 2021). Farmers who produce in rural areas diversify their income sources by developing socioeconomic activities such as agritourism (Kieffer, 2018). It is stated (Bosmann et al., 2021) that agritourism allows farmers to diversify their business model and it, therefore, increases their revenue. Agritourism merges the rural lifestyle and cultural context of local communities with recreational experiences derived from agricultural activities, as emphasized by Broccardo et al. (2017) and Zambrano-Mieles et al. (2017). When effectively planned and managed, these elements contribute to sustainable development (Marzo-Navarro et al., 2018) and support the preservation of agricultural practices, cultural traditions, and ancestral knowledge passed down through generations (Rodriguez Alonso, 2019).

Agritourism is considered to be a complex and largely differentiated fact (Frochot, 2005). Within this highly differentiated and complex fact, Pacciani (2011) points out the importance of actions and relationships between public and

private actors. He underlines that those actors are the ones who define the connections between touristic products and local resources.

Generally, agritourism is considered as a rural tourism subset (Phillip et al., 2010). Therefore, it is deemed to be a structure founded on the use of local resources that are already available (Roberts and Hall, 2001; Hall et al., 2003; Cawley and Gillmor, 2008).

Despite the existence of various case studies and empirical analyses mentioning that agritourism's different types have pros and cons in terms of the environment (Daugstad et al., 2002; Frey and Zimmermann, 2005; Giaccio and Mastronardi, 2011; Mastronardi et al., 2015a) and on the socio-economic context of the very area (McGehee et al., 2007; Tew and Barbieri, 2012; Vogt, 2013; Srisomyong and Meyer, 2015), agritourism is accepted as an actor, playing an importing role for local development (Slee et al., 1997; European Commission, 2007; Saxena et al., 2007; Flanigan et al., 2015; Mastronardi et al., 2015b). Dimara and Skuras (1999), Mastronardi and Cipollina (2009) and Belletti (2010) emphasize agritourism as a key factor in particularly rural marginal areas while Garrod et al. (2006) and Mastronardi et al. (2015b) underline that tourists appreciate mostly areas hosting environmental and cultural heritage. Bosmann et al., (2021) cite that agritourists are interested in being on an active farm, offering local products, where they can experience animal husbandry. Researchers (Ait-Yahia Ghidouche et al., 2021), states that taking part in farm work is an essential component of agritourism activity.

According to Woo and Yean (2006), beyond its economic advantages, agritourism also serves an educational purpose related to environmental awareness. It provides an opportunity for individuals from urban backgrounds to learn about food production processes and animal husbandry practices (Busby and Rendle, 2002; Oppermann, 1995).

According to Ait-Yahia Ghidouche et al. (2021), apart creating a gain for farmers and tourists, contributes directly to alleviating poverty, reducing inequalities, assuring food security and is also a means in preserving water

resources. Agritourism is a means for the sustainability of nearby cities (Demirel and Kacmaz, 2023).

Agritourism has a positive impact on the natural resources and biodiversity of the region where it is carried out, because in agritourism farms, the tendency is to develop more sustainable techniques.

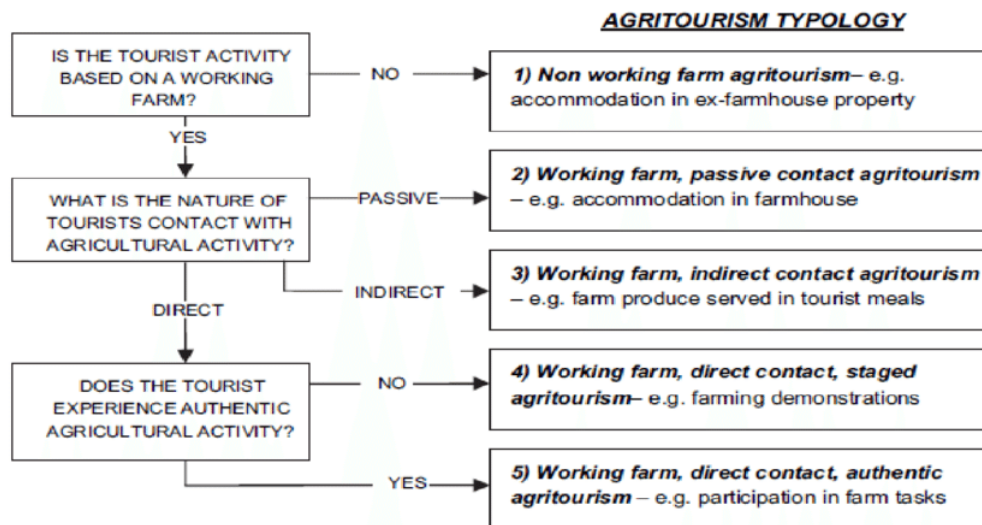
Another positive, effective aspect of agritourism is that it helps in preventing depopulation which is very common in rural regions and it also prevents to protect the traditional culture. Continuous agricultural activities performed in agritourism farms may help to protect the soil of the less advantageous region and help to prevent hydrogeological disasters (Tarolli et al., 2014; Agnoletti et al., 2015). Lupi et al.(2017) also indicated that new horizons are possible in rural development through agritourism, which provides beneficial effects on the landscape and environment, while it helps reduce depopulation.

Agritourism is not to be considered only a means to preserve arable lands and sell agricultural products, but is an alternative tourism activity with economic aspects. Festivals and farmers' markets organized within the scope of agritourism activities are of crucial importance to revive the regional economy (Çıkm, et al., 2009).

Taking into account agritourism's positive effects such as economic, environmental and social benefits on a region, determining the factors that increase the income provided by agritourism can contribute to creating and implementing necessary policies for the development of rural regions and to maintain sustainability.

Due to the wide definition of agritourism, there is still a debate on how to define agritourism, and it remains an academic dilemma waiting to be resolved (Philip et al., 2010).

Typology of agritourism activities is presented below in Figure 3.1 which demonstrates five different agritourism activities. These agritourism activities are classified based on the conditions of the farm such as being a working or non-working farm, the contact of tourists with agricultural activities and tourists' involvement in agricultural activities.



Source: Phillip et al., 2010

Figure 3.1 Typology of Agritourism Activities

3.1. DEVELOPMENT AND MODELS OF AGRITOURISM IN THE WORLD

Reading about world history will reveal that for centuries, individuals traveling great distances have been able to find food and shelter on farms all over the world when there was no other option for accommodation, such as inns or monasteries in the western side, and caravanserais in the eastern side of the world. This kind of hospitality, which offers quite limited options, if any at all, became even more significant when people from large cities wanted to spend time in the heart of the countryside but could not afford the five-star hotels situated in the most popular parts of their countries, under the famous commercial title “resort”. At this point, farms entered the scene and began providing visitors wishing to be closer to nature, offering basic lodging amenities. Thus, agritourism emerged as a new and varied source of revenue for farmers struggling to make ends meet and carry on with their farming operations. On the other hand, agritourism provided an ongoing source of employment for

the people who lived close to agritourism farms, for farmers having no time to serve the visitors outsourced accommodation services.

Researchers started to study the concept of agritourism in the 80s. They first defined the fundamentals of agritourism based on sociology and tourism facts (Barbieri et al., 2019).

Beginning in the 1980s, the European Union (EU) made growing agricultural earnings and agritourism its top priorities. Funds were given to farmers who developed plans to diversify their agricultural operations in order to increase their productivity in terms of quality, meet market demands, save energy, or improve environmental circumstances (Regulations EEC (European Economic Community) No. 797/85, 1985).

In order to promote, support, and regulate farm-based tourism, numerous nations have regulated their domestic laws and/or legislation since 1985, when Italy became the first country to pass a particular law for agritourism operations. Although the Italian Law stipulates that no farm with active farming activities can be involved in agritourism business, each country experienced different developments on the path of agritourism and accordingly, has its particular regulations and applications.

Italy is noted as the first country where the first movements of modern agritourism activities started in the early 60s. Having no official regulation in terms of farms involved in tourism activities, these pioneers faced several problems with the local administrations of the Ministry of Interiors, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Health, each of them responsible for different aspects of agritourism activities in local farms (Santucci, 2013).

Eventually, Italy became the first EU country that enacted a law on agritourism in 1985. This first law, with number 730/1985, was updated in 1996 by the Law with number 06 and by the law with number 96/2006. By the last updates of the law, agritourism is accepted as an agricultural activity that can be carried out only by the farmer and his/her family members. The law regulated not only the limit of rooms, beds and restaurant seats for an agritourism facility but also the value-added taxation and income taxation. Tourism activities of the

farms in the agritourism business must be based on agriculture, aiming to preserve the agricultural features and activities of the farms (Santeramo and Barbieri, 2017; Sidali, 2011). Following that date, other regions of Italy have developed their own regional legislations to regulate agritourism activities carried out on their administrative territories. It is seen that some adaptations have been carried out based on the local traditions, culture and agriculture of the regions. As is the aim of agritourism, local products have been used to attract tourists to provincial regions (Santucci, 2013).

In Italy, agritourism has a legal nature that is governed by laws. The Italian legislative system points out the connection, complementarity and non-prevalence aspects of agritourism (Sonnino, 2004). It has different elements when compared to all other rural tourism types. The farm where the agritourism activities are carried out must be an active farm, located in a rural area, using and producing raw materials, providing employment, offering accommodation and catering, and other activities if possible.

Lupi et al. (2017) describe that the Italian legislation is pursuing four issues which are as follows;

- 1- Economic issues; integrating farmers' revenues and promoting local products,
- 2- Socio-cultural issues; consolidating the relations between the city and countryside, preserving local traditions,
- 3- Environmental issues; protecting the environment and the landscape,
- 4- Occupational issues; creating new job opportunities, especially in the marginal areas, aiming to limit the migration of young and female labor force.

It is determined that in Italy, the application of these legislations and the diversification of income sources helped the revival of ancient traditions and increased the GDP, contributing to rural development (Santucci, 2013). All thanks to agritourism.

According to Esposti (2006), agritourism has, especially because it had spread throughout the country, considerable economic and social interests.

Table 3.1 Agritourism facilities breakdown in Italy as per 2021

Kind of agritourism authorization	Accommodation	Catering	Tasting	Other activities different from accommodation catering tasting	All items
Territory					
Italy	20.646	12.798	6.111	13.457	25.390
Nord	8.046	5.436	1.604	5.051	11.131
Piemonte	978	839	755	1.025	1.364
Valle d'Aosta / Vallée d'Aoste	43	41	21	11	60
Liguria	630	342	102	246	699
Lombardia	947	1.116	209	881	1.728
Trentino Alto Adige / Südtirol	3.136	761	392	1.134	3.749
Bolzano / Bozen	2.761	560	243	1.028	3.253
Trento	375	201	149	106	496
Veneto	1.037	933	113	522	1.570
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	392	529	12	312	703
Emilia-Romagna	883	875	0	920	1.258
Centro (I)	8.276	3.664	2.706	5.116	9.210
Toscana	4.912	1.998	1.651	2.583	5.380
Umbria	1.405	463	349	1.178	1.414
Marche	961	475	404	585	1.101
Lazio	998	728	302	770	1.315
Mezzogiorno	4.324	3.698	1.801	3.290	5.049
Abruzzo	486	415	109	296	588
Molise	85	92	47	76	116
Campania	683	737	316	751	870
Puglia	862	693	443	454	958
Basilicata	178	163	58	138	214
Calabria	487	446	159	430	552
Sicilia	903	581	567	922	959
Sardegna	640	571	102	223	792

As per the data obtained from Italy's National Institute of Statistics, in the year 2021 there were 20.646 active farms authorized for accommodation (which pursuant to law are authorized to provide one or more additional services apart from lodging, providing accommodation with one or more kind of buildings), 12.798 active farms authorized for catering (which pursuant to law are authorized to provide one or more additional services), 6.111 active farms authorized for tasting ((which pursuant to law are authorized to provide one or more services), 13.457 active farms authorized for other activities different from accommodation, catering and tasting (which pursuant to law are authorized to provide one or more other activities such as horse-riding, trekking, etc.), and 25.390 active farms which are authorized for all the categories. The breakdown of these farms is provided on Table 3.1.

In 1997, taking as an example Italian approach to agritourism which proved to be successful, European Union Council, along with its member states, implemented interregional projects with the aim of creating new regional business opportunities, vitalizing rural economy and also maintaining their ecosystems. Through these projects, they aimed to use the farms for tourism purposes to compensate for the decreasing revenues of farmers (Bosmann et al., 2021).

Germany's Rügen Island is a good example in demonstrating importance of agritourism. In Rügen Island, 80% of accommodation is farm-based (Polukhina and Rukomoinikova, 2018). In Poland's farm-based tourism was deemed to be a cheap way to attract tourists, using already existing farm houses for accommodation and small facilities for catering (McMahon, 1996).

In Cyprus, the Cyprus Agrotourism Company was established within the scope of the rural tourism development program that was initiated by Cyprus Tourism Organization in 1995 (Farmaki, 2012).

A study conducted by Dutch researchers (Meraner et al., 2015) confirmed the outcomes obtained during the development of agritourism in Italy and stated that diversifying income resources not only increases rural regions' incomes but also preserves the environment and assures food production continuity.

A study which is conducted in Italy (Lupi et al., 2017) states that the probability of carrying out agritourism activities for farms that are located in environmentally protected areas is considerably higher than the ones that are located in not environmentally protected lands. The same study indicates also that this situation can suggest that there is a correlation between agriculture and environmental protection and that environmentally protected lands attract more tourists, making these areas more profitable for agritourism activities.

Agritourism emerged when the income of the farmers decreased and to find another income source was a must for farmers to maintain the viability of their economy (Fleischer et al., 2018).

In Poland, according to the research conducted in the Wielko-polska region, where there were 450 agritourism farms, agritourism operations demonstrate an example in demonstrating that there is a good relationship between local residents and the economic development of the region (Kosmaczewska, 2008). In 2021, the number of agritourism farms was more than 8.000, offering around 90.000 beds (Bacsi and Szálteleki, 2022). In Poland, agritourism provides additional income to the farms depending on the total outputs and inputs (Jeczmyk and Ryś-Jurek, 2024).

Barbieri and Tew (2016) determined the optimistic influence of agritourism on farm benefits in Missouri. The research they have conducted, collecting data from 164 agritourism farms, showed that farmers think about agritourism operations as an important factor for the sustainability of their farm. The popularity of agritourism has grown in the United States and gained economic importance accordingly (Lucha et al., 2016). Bernardo et al. (2004) stated that 62% of American adults had preferred rural regions for their holidays in the preceding three years.

In Norway and Austria, summer farms provide considerable economic contributions to the regional agrarian communities (Daugstad and Kirchengast, 2013). Austria's economy is dominated by the travel and tourism industry. Approximately 109,000 rooms were available on 21,000 Austrian farms between 1990 and 2000. Thus, one-sixth of all the beds available for tourists in Austria

are owned by farmers. The holiday farmers have arranged their marketing and representation more formally in recent years, initially at the regional level and later throughout the provinces. In 1991, the Austrian Farm Holidays Association was established to advocate for farmers' concerns throughout the country. Positive changes regarding "farm holidays" as a brand name started to give farmers an extra revenue stream and allow travelers to enjoy worthwhile vacations on an Austrian farm (Sachaleli, 2020; Embacher, 1994).

In 1971, an initiative of a “agritourism activity” was founded in the United Kingdom under the name “Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms” (WWOOF) to provide educational exchanges as well as cultural ones, between visitors who wish to spend time in organic farms and organic farmers who wish to accommodate visitors. WWOOF aims to ;

- create a global community, aware of the importance of ecological farming,
- encourage, enlighten, and instruct people on sustainability and agroecological farming.
- Provide environmentally friendly techniques as workable substitutes.
- Encourage harmonious interactions and a moral economy.

According to WWOOF, its objectives are to give individuals from all over the world the chance to learn useful skills in organic farming and gardening, experience rural life by interacting with the farmers who host them, support the organic and sustainability movements, and take part in cross-cultural exchanges. Actually WWOOF is operating in 132 countries, through more than 12000 hosting farms, visited by approximately 100000 WWOOFers. To serve as a democratic platform for national WWOOF groups to collaborate globally, the Federation of WWOOF Organizations (FoWo) was established in 2012.

However, this action which can be deemed as the first example of agritourism is not fulfilling the “supplementary income source” aspect of agritourism of our times. For, visitors are only offering their help in farm works to the farmers who are hosting them, but not paying for their stay on their farms.

In Türkiye, the (Agricultural Tourism and Volunteer Knowledge and Experience Exchange in Ecological Farms) (TaTuTa farms) were providing almost the same service. Originating as a project developed by United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Global Environment Fund (GEF) Small Grants Program (SGP) between the years 2003 – 2006, TaTuTa Initiative merged in 2004 with WWOOF and started to operate with the same principles under the name “WWOOF Türkiye”. Actually there are 53 host farms providing accommodation to volunteers in exchange of their help in farm work.

3.2. HOW CAN AGRITOURISM HELP TO DEFEAT RURAL POVERTY AND CONTRIBUTE TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Defeating rural poverty and driving sustainable development in impoverished rural regions requires a multidimensional approach that encompasses economic, social and environmental aspects to solve the very problem. Each of these aspects is an individual issue requesting immediate and lasting solutions, ending in sustainable outcomes.

The problem solvers, or policymakers in other words, working to defeat rural poverty and provide rural development, mostly consider economic issues, neglecting the well-being of the rural population (Gutiérrez Cedillo et al., 2011). Especially micro businesses of the rural regions, such as SMSFs defined as businesses employing a maximum of 10 workers (Devins, 1999; Kangasharju, 2000) and generating value added to the economy, are essential for rural households, yet they are frequently overlooked (Atasoy, et al., 2007; Campin et al., 2013; Larochelle et al., 2008).

To defeat rural poverty and provide extra income and value added to impoverished rural regions and SMSFs a very specific product is needed. This product can be “the agritourism” which it is defined by Esposti (2012) as an innovation in terms of nationwide agricultural radical product. And, which is also deemed to be the solution to resolve the problems encountered in rural development (Marandola et al., 2006). Agritourism presents both opportunities

and challenges for rural communities, according to the Rural Development Plan designed in 1999 in Tuscany. On the one hand, agritourism is really mentioned as one of the strategies that have prevented rural migration and revived rural communities, together with the assessment of typical products and the growth of organic agriculture. However, the Plan makes it clear that agritourism meets the fundamental challenge of sustainable development in its attempt to strike a balance between the reproduction of customer resources and their economic evaluation: the development of relationships with external subjects (consumers and tour operators) who are essential to enhancing production but who may also disrupt local systems because their pressure jeopardizes the mechanisms by which those systems regenerate themselves (Regione Toscana, 1999).

In 2011, The New York Times reported that agritourism has saved many small farms from financial bankruptcy in California, for it was an enticing option for extra income, capturing the recreational aspect of the farm (Khanal and Mishra, 2014).

Lucha et al. (2016) define that by enhancing and diversifying a farmer's revenue source, agritourism can be seen as a viable commercial endeavor that can lower risks. Another researcher (Nilson, 2002) emphasizes the aspect of agritourism, which can provide the farmers an alternative source of revenue, which can provide them with several economic benefits. Ventura and Milone (2000) also pointed out that agritourism provides continuous cash flow throughout the year. Öztornacı and Şengül (2019) argue that when agriculture is combined with improvements in education, health and housing, it plays a pivotal role in reducing rural poverty and ensuring social development. Other researchers (Busby and Rendle, 2000), underlined that apart becoming a second financial source, agritourism can allow the farmers to maintain their traditional agricultural activities.

3.2.1. The Economic Impact of Agritourism on Rural Communities

On the other hand, tourism, which is defined as a chimneyless industry, is a large-scale business line that is most often used to revitalize the economy of a

country or region and, when handled successfully, becomes one of the sectors that provide the greatest benefit to the economy (Çıkın et al., 2009).

Agritourism provides a chance to establish a connection between the local tourism business and the agricultural community while also enhancing the value of crops, livestock, and other natural resources that a farm has to offer (Das and Rainey, 2010).

Table 3.2 Türkiye’s monthly tourism income in 2025

Türkiye’s Monthly Tourism Income in 2025	
	2025 (Thousand USD)
January	3.454.103
February	2.855.299
March	3.014.469
April	4.194.754
May	5.490.300
June	6.410.193
July	7.542.525
August	9.010.567
September	7.493.687
October	Not declared yet
November	Not declared yet
December	Not declared yet

Source : data.tuik.gov.tr/ 2025, October 31.

Table 3.2 presented above provides the contribution of tourism in Turkish economy for the first nine months of the year 2025.

Agritourism revenue serves as a significant economic driver when effectively planned and managed, supporting national and regional economies throughout the year. It is a contribution to the rural regions’ economies,

especially following an agricultural decline which happens from time to time (Mura and Ključnikov, 2018).

Successful examples from Italy, the USA, and the EU illustrate how agritourism generates substantial economic benefits (Bagi and Reeder, 2012; Barbieri, 2013).

Agritourism, a concept often heard in the last decades, offering several services such as meal provision, on-site processing of agricultural goods, pick your own food activities (Phillip et al., 2010) has become an important factor in the socioeconomics of SMSFs. By bringing local and extra-local actors together (Ionescu et al., 2021) and creating a symbiosis of farming activities and tourism, which is also called micro businesses of the tourism sector, agritourism is mostly related to rural development (Flanigan et al., 2014) by generating a supplementary income source for farmers and supplying economic benefits (Busby and Rendle, 2000). Thus, it is obvious that agritourism is not important only for the individual actors who are the farmers and consumers but also for the rural community (McGehee, 2007a). It is frequently cited as having the capacity to boost farms and the rural communities around them (Potočnik-Slavič and Schmitz, 2013). For, when a farm is involved in agritourism activities it boosts other regional actors such as producers of agrifood, local artisans manufacturing handicrafts, local restaurants serving traditional food, and shops (Ollenburg and Buckley, 2007). Agritourism farms contribute also to the preservation of local culture and traditions (Wilson et al., 2006). In particular, it is anticipated that agritourism will support employment opportunities, create extra income, promote long-term stability in rural areas, and help maintain a well-managed cultural landscape (Potočnik-Slavič and Schmitz, 2013).

The concept of agritourism is clearly defined by the combination of two determinations made by Pauw and Thurlow (2011) and Popescu et al. (2014) who indicated respectively that agriculture can subsidize the economic benefits of a country and that tourism can contribute to the economic benefits of a country. Therefore, the provision of services needed for agricultural activities through cross-marketing, the improvement and diversification of products (Tew

and Barbieri, 2012; Barbieri and Tew, 2016), the direct sale of farm products to consumers, and the sale of other regional products and handicrafts is only possible if agritourism is a distinct source of income that depends on the services provided by farms and residents of nearby villages. Agritourism can clearly contribute to rural development by generating additional economic value. In economic terms, value added refers to the net output produced by an activity, calculated as the difference between total production and the cost of intermediate goods and services used in the process. It also reflects the income distributed to labor and capital within the production system. When disaggregated by sector, value added highlights the specific economic contributions of industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, energy, and various service sectors.

Successful examples from Italy, the United States, and the European Union illustrate how agritourism generates substantial economic benefits (Bagi and Reeder, 2012; Barbieri, 2013).

Since the main source of income in rural areas is agriculture and animal husbandry, tourism can be considered as an alternative source of income in these areas. Farm owners can access new sources of income by opening part of their farms to agrotourism or caravan/camping tourism (Ilter, 2021).

The EU and also the states, individually have attributed agritourism an economic weight for being a driver of processes in terms of rural and also regional development. For agritourism activities are considered as one of the constituents, an integral one, of policies aiming at the development of rural areas (Bianchi, 2011).

According to Barbieri (2013) and McGehee (2007a), agritourism has a significant ability to generate supplementary income for farmers, requesting low investment as it uses the actual assets of a farm. Especially McGehee (2007b) claims that farmers and rural business owners can diversify their revenue streams by engaging in agritourism. They can sell goods, provide experiences (such as farm tours and workshops), and arrange lodging by allowing guests to stay on their farms. Rural livelihoods can be greatly supported by this extra income, particularly during off-peak farming seasons.

Successful examples in Tuscany and Umbria prove that the consolidation of rural tourism and certified quality foods can provide alternatives to a sense of remoteness in less favored rural areas (Galluzzo, 2017)

Another researcher (Schilling et al., 2012) stated that agritourism, which is the combination of agriculture and tourism, can have a significant impact on the economy. The survey conducted by the same researcher pointed out that 51% of 1043 farmers who participated to the survey in New Jersey declared receiving half of their income from agritourism. 36% of these 1043 farmers declared that they receive whole their income from agritourism.

Researchers Potočnik-Slavič and Schmitz (2013) ran a study based on evidence gathered from nine European countries which are the United Kingdom, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Croatia, Slovenia and Ireland. After explaining that farmers' income is decreasing due to the ongoing reforms of the EU Common Agricultural Policy, the researchers indicated that farmers' search for new sources to generate additional income, agritourism is deemed to be a possibility to diversify farm household revenue.

Hawkes (2013) indicated that as per the data concerning the 23.350 farms which are surveyed by the USDA, since 2002 the income earned due to agritourism in the United States of America reached an average of USD 24.400 per farm. This figure is indicated in the 2007 Census of Agriculture. This figure is announced as USD 21.230 per farm as an average in 2012 Census of Agriculture. This time the number of farms involved in agritourism was 33.161. The increase in farm numbers explains the decrease in income figures.

In another survey, which has been conducted by Veeck et al. (2016) in Michigan, over 154 farms carrying out agritourism activities, a considerable number of families carrying out agritourism in Michigan state, declared the said activities to be a vital income source. They argued that annual sales are over USD 430 million dollars while providing employment to over 4,000 full-time workers and 28,000 part-time ones.

The study of Kania and Bogusz (2016) in Poland, covering 73 farms in Carpathian Mountains, found that the income obtained from agritourism activities considerably improves the way of life of peasants.

Barbieri and Tew (2016) conducted a survey in Missouri in 2008 about the economic achievement of agritourism activities. For their survey, they gathered data from 564 farmers settled in Missouri state. More than fifty percent of the farmers declared agritourism as an important income source. Furthermore, agritourism was accepted as a significant component of farming business in continuing to carry out their activities. They also defined agritourism as a promising influence on farm livelihood.

Blay Palmer et al. (2016) have highlighted another aspect of agritourism in relation to local food resilience. The researchers asserted that by giving farmers an additional revenue flow, agritourism increases the local food system's economic resilience. The fact that agritourism provides farmers with a diversification strategy to reduce risk in an agricultural context has also been highlighted by Barbieri et al. (2008).

Stampini and Tornarolli (2012) highlight the need for diverse economic structures in rural areas to improve living standards for beneficiary households. Agritourism can be a viable avenue for income generation and reducing rural poverty. Academics such as Torres et al. (2024) and Van Sandt and Thilmany McFadden (2016) also pointed out that agritourism activities provided economic benefits.

3.2.2. Agritourism's Contribution to Employment and Business Growth

The German Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV, 2010) regards agrotourism not only as a farm development issue but also as an employment issue and as a suitable instrument for developing rural areas.

It is well known that regions with intense agricultural activities deal with unemployment issues, among others (Çıkın et al., 2009). Therefore, providing tourism services on farms may and probably will create employment

opportunities for unemployed people living in villages carrying out agricultural activities. Carpio et al. (2008) also point out the additional employment opportunities created by agritourism activities for the rural population. The research of Avcu and Yayla (2021) shows that strengthening rural economies through diversified agricultural activities (e.g., alternative income sources) significantly mitigates migration pressures and improves rural wellbeing, paving the way for initiatives like agritourism to take hold.

Both direct and indirect job possibilities can be generated by agritourism. Jobs in supporting industries like restaurants and transportation services as well as on farms like guides and hospitality workers may be developed. Rural unemployment rates may decline as a result of this employment inflow (Beed and Barlow, 2013).

Apodaca-González et al. (2014) emphasized that agritourism practices can dynamize the development process in rural areas and thus reduce poverty, especially in developing countries.

Agritourism is an employment opportunity for family members, especially the women of the farm household (Oppermann, 1995). It can help mitigate rural poverty by providing alternative employment opportunities that align with local traditions and culture (Stavroulakis, 2014).

Agritourism operations in a rural region provides employment not only for people who are in the farming industry but also for people from the tourism industry, such as housekeepers, kitchen staff, liaison officers and so on. It also provides opportunities for local artisans to present and sell their crafts to tourists who more frequently visit their region. This tourism industry which remains active throughout the year can become a sustainable income resource. Bosmann (2021) emphasizes that regional tourism supports the local economy. The same aspect is emphasized by Wolfe and Hammock (2006), claiming that agritourism provides an employment opportunity for residents living in the region. Hence, we can say that agritourism can be a source of local economic benefits for the population living around the farm.

3.2.3. Social and Cultural Benefits of Agritourism

When agritourism operations include holding civilized gatherings, teaching schoolchildren, and incorporating tour groups it generates a financial sources which then trickles down to other areas of the local economy. Through agritourism, individuals can gain a deeper understanding of the skill and labor required to produce the food and fiber that we all enjoy (Das and Rainey, 2010).

Carrying out agritourism activities in rural areas enables the rural population to get in touch with new cultures and develop language skills. Local populations earning more income and feeling secure financially initiate cultural activities (Civelek et al., 2014).

It is argued that agritourism is one of the well-known tourism strategies for many communities in rural areas engaged in farming, to stimulate their socio-economic conditions (Kurnianto et al., 2013; Bachok et al., 2019; Tuzon et al., 2014; Srisomyong, 2010).

Agritourism is an opportunity for farmers to continue to preserve their family farms along with the heritage and culture that are a part of them in the rural areas. This is an aspect of agritourism which has been witnesses in England and Scotland (Ilbery et al., 1998).

Zawadka (2019) claims that staying on an agritourism farm is a perfect opportunity in terms of cultural education. He adds that passing time on agritourism farms broadens customers' knowledge on agricultural production specificity and makes it possible to contact with farm animals.

Stavroulakis et al. (2014) deem agritourism as an opportunity to acquire additional revenue for local citizens by the use of traditional customs, recipes and art.

Pulina et al., (2006) claimed that in Sardinia agritourism operations offered opportunities in terms of educing youth rural-urban migration and social isolation.

Through the heritagization of indigenous foods and traditional agricultural expertise, agritourism farms support ethno-culinary heritage preservation and moderate local food activism (Musa and Chin, 2022). The same researchers

claim that farming communities may revitalize and conserve intangible heritage for future generations by showcasing and promoting their traditional agricultural expertise to tourists. In addition to showcasing the adaptability of indigenous traditions currently being integrated into contemporary agritourism, ethnic cuisine has the potential to revitalize sustainable forest agriculture.

3.2.4. Environmental Benefits and Sustainable Development through Agritourism

Sachaleli (2020) highlights sustainability as a defining feature of agritourism, particularly due to its environmentally friendly practices that align with broader sustainable development goals. Similarly, Barbieri (2013) and McGehee (2007b) emphasize that agritourism tends to have limited negative effects on both the local environment and cultural heritage.

In Italy, Di Betta and Amenta (2013) conducted research across 20 administrative provinces, concluding that environmental quality plays a critical role in the success of agritourism enterprises. Their findings also indicate that agritourism contributes to the conservation of local cultures and ecological systems.

Further studies (Mace, 2005; Sharpley and Vass, 2006; Bagi and Reeder, 2012) suggest that many small farms, often limited by labor, capital, or economies of scale, turn to agritourism as a strategy for staying operational. This shift not only strengthens farm income but also supports environmental stewardship, as continued land use for agriculture helps prevent erosion and degradation.

Sznajder et al. (2009) also point out that beyond its economic benefits, agritourism enables farming families to protect both agricultural land and nearby natural landscapes. Additionally, scholars such as Tarolli et al. (2014) and Agnoletti et al. (2015) argue that by maintaining responsible land use, agritourism may also help reduce hydrogeological risks.

Barbieri and Mshenga (2008) argue that agritourism can serve as an effective means of educating visitors about the essential role of farmers, the challenges they encounter, and the sustainability efforts they undertake.

3.2.5. Government Policies and Strategic Recommendations

Gia (2021) stated that for governments and related agencies knowledge of agritourism is of primary importance when it comes to determining the means leading to economic growth. This must be why, seeing the importance of agritourism as a potential income resource for local farmers, leaders of Belize, Grenada, Jamaica and Saint Lucia examined agritourism activities and its outcomes as an economic model to contribute to the development of their countries (Saint-Ulysse, 2023).

Vogt (2014) found that agrotourism enterprises applying strategic management tools—such as consistent performance monitoring and tailoring offerings to defined customer segments—demonstrated stronger business outcomes. The study also highlighted that clusters of professionally managed agrotourism businesses with well-defined goals tend to enhance overall competitiveness. It concluded that agrotourism holds substantial potential as a competitive market segment, despite often being overlooked by the mainstream travel industry.

During the conference organized in Grosseto, Italy in 1998, agritourism is defined as a link integrating all available resources of rural regions, namely agriculture, tourism, handicrafts, folklore, history, and environment, which are the essentials of a quality territorial system (Pacciani, 1998).

3.2.6. The Future of Agritourism in Rural Development

The studies conducted in the United States by Bagi and Reeder (2012) indicate that agritourism provides a remarkable contribution to farmers' income. These researchers stated that according to the data obtained from the Agricultural Resources Management Survey (USDA-ERS-2007), annually agritourism businesses were providing an excess of gross income amounting to USD

16.000.-. The survey provided a figure of USD 554 million of national total income for the year 2007 earned due to agritourism activities. Direct sales of farm products to tourists provided an additional USD 258 million.

Italian researchers Ammirato and Felicetti (2014) examined a particular form of Alternative Agrifood Networks (AAFN) — referred to as the agritourism rural network (Renting et al., 2003). This model represents a collaborative relationship between rural economic actors and tourists, where visitors engage with the local community through curated packages of regional products and services offered by network participants. The researchers aimed to deepen understanding of the agritourism phenomenon and explore its viability as a framework for sustainable rural development. To achieve this, they carried out an exploratory survey in Calabria, Italy, involving a regional sample of farms that offer agritourism experiences.

Malkanathi and Routray (2012) consider agritourism as a pillar on which stands the poverty reduction strategy in poor regions. They also depict it as an extraordinary adventure for tourists and a source of profitable undertakings.

According to Çıkın et al. (2009) agritourism activities enable farmers to obtain the maximum yield from their agricultural lands. Agritourism provides to farmers with benefits such as sustainable agricultural production and increased market accessibility (Kline et al., 2016).

Bagi and Reeder (2012), in their study from the United States, identified five key diversification strategies adopted by farms: renewable energy production, direct marketing, organic farming, value-added agricultural processing (e.g., making wine, cheese, or jams), and agritourism. The study found that agritourism provided the highest average farm household net worth for farms carrying out agritourism activities (USD 2.0 million). The same study revealed that farms that were involved in agritourism activities were larger in size.

Another research conducted in Italy (Lupi et al., 2017) studied the agritourism farms' features and their relations with rural development and land use policy. This study suggests that for farms that are located on hills and

mountains where it is not possible to carry out production on large scales, agritourism may provide a considerable and valuable addition to their income. Therefore, it is indicated that some geo-morphologically disadvantaged regions may be more suitable for agritourism, especially when and if they are located only protected areas. Similarly, another research points out that agritourism is a means to position a region at a better level in terms of tourism when it has no significant cultural, natural or historical aspects (Ait-Yahia Ghioudche and Ghidouche, 2019).

According to Tew and Barbieri (2012), who point out that agricultural production costs are increasing, agritourism's possibility to diversify income sources for farmers, is a low-risk means to help farmers to increase their earnings. On the other hand, agritourism can be a remedy for farmers who face bad weather conditions, natural disasters, fall in yields and droughts (Hawkes, 2013).

While the study of Ait-Yahia Ghidouche et al. (2021) points out that agritourism activities create economic gains, the same study also indicates its environmental and social benefits. Muresan et al. (2019) to sum up the importance of rural development indicated that rural areas' economic development by rural tourism requires local community involvement.

Agritourism, by diversifying agricultural activities, provides not only an opportunity for the farmers to maintain their original food producer role, but also an opportunity for microbusinesses such as SMSFs, SMSFFs, SEFs and ACs to increase their income, empathizes important role of minorities in the sector, pointing out the gaps in this baby industry, such as policies, network formation and marketing (Perez-Olmos and Aguilar-Rivera, 2021).

According to other researchers (MacKay et al., 2019), agritourism can, while preserving farms and improving their sustainability, provide another opportunity to use arable lands. Farmers who engage in agritourism activities continue to stay in their local region, and they maintain their agricultural activities. For, although the prices of food are increasing in big cities, prices the farmers are offered for their products are decreasing. Since most of the time,

farmers and their family members have not worked outside of the farm, agritourism becomes an additional income source for them. This additional income source provides employment for the other members of the farm household and even for the people living nearby (Sgroi et al., 2018).

SMSFs and SMSFFs are microbusinesses with high flexibility that can fill the gap in the market and be the key to economic recovery by providing employment opportunities for local unemployed citizens (Ivanona and Cepel, 2018; Tvaronavičienė and Razminienė, 2017). As Broccardo et al. (2017) pointed out, agritourism can be a diversification of agricultural activities in rural areas, combining not only farm activities but also rural culture with touristic amusement in an agricultural environment, thus each destination's socioeconomic characteristics are affecting it. Bórawski et al. (2015) indicated that agritourism is an outstanding opportunity for small farms. They stated that especially for farms which are located near waterways or forests agritourism can provide profit growth. Offering fishing, tracking, horse riding and even hunting possibilities to the tourist can be an additional source of income (Barbieri et al., 2016).

Agritourism can be a considerable opportunity for small and medium-sized farmers to obtain additional income, for they are not able to get into competition with big ones (Lupi et al., 2017). Campbell and Kubickova (2020) point out that agritourism is a means of economic diversification. According to Testa et al. (2019), agritourism can serve as an important income stream for small farms, particularly as they face increasing pressure from global market competition.

According to Darău et al. (2010), farmers consider agritourism as an activity on top of their daily ones.

Agritourism, widely recognized for its role in promoting rural development, also holds significant potential to transform local initiatives, including small-scale women's cooperatives (Kizos and Iosifides, 2007).

Hawkes (2013) describes agritourism as a value-added product. He emphasizes that additional income can be generated by agritourism activities and consumers can perceive a farm as a brand. Agritourism is a tool that allows

farmer to diversify their income sources. For, diversifying farm activities is a must to obtain additional income (Salvioni et al., 2020).

Lucha et al. (2016) conducted research in Virginia to examine how demographic characteristics, farm operations, and financial variables influence the profitability of agritourism enterprises. This empirical study, conducted on more than 500 farms involved in agritourism activities showed that the profitability of such activities is associated with the farmers who are motivated by the idea of making extra income, who are more educated. They also showed that when the agritourism activities cover larger areas, then the extra income from agritourism is higher in percentage too. They didn't neglect the positive effect of consumers who come and spend money on farms. Their study showed also that locations that are situated at a long distance, have negative effects on the profitability of agritourism operations.

The creation of local jobs, the provision of additional incomes, the filling of labor gaps, the development of local cooperatives, and the empowerment and control, particularly for women, through the dissemination of new skills, income streams, and qualifications are a few examples of the potential effects of agritourism on local development (Goodwin, 2008). Networks of agritourism businesses are essential for fostering sustainable local economies, as cooperation among farms, processors, and other service providers contributes to a more robust economic framework (Karampela et al., 2016). Che et al. (2005) study the influence of networks, namely the linkages among farmers, on agritourism performance, indicating that entrepreneurs with partners achieve superior outcomes compared to those who pursue individualistic approaches and cultivate relationships with other tourism stakeholders.

Agritourism provides employment not only for people who are in the farming industry but also for people from the tourism industry such as housekeepers, kitchen staff, liaison officers and so on. It also provides opportunities for local artisans to present and sell their crafts to tourists who more frequently visit their region. This tourism industry which remains active

throughout the year can become a sustainable income resource. Bosmann (2021) emphasizes that regional tourism supports the local economy. Hence, we can say that agritourism can be a source of local economic benefits for the population living around the farm.

Another favorable aspect of agritourism is that the income earned by agritourism activities can contribute to the socio-economic development of the people living in the very regions while it may help to preserve natural values and traditional culture. Tew and Barbieri (2012) indicate that increased direct sales are a benefit for agritourism operators as people coming to the farms purchase farm products. Barbieri (2013), also indicates that agritourism, improving wild habitat and conserving local water, affects the environment positively.

Increased diversified economic activities will enable rural regions to regain their economic power, give way to new investments, decrease the migration towards big cities, maybe even cause migration back to rural regions, increase the surface of planted lands and stop erosion as well. To achieve all the above goals, not only the farmers, but regional entrepreneurs and political figures of the region must work hand in hand. Meyer and Meyer (2015) emphasize that in this respect, agritourism is a profitable entrepreneurial undertaking.

Lupi et al. (2017) indicate that farms with lower economic size (up to Euro 100,000) are more likely to be in agritourism. The probability decreases as the size of the farm's increases. The same study revealed that in Italy agritourism has distinctive social, environmental and economic characteristics when compared to traditional farms and that agritourism farms may be a supportive element of rural development due to their activities protect the environment, integrate business revenues and increase employment rates. Agritourism activities raise employment in rural areas as they provide good employment and business opportunities for young farmers. Another research conducted by Bhatta and Ohe (2019) points out also that agritourism is a means for environmental development. In regions engaging in agritourism activities landscape is

safeguarded, rural structures are preserved as well as historical and monumental buildings (Cahill, 2001).

Agritourism activities are supported by the state in Colorado, USA. The statistics indicate that in 2006, more than 13 million people participated in agritourism activities, spending USD 2,2 million.

In 2004, agritourism activities in Georgia provided USD 45,26 million to the economy.

In Italy, where agritourism started for the very first time in the 1980s, the turnover which is calculated as the gross value of goods and services sold to the customers, was 400 million Euro in 1999 obtained by 8,758 farms providing a total of 100,000 beds for agritourism. This turnover reached one billion Euro in 2009 by 19,019 farms providing 193,480 beds. Italian farms reached that figure with the support of public marketing, networking activities and politicians who were committed to this subject (Bosmann et al., 2021). Researchers Ammirato and Felicetti (2014) conducted research in the Calabria region of Italy. This research revealed that 73% of farms over 52 farms that participated in the research, reported that more than 50% of their farm's total annual revenue was generated through agritourism-related activities. 29% of these farms reached a rate of turnover obtained due to agritourism activities between 20% and 50%. This survey highlighted that agritourism activities can provide farmers with a considerable amount of income, becoming an alternative to selling their farms' products.

Bosmann et al., (2021) conducted a study in the Kleve County of Germany and found that by using agritourism as a tool in economic development popular regions have been successful when they had diversified their revenue sources. They also identified the factors that affect the development of agritourism in rural regions which have not been developed in terms of tourism. The same study points out as well the importance of proximity to cities when it comes in attracting agritourists to farms, of political decisions in preparing and supporting entrepreneurs to get into agritourism activities and of networks that can strengthen rural development through agritourism.

It is stated by Stampini and Tornarolli (2012) that poverty can be reduced by a broader economic structure which includes agritourism. Academics Van Sandt and Thilmany McFadden (2016) also pointed out that agritourism activities provided economic benefits.

A study which is conducted in the USA found that the financial security of farmers can be provided and improved by agritourism activities (Joo et al., 2013)

A study by Schilling et al. (2014) in New Jersey, USA, demonstrated that agritourism has a statistically significant and positive impact on farm profitability. Similarly, research by Veeck et al. (2016) found that agritourism makes a growing and meaningful contribution to both the agricultural and tourism sectors in the United States and North America more broadly.

Innovative farms have numerous positive benefits on creating jobs and increasing farm revenue, according to Barbieri's (2013) study, which included 873 farms in the USA. According to the study's findings, agritourism farms increase revenue and profit for the farming industry.

Despite this, agritourism projects frequently have low economic returns, but they improve the socioeconomic status of their owners and are seen as a potential source of extra revenue in addition to their own farm's operations (Karampela and Kizos, 2018).

Hansson et al. (2013) conducted a study in Sweden examining the motivations behind farmers' decisions to diversify into agritourism. The research included responses from 309 Swedish farmers and revealed that when family members are actively engaged in agritourism activities, farmers tend to be more motivated to adopt innovative practices, contributing to better-informed policymaking in rural development. Additionally, Karampela et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of collaboration, noting that horizontal, vertical, and diagonal partnerships each play distinct roles in shaping agritourism success and influencing local development.

However, despite agritourism's recognized contribution to rural development and its potential to generate added value within local economies, there remains a lack of sufficient research focused on understanding agritourism

from the perspective of consumers (Stotten et al., 2019). Barbieri and Tew (2016) also emphasized the need for further studies to capture the full spectrum of benefits that agritourism offers to farm operations.

3.2.7. Agritourism Incentives and Policy Framework in Türkiye

In the EU, agritourism operations are strongly supported in member states through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and its Rural Development Programs (RDPs). Under Pillar II of the CAP, funds are allocated to encourage farm diversification into non-agricultural activities, including rural tourism.

For instance, in Italy, agritourism is regulated and promoted under Law 96/2006. Farmers receive tax reductions, grants for farm stay renovation, and brand identity support. Tuscany and Trentino-Alto Adige are standout regions with strong local networks and promotional platforms.

In Austria, the “Holiday on Farm” program offers subsidies, quality certification, and joint marketing. Agritourism here is family-driven and deeply integrated with cultural preservation.

In France, the program “Bienvenue à la Ferme” (Welcome to the farm) is a national network offering marketing, booking platforms, and training. Rural development funds co-finance facilities, farm restaurants, and experience-based tourism.

In Belgium, agritourism is governed regionally — particularly through Flanders and Wallonia, each of which offers specific incentives. Agritourism operators in Wallonia can receive up to 30–50% funding for converting agricultural buildings into tourist accommodations under rural development plans supported by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). Farmers offering agritourism services benefit from reduced Value-Added Tax (VAT) rates and simplified tax regimes. Organizations like “Accueil Champêtre en Wallonie” provide marketing platforms, training, and certifications to increase visibility and service quality.

In Germany agritourism model is one of the most institutionalized and successful in Europe, thanks to structured national programs and strong

Bundesländer (state-level) support. National Investment Programs for Rural Development (GAK) offer up to 40% cost-sharing for renovations and improvements related to farm tourism infrastructure. The “Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof” (Holiday on the Farm) association certifies agritourism providers and supports joint advertising, contributing to brand trust. Agricultural Chambers offer consulting on business models, pricing, and digital marketing, often free or subsidized. Bavarian and Baden-Württemberg programs link farm tourism to ecological agriculture and climate-resilient rural development, granting bonus points for environmentally sound practices.

In the USA, agritourism is supported at the state level, often through collaboration between Departments of Agriculture, Tourism, and Cooperative Extension Services. USDA provides grants through Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG) and Rural Business Development Grants (RBDG).

In Türkiye, agritourism development is increasingly supported by structured public policies and funding mechanisms aimed at promoting rural diversification, sustainability, and economic resilience. The cornerstone of this support system is the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance in Rural Development (IPARD), co-financed by the European Union and the Turkish government, between 2007 and 2013. Through IPARD-II, which was active between 2014 – 2020 and the newly introduced IPARD-III programs, substantial grants are offered to rural enterprises under the measure titled “Diversification of Farm Activities and Business Development”. Eligible agritourism projects can receive up to 70% co-financing, enabling investments in rural accommodations, farm-based gastronomy, cultural experiences, and small-scale recreational infrastructure (Karagöz and Karagöz, 2024; Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 2022).

Beyond IPARD, Türkiye’s Development Agencies —operating under the Ministry of Industry and Technology—provide regionally adapted supports, including feasibility grants, branding consultancy, and promotional campaign assistance, particularly in areas with untapped tourism potential (Akin, 2023). Meanwhile, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization

(KOSGEB) facilitates the entrepreneurial aspects of agritourism by offering training, mentorship, and startup capital programs that rural tourism ventures can access if formally registered as SMSFs (Altunel and Sürücü, 2020).

At the national level, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry plays a coordinating role in shaping the regulatory environment for agritourism. This includes offering technical capacity-building workshops, simplifying the bureaucratic procedures for rural hospitality permits, and promoting local products through certification schemes and agri-markets (Özcan, 2021). Furthermore, Türkiye's agricultural extension system has begun integrating tourism and customer service training, especially in regions targeted by rural development initiatives.

Despite this multi-tiered support framework, uptake remains uneven. Studies identify several constraints such as low awareness among smallholder farmers, complex grant application procedures, and inconsistencies in local-level governance (Akın, 2023; Özcan, 2021). Additionally, cultural reluctance to mix private home life with commercial hospitality—especially in more conservative rural areas—has been noted as a barrier to agritourism participation (Karagöz and Karagöz, 2024).

To ensure more inclusive development, scholars recommend policy integration between tourism and agricultural agencies, regionalized training models, and targeted outreach efforts that specifically engage underrepresented rural groups such as women and youth (Altunel and Sürücü, 2020). As Türkiye seeks to align more closely with EU rural diversification trends, agritourism policy is expected to continue evolving toward more inclusive and innovation-driven models.

CHAPTER 4

4. METHODOLOGY AND DATA

This thesis is based on two research questions and eleven hypotheses—eight hypotheses focusing on consumers' perceptions of agritourism and three on farmers' perceptions of agritourism operations.

The research model for this thesis is presented as follows.

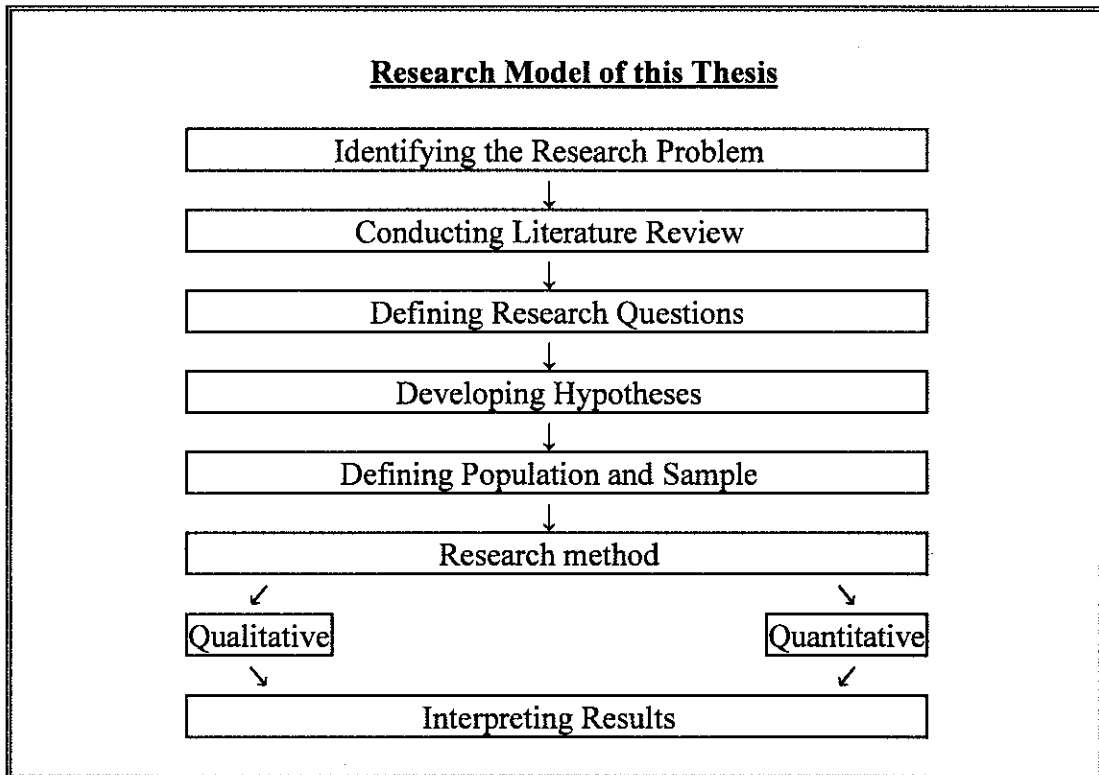


Figure 4. 1 Research Model of this thesis

Figure 4.1 presents that first, the research problem is identified. Conducting a literature review follows the identification of the research problem. Then, research questions are defined and hypotheses are developed. Following the definitions of the population and sample, research methods are determined

as a qualitative survey and a quantitative survey. Finally, the results obtained through these surveys are interpreted.

4.1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

Studying the benefits of agritourism and its potential impact on the development of impoverished rural regions, this thesis aims to address the following research questions:

4.1.1. Research questions

- 1- How does agritourism provide a second source of income for small and/or medium-sized farms?
- 2- How does agritourism help reduce rural poverty and contribute to rural development?

To answer these research questions, eight hypotheses related to consumers' perceptions and three hypotheses concerning farmers' perceptions have been formulated. These hypotheses explore the willingness, motivations, and concerns of both groups regarding agritourism.

4.1.2. Hypotheses concerning Consumers' Perceptions

H1- Female consumers, compared to male consumers, are less likely to look for modern life conditions and modern holiday facilities, preferring a real, authentic rural life experience without modern equipment.

H2- Female consumers, compared to male customers, prefer daily visits to a farm, rather than spending their holidays there.

H3- Consumers prefer near locations to spend their holidays on an agritourism farm.

H4- Male consumers prefer, compared to female ones, to get involved in farm work when they spend their holidays on an active farm.

H5- Consumers tend to purchase farm products and local handicrafts both during and after their visits, thereby supporting the rural economy.

H6- Consumers believe that spending their holidays on an active farm will be more relaxing, and healthy and ensure quality time.

H7- Consumers believe that spending time on an active farm will help to raise awareness concerning environmental issues.

H8- Consumers believe that spending time on an active farm will help to promote rural development.

4.1.3. Hypotheses concerning farmers' perceptions

H9- Farmers prefer daily visits rather than overnight staying.

H10- Farmers prefer to outsource daily services to consumers rather than sparing time and effort to serve consumers.

H11- Farmers prefer that consumers help them to fulfill daily farm tasks.

4.2. METHODOLOGY

According to Lucha et al. (2016), despite the growing popularity of agritourism enterprises, empirical research in this area remains limited. Financial analyses of agritourism operations are especially scarce, largely due to the need for long-term, large-scale data collection. Therefore, the present thesis explores visitors' preferences for spending holidays on working farms, their interest in participating in farm-related activities, and their purchasing behavior concerning farm products and regional handicrafts. It also examines farmers' motivations for launching agritourism ventures, their willingness to offer such services, the types of services they intend to provide, and their income expectations from agritourism.

Therefore, two surveys are conducted to serve the purpose of this thesis.

1- A survey of consumers gathered data on consumers' preferences, expectations and willingness regarding agritourism.

2- A survey of farmers gathered data on their willingness to engage in agritourism, and their concerns, as well as the conditions they endure while carrying out agricultural operations.

4.2.1. The Survey of Consumers

The first survey aiming to assess preferences, expectations and willingness of consumers regarding agritourism is composed of 34 questions (Appendix-B). It is conducted online between 01.10.2024 and 31.10.2024. A total of 601 participants responded to the survey. However, since 9 respondents did not provide answers to certain questions or statements, they were excluded from the survey, remaining 592 respondents whose replies were assessed and tested for the hypotheses.

This survey was divided into 2 sections;

1- Demographic questions, to collect data about the gender, age, education, marital status, number of children, etc. of the respondents.

2- Questions asked and statements proposed to collect data about the preferences, expectations and willingness of participants. Some of the statements were particularly proposed to test the hypotheses (Appendix-C).

4.2.2. The Survey of Farmers

The second survey was conducted by in-person interviews with farmers across different regions of Türkiye. This survey is composed of 27 questions (Appendix-D), divided into 3 sections.

1- Demographic questions, to gather data about demographic particularities of farmers such as gender, education, age, etc.

2- Questions regarding their actual situation and conditions such as for how many years they have been carrying out agricultural operations, the size of their land, the products they produce, how they sell, etc.

3- The third section aimed to obtain an outcome regarding their willingness and motivation to get engaged in agritourism. Again, some of the questions

addressed to the farmers were particularly asked to test the hypotheses (Appendix-E).

Seeing the reluctance, timidity, and cautiousness of farmers hosting “tourists” on their land, their concerns are also about the expenditures they have to face if they engage in agritourism, their perception of consumers as people who will cause obstacles for their already hard daily tasks, and initiating agritourism activities is first proposed as daily visits to farmers based on a schedule. When their perception shifted from “impossible to possible”, longer terms such as spending time all day long and eating in the farm and also 1 night or 2 nights accommodation are proposed as an option as well.

4.3. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Since the survey dataset is reliable based on Cronbach’s Alpha Test (See Section 5.3.1.1.) and (See Section 5.3.1.2.) which is conducted to verify the result of the first one, but came out to be not normally distributed based on Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test (See Section 5.3.2.1.) and the Shapiro-Wilk Test (See Section 5.3.2.2.) conducted to check the result of the first one, non-parametric tests were used to test the hypotheses. The choice of statistical tests depended on data type and the objectives of the research.

Tests chosen and run in this thesis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software are explained in the following sections, starting with the ones used for reliability and normality tests.

4.3.1 Sampling and Data Collection

To gather data for this thesis, an online survey comprising 34 questions was conducted. The survey was online between 01.10.2024 and 31.10.2024. A total of 601 respondents replied to the survey during this period. Since no specific population segment was targeted for this survey, it was distributed online, based on non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling is a voluntary response method. The formula used to compute the minimum recommended sample size when the target population is large and in the condition of an unknown population is as follows:

$$n = (N \cdot Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1 - p)) / (e^2 \cdot (N - 1) + (Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1 - p)))$$

Where;

Z; Confidence level

p; proportion

e; margin error

The confidence level being 95% is 1,96

Margin of error being 5% is 0,05

And the proportion is 0,5, because it is unknown.

The computation of this formula provides n as 385, which is the minimum recommended sample size. The sample size of this survey was 601 when it was concluded and 592 when 9 respondents were excluded. Therefore, it exceeds the threshold and proves that sufficient data have been gathered. These data were gathered based on voluntary responses of respondents who agreed to participate in this survey.

4.3.2 Reliability Tests

The tests conducted to assess the reliability of this thesis are detailed and explained in the following subchapters. Although it was not required, the reliability of this thesis has been tested twice for accuracy.

4.3.2.1 Cronbach's Alpha Test

Introduced by American psychologist Lee. J. Cronbach (1951), Cronbach's Alpha is a reliability coefficient and a measure of the internal consistency of tests, questionnaires, or scales. It helps determine if the survey's items are reliable and consistent in measuring the intended concept, whether they measure the same underlying construct or latent variable.

Cronbach's Alpha is derived from the classical test theory (CTT), which states that any observed score (X) is the sum of the true score (T) and the measurement error (E).

The formula is;

$$X = T + E$$

Where ;

X; Observed Score

T; True Score

E; Measurement Error

By measuring internal consistency, it assesses how well a set of survey or test items measures the same underlying trait; responses to these items should be correlated.

Mathematically, Cronbach's Alpha is computed using the following formula :

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1} (1 - \frac{\sum \sigma_i^2}{\sigma_T^2})$$

Where ;

α is the Cronbach's alpha to be computed

k is the total number of questions

$\sum \sigma_i^2$ is the Sum of variance of all questions

σ_T^2 is the variance for the total score

A higher value of alpha, as close as to 1, indicates greater internal consistency. The following thresholds are used to interpret Cronbach's Alpha results:

<u>Cronbach's Alpha (α)</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
$\geq 0,90$	Excellent Reliability
0,80 – 0,89	Good Reliability
0,70 – 0,79	Acceptable Reliability
0,60 – 0,69	Questionable Reliability
0,50 – 0,59	Poor Reliability
$< 0,50$	Unacceptable Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha is especially helpful in survey-based research and psychometrics. Because (i) it allows a numerical assessment of the degree to which items on a scale are consistent with one another; (ii) it can pinpoint problematic items that compromise consistency, (iii) it facilitates the validation of scales designed to assess a single latent characteristic; and (iv) it is easy to compute using contemporary statistical software.

However, it's important to remember that Cronbach's Alpha makes the assumption that all of the scale's items measure the same thing, or unidimensionality.

While computing the Cronbach's Alpha, first the variance of each individual items, which are the questions, are computed. The result of this computation gives us the data on how much replies vary (variance of item "i" which is the " σ^2_i ") on each question.

Then the score of all items for each respondent are added up to reach a total score per each respondent. The total represents the overall measure of the trait being studied.

The following step is to compute the variance of the total scores " σ^2_T " for all respondents. The computed result shows how much the overall test scores vary between individuals.

In the final step, Cronbach's Alpha is calculated using the previously mentioned formula to assess the survey's reliability. The resulting value is then evaluated based on the interpretation scale provided above.

4.3.2.2 Guttman's Lambda-2 Test

Guttman's Lambda-2 is a statistical estimate of internal consistency reliability, just like Cronbach's Alpha. This test shows how reliably a set of items measures a single construct – for example, whether the questions in a survey are working together to assess something like motivation.

Guttman's Lambda-2 is known to be more accurate and less biased, especially when:

- The number of items is small,
- The assumptions of Cronbach's Alpha (like tau-equivalence) are not met.

Lambda-2 is part of a broader family called Guttman's Lambda coefficients (λ_1 to λ_n), and among them, Lambda-2 is the most commonly used.

Mathematically, Guttman's Lambda-2 is computed using the below formula ;

$$\lambda_2 = 1 - ((\sigma_{T-i}^2 + \sigma_i^2) / \sigma_T^2)$$

Here;

σ_T^2 is the variance of total test scores;

σ_{T-i}^2 is the variance of the total score when item i is removed

σ_i^2 is the variance of item i

Guttman's Lambda-2 test's results range from 0 to 1. The closer the computed value is to 1, the higher is the internal consistency. The following thresholds are used to interpret Guttman's Lambda-2 test's results:

Guttman's Lambda-2	Interpretation
$\geq 0,90$	Excellent
0,80 – 0,89	Good
0,70 – 0,79	Acceptable
$< 0,70$	The tests need further investigation or revision

It must be noted that if Lambda-2 is greater than Cronbach's Alpha then it is assessed that Cronbach's Alpha underestimated the true reliability of the survey's scale. This situation is not uncommon in real-world data.

Guttman's Lambda-2 is based on item variances and covariances, and it estimates the proportion of the overall test score variance that can be attributed to a common underlying component, even though it is typically calculated using statistical software. By relaxing assumptions such as equal item contributions, it helps correct for potential biases present in Cronbach's Alpha. Although the calculation is not performed manually due to its reliance on matrix algebra, it essentially reflects the internal consistency of the test. In this thesis, Guttman's Lambda-2 is used to support the reliability assessment conducted using Cronbach's Alpha, and the result reinforces the dependability indicated by the latter.

4.3.3 Normality Tests

Same as in reliability, the normality of this thesis has been tested twice also. The tests conducted to assess the normality of this thesis are detailed and explained in the following subchapters.

4.3.3.1 Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test originated with the work of Soviet mathematician Andrey Kolmogorov, who first introduced the method in 1933. Later, in the mid-20th century, his colleague Nikolai Smirnov expanded upon and formalized the test, contributing significantly to its development and application (Kolmogorov, 1933; Smirnov, 1948).

The Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test (KST) is a non-parametric method used to evaluate the degree of similarity between probability distributions. In the two-sample version, the test examines whether two independent datasets originate from the same distribution. The one-sample version, on the other hand, checks if a single sample aligns with a predefined theoretical distribution, typically a normal distribution. In essence, the procedure compares the sample's Empirical

Distribution Function (EDF) to a reference Cumulative Distribution Function (CDF) to determine how well the data fits the expected pattern.

In statistical analysis, the KST is usually applied when parametric assumptions (normality) cannot be satisfied or when the underlying distribution data is unknown (Massey, 1951).

The KST is used; (i) to check normality of a dataset; (ii) to decide between parametric and non-parametric tests to be used in analysis; and (iii) to evaluate whether the data's distribution fits theoretical expectations.

The KST is useful especially when the sample size is moderate or large, and to avoid making assumptions about the shape of the distribution.

A statistically significant result from the KST ($p < 0.05$) indicates that the dataset significantly deviates from a normal distribution, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis of normality. In this thesis, the KST was applied to the survey data, yielding a statistically significant p-value. This result confirms that the distribution does not follow a normal pattern, and therefore, non-parametric statistical methods were employed in the subsequent analyses.

The test statistic, denoted as D , represents the maximum absolute difference between the empirical and theoretical CDFs. For the one-sample KST, the statistic is computed as follows:

$$D = \sup_x |F_n(x) - F(x)|$$

Where;

$F(x)$ is the theoretical cumulative distribution function; and

$F_n(x)$ is the empirical cumulative distribution function,

In the two-sample KST, the statistic compares two empirical distribution functions derived from samples of sizes n and m . The observed value of D is then compared to a critical threshold from the Kolmogorov distribution. If the observed D exceeds this critical threshold at a chosen significance level (e.g. $p < 0.05$), the null hypothesis is rejected (Massey, 1951).

The KST is particularly valuable in cases where:

- The underlying distribution is unknown or not assumed to be normal;
- The sample size is moderate to large;
- Researchers wish to avoid assumptions about distributional shape.

It is especially sensitive to differences in both the location (central tendency) and shape of the compared distributions. However, its sensitivity is typically greater near the center of the distribution than at the tails. In one-sample applications, the parameters of the theoretical distribution must be specified in advance. If these are estimated from the sample, adjustments such as the Lilliefors correction may be necessary.

In this thesis, the KST was applied to the survey data to assess normality. The result yielded a statistically significant p-value ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the data deviates significantly from a normal distribution. Consequently, the null hypothesis of normality was rejected, and non-parametric statistical methods were employed in subsequent analyses.

4.3.3.2 Shapiro-Wilk Test

The Shapiro–Wilk Test (SWT), developed by Samuel Shapiro and Martin Wilk in 1965, is a statistical method used to evaluate whether a given dataset follows a normal distribution. It is particularly effective in identifying departures from normality in small to medium-sized samples and is recognized for its high statistical power compared to other normality tests (Shapiro and Wilk, 1965).

Unlike graphical methods of testing normality (e.g., Q-Q plots), the SWT provides a formal statistical test of the null hypothesis that the data are drawn from a normal distribution. The SWT is specifically designed to test normality — a critical assumption in many parametric statistical tests, such as t-tests, ANOVA, and linear regression. Its strength lies in its sensitivity to both skewness and kurtosis, making it highly effective for detecting subtle departures from normality.

Common use cases include:

- Verifying assumptions before applying parametric methods
- Preprocessing steps in data analysis workflows
- Determining whether to use parametric or non-parametric statistical methods.

The SWT value is calculated using the following mathematical formula ;

$$W = ((\sum_{i=1}^n \alpha_i x_{(i)})^2) / \sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \bar{x})^2$$

Where:

- $x_{(i)}$ denotes the sample observations sorted from the lowest to the highest value
- \bar{x} is the sample mean
- α_i are constants computed from the expected values of the order statistics of a normally distributed sample, taking into account their associated covariance structure.

A W statistic approaching 1 implies that the data closely follows a normal distribution, while lower values indicate increasing deviation from normality.

The test produces a p-value. If $p < \alpha$ (commonly 0.05), the null hypothesis of normality is rejected.

The SWT is designed to test continuous data. It is mostly effective for small to moderate sample sizes such as lower than 2000 samples. When it comes to larger samples, even minor deviations from normality may yield significant results (Royston, 1982). The test assumes independent and identically distributed observations.

When the p-value is lower than 0,05 ($p < 0,05$) we can say that the dataset deviates significantly from a normal distribution. When the p-value is bigger than 0,05 ($p > 0,05$) then it is showing that the dataset is normally distributed. In

case of a not normally distributed survey dataset, non-parametric statistical methods should be applied to test the following analyses.

4.3.4 Tests Used to Analyze Hypotheses

All the tests used to assess the hypotheses of this thesis are detailed and explained below, along with the reasons they have been chosen for.

4.3.4.1 Mann-Whitney-U Test

The Mann-Whitney U test (MWUT), which is often referred to as the Wilcoxon Rank-Sum Test, is a non-parametric inferential statistical method. It is designed to evaluate whether two independent samples originate from populations with the same distribution. The test is developed by Mann and Whitney (1947). It serves as a robust alternative to the independent samples t-test when the assumptions of normality or homogeneity of variances are violated (Nachar, 2008).

The MWUT operates by ranking all data points from both groups together and subsequently comparing the sum of the ranks between the groups. The fundamental assumption is that the observations are independent, and the dependent variable should be at least ordinal. While the test does not specifically require normally distributed data, it does assume that the distributions of the two groups are similar in shape if the intent is to make inferences about medians (Field, 2013).

The U statistic is calculated based on the rank sums, and it measures the degree of overlap between the two groups' distributions. A significant U value suggests that one group tends to have systematically higher or lower values than the other. The MWUT is particularly advantageous because it is less sensitive to outliers and skewed data, and is thus widely used in social sciences, health sciences, and agricultural research when non-parametric methods are appropriate.

The formula of MWUT is as below:

$$U = n_1.n_2 + (n_1(n_1+1) / 2) - R_1$$

Where;

n_1 is the number of observations in Group 1

n_2 is the number of observations in Group 2

R_1 is the sum of ranks for Group 1

Moreover, the test can be used with small sample sizes and yields exact p-values, although with larger samples, the U distribution approximates a normal distribution, allowing for the application of z-scores for hypothesis testing. Researchers should be cautious when interpreting results, ensuring that differences observed are not merely due to differences in distribution shapes but rather differences in central tendency (Gibbons and Chakraborti, 2011).

For this thesis, the MWUT was employed to compare differences between two independent groups because the data did not meet the assumptions of normality, as assessed by the KST and SWT. Given the ordinal nature and non-normal distribution of the variables, the MWUT test provided a robust non-parametric alternative to the independent samples t-test.

4.3.4.2 Paired-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test

The Paired-Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test is a non-parametric statistical method used to compare two related or paired samples to assess whether their population mean ranks differ. It serves as a robust alternative to the paired samples t-test, particularly when the assumption of normality is violated (Wilcoxon, 1945). The test is appropriate for continuous or ordinal data where measurements are taken from the same subjects under two different conditions, or from matched pairs.

The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test operates by calculating the differences between paired observations, ranking the absolute values of these differences, and then analyzing the ranks based on the signs (positive or negative) of the original differences. The test evaluates whether the distribution of the differences is symmetric around zero. Unlike its parametric counterpart, it does

not assume that the differences are normally distributed, making it more suitable for small samples and skewed data distributions (Field, 2013).

In applied research, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test is commonly utilized in pre-test/post-test designs, before-and-after studies, or whenever two related observations are compared (Gibbons and Chakraborti, 2011). It is particularly recommended when data are ordinal, when sample sizes are small, or when outliers are present that would otherwise distort parametric tests. The test provides a p-value indicating whether the observed differences between pairs are statistically significant.

As with all non-parametric tests, interpretation should consider the fact that the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test assesses differences in median rather than mean values. Additionally, researchers must ensure that the pairs are appropriately matched and that the differences between pairs are symmetrically distributed around the median if stronger inferences are to be drawn (Pett, 2015).

The test is calculated using the below formula;

$$W = \sum R^+$$

where ;

W, is the test statistic;

R⁺, is the sum of ranks for positive differences.

For this thesis, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test was applied to compare paired observations because the data did not satisfy the assumptions of normality, as verified through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. Given the ordinal level of measurement and the related nature of the samples, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test was selected as a robust non-parametric alternative to the paired samples t-test.

4.3.4.3 One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test

The One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test serves as a non-parametric substitute for the one-sample t-test when data do not meet normality assumptions. It is used to assess whether the median of a single sample differs significantly from a hypothesized median value. Originally developed by

Wilcoxon (1945), the test is particularly useful when the assumptions of normality and/or continuous distribution required for the one-sample t-test are not met (Conover, 1999).

In the One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test, each observation is subtracted from the hypothesized median value, and the absolute differences are ranked. The ranks are then assigned the sign of the original difference (positive or negative). The test statistic is based on the sum of the signed ranks, and a significant result indicates that the sample median differs from the hypothesized value.

The formula used to calculate the One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test is as follows:

$$W = \sum R^+$$

Where ;

W, is the test statistic;

R^+ , is the sum of ranks for positive differences.

As it can be observed, the One-Sample and the Paired-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank tests employ the same mathematical formula because, in both cases, the analysis is based on the differences between two related measures. In the Paired-Sample version, the differences are calculated between two conditions or time points for the same subject, whereas in the One-Sample version, the differences are calculated between each observation and a hypothesized median value. As a result, both tests analyze the symmetry of the distribution of these differences around zero using identical statistical procedures.

The method assumes that the differences between observations and the hypothesized median are symmetrically distributed around the true median, although it does not require the differences to be normally distributed. The test is widely applied in studies involving small sample sizes, ordinal data, or skewed distributions where parametric assumptions are not justified (Field, 2013).

Researchers must ensure that the data are at least ordinal and that the differences between observations and the hypothesized median are meaningful.

The One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test is advantageous because it maintains reasonable statistical power even when sample distributions are markedly non-normal (Gibbons and Chakraborti, 2011).

The One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test is utilized to determine whether the sample median significantly differed from the hypothesized value, given that the data did not satisfy normality assumptions as assessed by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. This non-parametric method is selected due to the ordinal nature and non-normal distribution of the data.

4.3.4.4 Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit Test

The Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit Test is a non-parametric inferential statistical test used to determine whether the observed distribution of a single categorical variable differs significantly from an expected distribution (Field, 2018). It is particularly useful in analyzing survey data where responses fall into distinct, mutually exclusive categories.

The test evaluates whether the observed frequencies of categories match hypothetical or theoretical frequencies, which may be derived from theory, previous research, or assumptions of equal distribution (Pallant, 2020). It is often employed in preference studies, behavioral research, and surveys with response options such as "Yes," "No," or "Not sure."

In this thesis, the Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit Test will be used to assess whether farmers' preferences (e.g., for daily visits or outsourcing services) are significantly skewed toward one category, indicating a dominant attitude or behavior.

According to Gravetter and Wallnau (2017), the Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit Test relies on the following assumptions:

1. The variable under analysis is categorical.
2. The data consist of frequencies (counts of cases) rather than percentages or continuous measurements.
3. Each case contributes to only one category, ensuring independence of observations.

4. The expected frequency in each category should be at least five to ensure the validity of the chi-square approximation.

The test is based on comparing observed counts to expected counts under a null hypothesis. To carry out this comparison the test statistic is calculated using the following formula:

$$X^2 = \sum ((O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i)$$

Where:

- O_i = Observed frequency in category i
- E_i = Expected frequency in category i
- The summation is over all response categories.

The result is compared against a critical value from the chi-square distribution table, with degrees of freedom (df) = $k - 1$, where k is the number of categories (for this thesis' farmers survey (df) = 2, for there are 3 categories for k).

If the calculated chi-square statistic exceeds the critical value at a chosen significance level (typically $\alpha = .05$), the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that the observed frequencies differ significantly from what was expected.

The following table displays the Critical Values of Chi-Square test.

Table 4.1 Critical values of Chi-square test

Degrees of Freedom	$\alpha=0,1$	$\alpha=0,05$	$\alpha=0,01$	$\alpha=0,001$
1	2,71	3,84	6,63	10,83
2	4,61	5,99	9,21	13,82
3	6,25	7,81	11,34	16,27
4	7,78	9,49	13,28	18,47
5	9,24	11,07	15,09	20,52

CHAPTER 5

5. EMPIRICAL OUTPUTS

Below are the outputs of both surveys, first, the one conducted to determine the point of view of the consumers and second, the farmers' perception of agritourism are presented.

5.1. OUTPUTS OF THE SURVEY

The survey conducted to gather data on consumers' perceptions, preferences and demographics was available online between 01.10.2024 and 31.10.2024, during which 601 participants provided replies. However, since 9 respondents did not provide answers to certain questions or statements, they are excluded from the survey, leaving 592 respondents, whose replies are assessed.

Empirical outputs of the survey conducted for consumers' perceptions, preferences and demographics are provided below.

5.1.1. Consumers' Demographics

Demographics are essential in survey research, for they affect data interpretation, respondent categorization, and the overall validity of the thesis. They are also influencing decision-making, market segmentation and policy planning. Researchers can examine subgroup differences, analyze trends, and make sure their findings are generalizable by having a thorough understanding of demographic parameters including age, gender, income, education level, and geographic region.

By incorporating demographic variables such as age, gender, and education researchers and industry professionals can better understand market trends and create targeted strategies.

A study by Ahmad et al. (2025) emphasizes the role of demographics in ensuring that survey results represent a larger population.

Alanazy et al. (2025) highlight the necessity of demographic data in workforce-related research.

It is also examined that cultural backgrounds affect consumers' behaviors in product marketing (Wang et al., 2025).

Mandalia and Ridwan (2024) examined how demographic variables impact tourism preferences, highlighting that younger travelers tend to prefer adventure tourism, while older tourists prioritize comfort and cultural experiences.

It is also argued that demographic segmentation helped in sustainable tourism development by tailoring offerings to different visitor profiles (Asifat et al., 2025)

5.1.1.1. Consumers' Gender

The first survey question prepared for the research of this thesis is about the respondents' gender. The gender of the respondents is asked because their relative replies would be analyzed on a gender basis for some of this thesis' hypotheses. The aim in using gender differentiation for some of the hypotheses is to determine gender-based preferences to be used in implementing and developing agritourism operations accordingly on a farm.

Gender is not only a critical demographic variable but also influences survey response behavior. Research has shown gender-related variation in both response consistency (de Ruijter et al., 2025a) and perceptions of survey relevance and clarity (de Ruijter et al., 2025b), highlighting the necessity of including gender questions in any robust survey design..

Table 5.1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by gender, while Figure 5.1 provides a visual summary. The findings indicate that female respondents represent the majority of the sample (57.6%), while male respondents account for 42.4%. This balanced but female-skewed distribution ensures that the dataset is suitable for testing gender-based

hypotheses, while also suggesting that women’s perspectives may be particularly influential in shaping agritourism demand.

This demographic foundation provides the basis for the gender-focused hypotheses tested in Section 5.2.3

Table 5.1 Gender Distribution of Survey Respondents

Gender Distribution		
Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	341	57,60
Male	251	42,40
Total	592	100

Below, the bar chart of the frequency and percentage distribution is provided for better visualization.

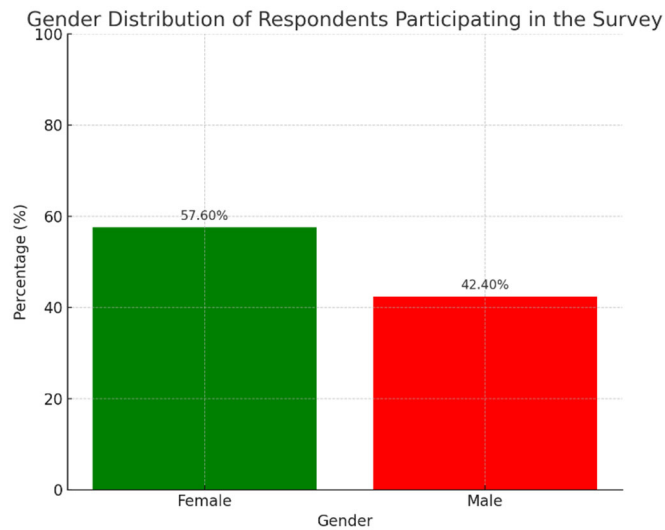


Figure 5.1 Gender Distribution of Survey Respondents

5.1.1.2. Consumers' Age

The second survey question aimed to determine the age of the respondents, with six predefined ranges: younger than 25 years, 26–35 years, 36–45 years, 46–55 years, 56–65 years, and older than 65 years.

Previous research has emphasized that age is a crucial demographic factor influencing rural tourism participation and behavior. For instance, Einali et al. (2025) found that customer age groups significantly affect the success of rural tourism initiatives. Torres et al. (2024) highlighted that younger tourists tend to prefer budget-friendly options, while older visitors are often willing to pay premium prices for exclusive experiences. Similarly, Gao et al. (2014) showed that younger tourists (18–35 years) are more inclined toward adventure-based agritourism, whereas older tourists (50+) prioritize relaxation and cultural immersion. Shah et al. (2020) also emphasized generational differences, noting that Gen Z and Millennials are attracted to hands-on farm activities, while Gen X and Boomers enjoy farm-to-table dining and cultural events. Finally, Wu et al. (2022) argued that marketing strategies should be segmented by age group, as Millennials often prefer eco-tourism and experiential travel, while Baby Boomers lean toward heritage and slow tourism.

Table 5.2 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by age group, while Figure 5.2 provides a visual representation. The findings indicate that the largest share of respondents were between 56–65 years of age (205 respondents, 34.63%), followed by those aged 46–55 years (157 respondents, 26.12%). Younger respondents were comparatively fewer, with only 33 respondents (5.57%) under the age of 25, and 40 respondents (6.76%) aged 26–35. These findings suggest that middle-aged and older adults dominate the sample, aligning with previous studies that emphasize the stronger engagement of older age groups in agritourism.

Table 5. 2 Age Distribution of Survey Respondents

Distribution of Age of the Respondents		
Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
-25	33	5,57
26-35	40	6,76
36-45	92	15,54
46-55	157	26,12
56-65	205	34,63
65+	65	10,98
Total	592	100

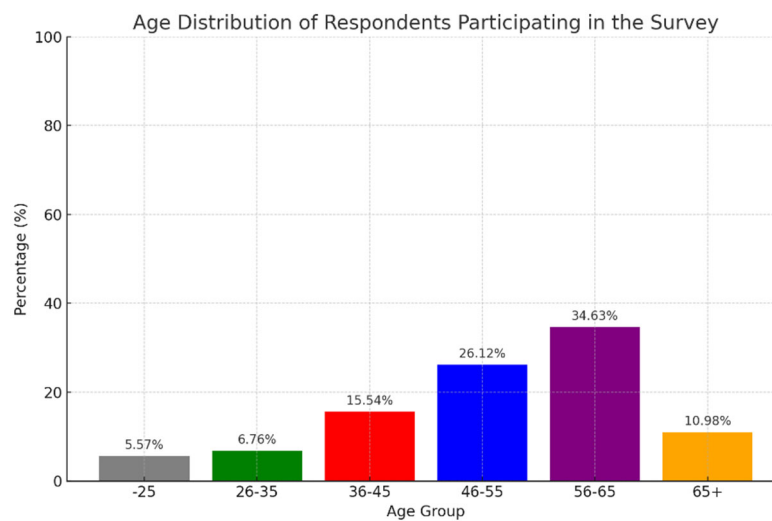


Figure 5.2 Age Distribution of Survey Respondents

5.1.1.3. Locations where consumers live

The third question of the survey asked respondents to indicate their place of residence. Location is a critical demographic factor, as it often shapes tourists' expectations and decision-making in agritourism. Scaglione and Mendola

(2017), for example, found that tourists from different regions hold varying expectations regarding service quality in rural tourism, with home regions influencing both travel decisions and accommodation preferences. Gao et al. (2014) similarly highlighted that urban and rural tourists perceive agricultural landscapes differently, with urban tourists favoring immersive farm-stay experiences, while rural tourists show greater interest in cultural heritage. Torres et al. (2024) demonstrated that respondents from metropolitan areas are more likely to engage in agritourism activities, whereas those from rural locations tend to participate for family or educational purposes. Wu et al. (2022) further emphasized the importance of respondents' locations for sustainable agritourism, showing how location shapes destination marketing strategies.

As the present survey was conducted online, responses were received from individuals residing in various cities across Türkiye.

Table 5.3 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by location, while Figure 5.3 offers a visual overview. The findings reveal that the majority of respondents live in Istanbul (49.49%), followed by Ankara (17.06%) and Izmir (7.27%). Other provinces contributed smaller proportions, each accounting for less than 5% of the sample. This distribution highlights the dominance of large metropolitan centers, particularly Istanbul, in shaping the survey results.

This urban concentration may have influenced the consumers' agritourism preferences discussed in Section 5.2.3

Table 5.3 Location Distribution of Survey Respondents

Frequency and Percentage of the Location Distribution of Respondents participating in the Survey		
Location	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Adana	26	4,39
Ankara	101	17,06
Antalya	9	1,52
Bursa	10	1,69
Çanakkale	6	1,01
Hatay	11	1,86
Istanbul	293	49,49
Izmir	43	7,27
Kocaeli	7	1,18
Mersin	13	2,20
Muğla	6	1,01
Tekirdağ	9	1,52
Other	58	9,80
Total	592	100,00

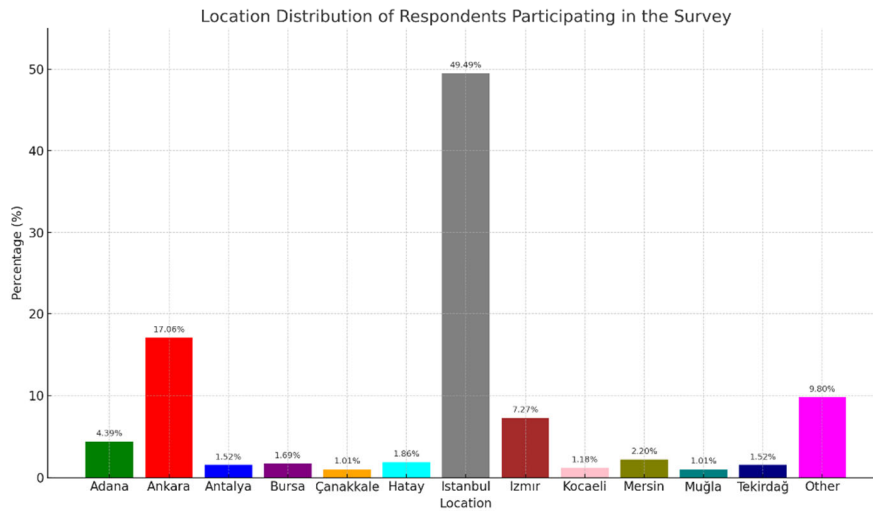


Figure 5.3 Location Distribution of Survey Respondents

5.1.1.4. Education Level of Consumers

The fourth question of the survey asked respondents to indicate their educational degree. Previous studies highlight education as a key factor influencing agritourism behavior. Zawadka et al. (2022) found that more educated tourists often prioritize sustainable practices and prefer farm stays that incorporate environmental education and safety measures. In Italy, Torquati et al. (2017) reported that educational level significantly correlated with preferences for nature-based and heritage-focused agritourism. Similarly, Arroyo et al. (2013) showed that tourists with higher educational attainment were more likely to participate in farm workshops and sustainable farming activities, emphasizing the role of education in shaping experiential demand.

Table 5.4 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by educational level, while Figure 5.4 illustrates these results visually. The findings show that 50 respondents (8.65%) reported high school education or less, while 29 respondents (4.83%) held an associate's degree. The largest share of respondents had a bachelor's degree (233 respondents, 39.43%), followed by graduate degrees (149 respondents, 25.12%) and PhDs (131 respondents, 21.96%). These results indicate that the sample is highly educated overall, which may explain their heightened sensitivity to sustainability and experiential dimensions of agritourism, consistent with prior research.

Table 5.4 Education Level of Survey Respondents

Education Level Distribution of Respondents		
Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
High school and inferior	50	8,65
Associate's Degree	29	4,83
Bachelor's Degree	233	39,43
Graduate Degree	149	25,12
PhD	131	21,96
Total	592	100

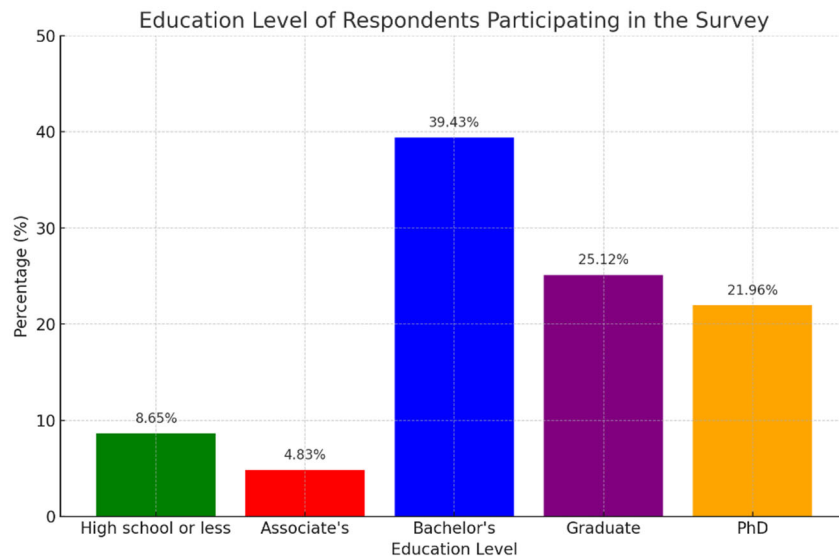


Figure 5.4 Education Level of Survey Respondents

5.1.1.5. Profession of Consumers

The profession of survey respondents plays a significant role in agritourism research, as it provides insights into consumer behavior, economic impact, job-related preferences, and market segmentation. Gao et al. (2014) found that respondents from corporate jobs tend to prefer short agritourism stays, while self-employed individuals or retirees favor extended, immersive experiences. Torres et al. (2024) reported that high-income professionals are more likely to spend on premium agritourism services, whereas blue-collar workers generally opt for budget-friendly rural tourism. Similarly, Van Trung and Mohanty (2021) showed that respondents working in the hospitality and service industries tend to be more critical of agritourism services, given their higher expectations for quality.

In this thesis, the fifth survey question asked respondents to specify their profession. Initially, nine categories were used: civil servant, housewife, private sector, retired, self-employed, student, tradesman, worker, and other. However, because a considerable number of respondents provided specific answers such as academician, physician, doctor, teacher, lecturer, therapist, or pharmacist, two additional categories—health sector and education sector—were added. Other specific professions (e.g., engineer, architect, writer, translator, coordinator, attorney at law) were included under “other.” While being a student may not typically be classified as a profession, it was retained as a category to capture the perceptions of younger participants.

Table 5.5 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents’ professions, and Figure 5.5 provides a visual overview. The findings indicate that the largest group of respondents were retired (33.61%), followed by those employed in the private sector (19.76%). Civil servants (12.16%), self-employed respondents (9.80%), and individuals in the education sector (8.28%) also formed notable shares. In contrast, workers (0.67%), tradesmen (2.03%), and housewives (3.21%) represented smaller proportions of the sample. These results suggest that a significant portion of the respondents were either retired or employed in professional/white-collar occupations, which may have influenced their perceptions and preferences regarding agritourism.

Table 5.5 Professions of Survey Respondents

Distribution of Respondents' Professions		
Professions	Frequency	Percentage
Civil servant	72	12,16
Education sector	49	8,28
Health sector	21	3,55
Housewife	19	3,21
Private sector	117	19,76
Retired	199	33,61
Self-employed	58	9,80
Student	23	3,89
Tradesman	12	2,03
Worker	4	0,67
Other	18	3,04
Total	592	100

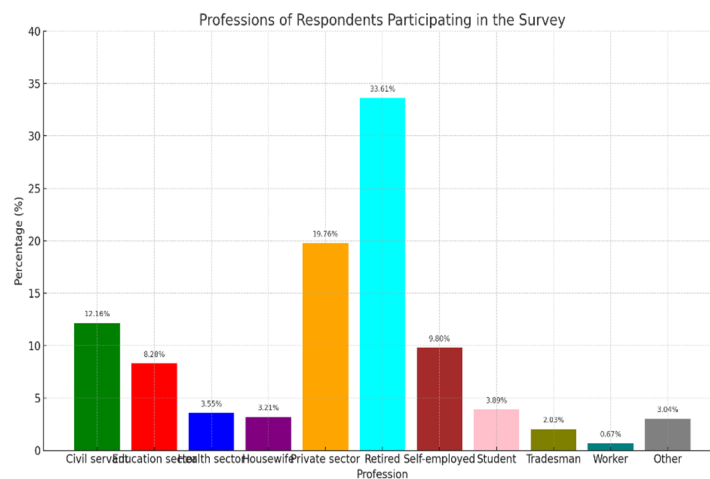


Figure 5.5 Professions of Survey Respondents

5.1.1.6. Civil Status of Respondents

Civil status (e.g., single, married, widowed, divorced) is a crucial demographic variable in agritourism research, as it influences consumer behavior, decision-making, travel preferences, and financial planning.

Nakpathom and Pitchayadejanant (2017), for instance, found that married individuals in Thailand tend to prefer family-oriented tourism, while single respondents are more inclined toward adventure and social tourism. Similarly, Esguerra (2020) showed that widowed and retired individuals in the Philippines were the most frequent visitors to agritourism destinations, highlighting the combined effect of age and marital status on rural tourism engagement. Bannor et al. (2022) emphasized that married respondents with children often allocate higher budgets for leisure tourism, whereas single individuals tend to spend more on experiential activities. Salarda (2021) further demonstrated that civil status shapes satisfaction levels, with married respondents valuing comfort and relaxation, while single respondents prioritize outdoor and cultural experiences.

The sixth question, therefore, asked respondents about their civil status. Table 5.6 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of responses, and Figure 5.6 provides a visual representation. The results show that the majority of respondents are married (412 respondents, 69.59%), while single respondents accounted for 180 individuals (30.41%). This distribution indicates that married ones form the dominant group within the sample, which may influence the survey's findings concerning family-oriented agritourism preferences.

Table 5.6 Civil Status of Survey Respondents

Distribution of Civil Status		
Civil Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	180	30,41
Married	412	69,59
Total	592	100,00

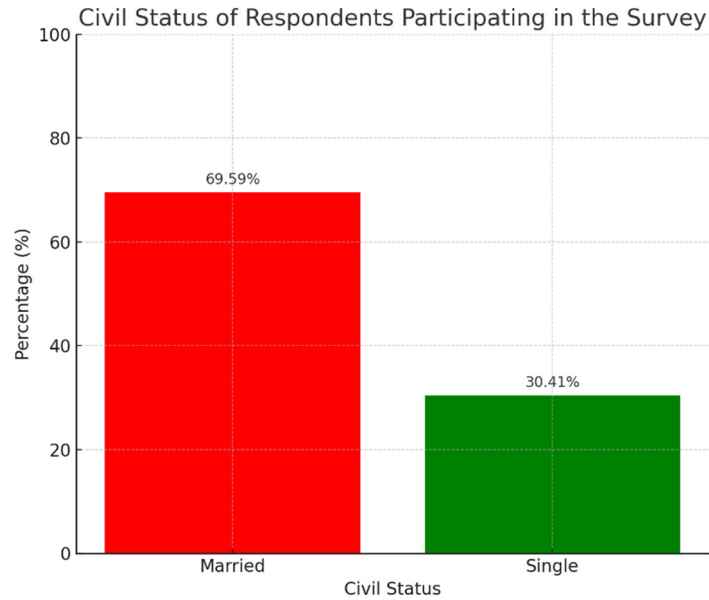


Figure 5.6 Civil Status of Survey Respondents

5.1.1.7. Number of Children of Respondents

The seventh survey question collected data on the number of children in respondents' households. The number of children is an important demographic factor, as it can significantly influence family travel preferences and decisions regarding agritourism participation. Families with children often seek destinations offering child-friendly activities and safe environments, which has implications for the marketing and management strategies of agritourism businesses (Scaglione and Mendola, 2017).

Jin et al. (2022), in a study conducted in Eastern China, showed that household size can affect income dynamics and spending behavior during agritourism visits, with larger families prioritizing budget-friendly options that appeal to all age groups. Liang et al. (2021) found that families with children have distinct expectations concerning amenities and activities; agritourism sites offering features such as petting zoos or interactive farm experiences report higher levels of satisfaction and revisit intentions. Balinska (2015) further

emphasized that the presence of children requires operators to prioritize safety, including clear pathways and secure equipment. .

Table 5.7 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by number of children, while Figure 5.7 provides a visual overview. The results show that the majority of respondents reported having two children (39.0%), followed by one child (31.4%). Larger households were rare, with fewer than 1% reporting more than three children. This distribution suggests that agritourism demand is strongly shaped by families with one or two children, reinforcing the importance of child-friendly amenities in agritourism design and marketing.

Table 5.7 Number of Children of Respondents Participating in the Survey

Distribution of the Respondents' Number of Children		
Number of Children	Frequency	Percentage
No child	149	25,17
1 child	186	31,42
2 children	231	39,02
3 children	23	3,89
+3 children	3	0,51
Total	592	100

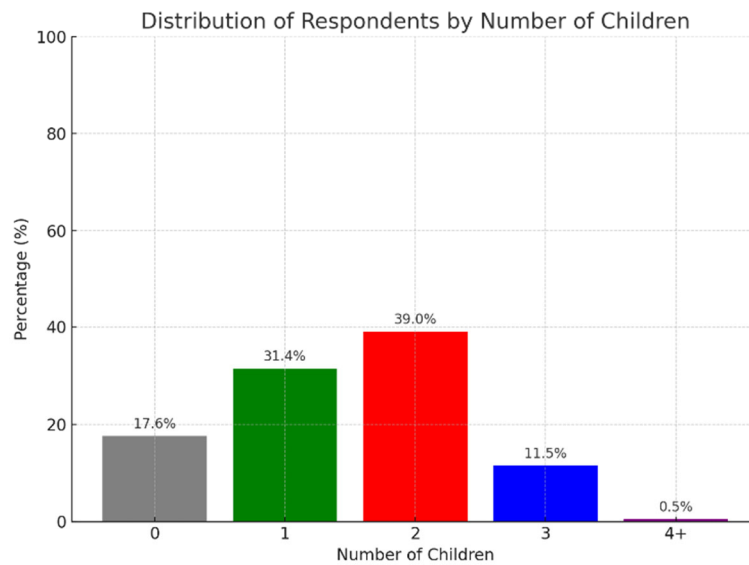


Figure 5.7 Number of Children of Respondents Participating in the Survey

5.1.2. Preferences and Perceptions Regarding Agritourism: Consumers' Perspectives

The following questions are asked to gather data from the respondents concerning their holiday habits. By asking the following questions, the frequency of the respondents' holidays and the duration of their holidays are determined.

5.1.2.1. Annual Holiday Frequency among Respondents

The eighth survey question asked respondents how many times per year they typically go on holiday. Holiday frequency is an important indicator of how actively individuals engage in tourism activities. Previous studies have shown that regular travelers often develop distinct expectations and perceptions compared to occasional tourists. For instance, Scaglione and Mendola (2017) noted that frequent tourists tend to engage more actively with tourism products, while Suhartanto et al. (2020) emphasized that they are more likely to form positive perceptions of destinations, influencing loyalty and word-of-mouth. Similarly, Kim et al. (2019) found that regular consumers often seek unique and

varied experiences, whereas less frequent travelers prefer traditional and familiar activities. Speirs (2003) further stressed that annual holiday frequency is important for managing seasonality and resource allocation in tourism operations.

Table 5.8 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents' holiday habits, while Figure 5.8 provides a visual overview. The results show that 52 respondents (7.70%) reported not taking holidays, while 178 respondents (28.50%) travel once per year. The largest group, 188 respondents (32.10%), indicated traveling twice per year, and 174 respondents (31.70%) reported traveling more than twice annually.

To further interpret these findings, responses were numerically coded (0 = "I do not go," 1 = "Once a year," 2 = "Twice a year," 3 = "More"). Based on this coding, the weighted mean was calculated as 1.82, suggesting that, on average, respondents go on holiday slightly less than twice per year. This reflects a moderate frequency of vacationing among the surveyed population, with the majority falling between one and two holidays annually, and a significant share indicating more frequent travel.

Table 5.8 Annual Holiday Frequency of Respondents

Annual Holiday Frequency of Respondents				
How many times	Frequency	Percentage	Overall Score	Weight
Once a year	178	28,50	178	1,82
Twice a year	188	32,10	376	
More	174	31,70	522	
I do not go	52	7,70	0	
Total	592	100	1076	

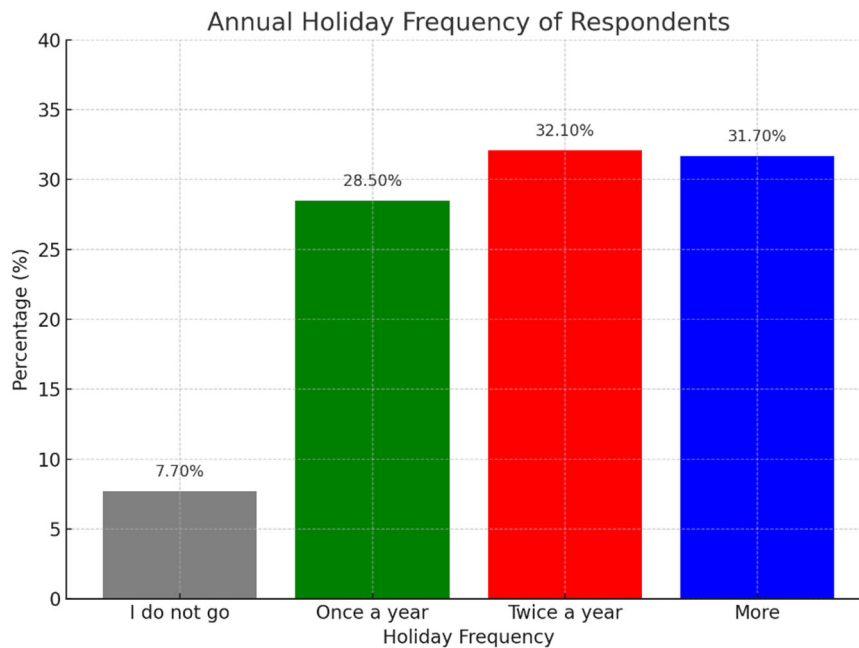


Figure 5. 8 Annual Holiday Frequency of Respondents

5.1.2.2. Average Holiday Duration among Respondents

The ninth survey question asked respondents about the typical duration of their holidays. Holiday length is a key indicator of tourist behavior and preferences, as it helps identify whether consumers favor short getaways or extended stays. This information directly informs the types of services and amenities agritourism providers should develop (Malkanathi and Routray, 2012). Longer stays are strongly correlated with greater economic impact on local economies, as they involve higher expenditures on accommodation, food, and activities (Fanelli and Romagnoli, 2020). Holiday duration also provides a basis for targeted marketing strategies; for instance, weekend packages for short-stay visitors or all-inclusive programs for those seeking extended experiences (Kim et al., 2019). Beyond marketing, length of stay shapes operational planning such as staffing, resource allocation, and service design (Speirs, 2003), and it can also help predict seasonality and peak periods (Varmazyari et al., 2018). Furthermore, Chatzigeorgiou and Simeli (2017) emphasized that short-term

consumers often value quick, immersive activities, while long-term visitors prioritize relaxation and cultural engagement, underscoring the need for tailored offerings. The data about average holiday duration enables agritourism providers to plan experiences that fit within visitors' available time, such as short workshops or extended immersive farm experiences (Tang et al., 2020).

Table 5.9 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents' holiday durations, while Figure 5.9 provides a visual overview. The findings show that the most common holiday length was one week, reported by 277 respondents (46.79%). Other responses included three to four days (116 respondents, 19.59%), two weeks (75 respondents, 12.67%), and more than two weeks (72 respondents, 12.16%). A smaller share reported not going on holidays (42 respondents, 7.09%), while only 10 respondents (1.69%) indicated holidays of one to two days.

To quantify these findings, responses were numerically coded (0 = "I do not go," 1 = "One–two days," 2 = "Three–four days," 3 = "One week," 4 = "Two weeks," 5 = "More than two weeks"). The resulting weighted average score of 2.93 suggests that respondents' holidays last approximately one week on average.

A minor inconsistency was observed between responses to holiday frequency and holiday duration: 42 respondents (7.09%) reported not taking holidays in this question, compared to 52 respondents (7.70%) in the previous question. This discrepancy may reflect inconsistent self-reporting or misinterpretation of the questions. Nevertheless, the data were retained, as these variables are not directly linked to hypothesis testing in this thesis.

Overall, the results indicate that respondents typically prefer one-week holidays, with meaningful shares also taking longer breaks, which underscores the importance of agritourism offerings that can accommodate both short- and long-duration visitors.

Table 5.9 Average Holiday Duration of Respondents

Average Holiday Duration among Respondents				
How many days	Frequency	Percentage	Overall Score	Weight
One - two days	10	1,69	10	2,93
Three - four days	116	19,59	232	
One week	277	46,79	831	
Two weeks	75	12,67	300	
More than two weeks	72	12,16	360	
I do not go on holidays	42	7,09	0	
Total	592	100	1733	

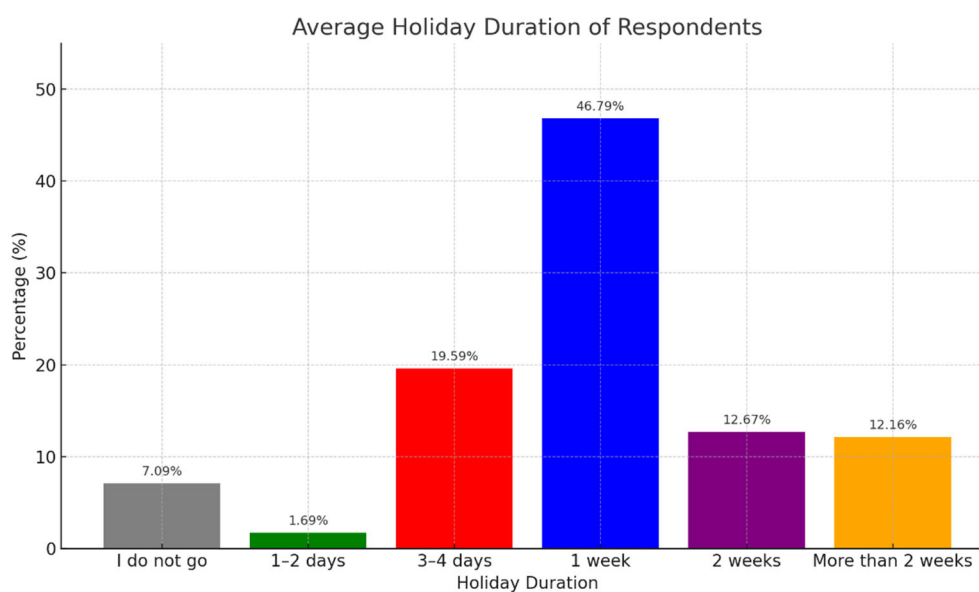


Figure 5.9 Average Holiday Duration of Respondents

5.1.2.3. Previous Farm Visit Experience among Respondents

The tenth survey question asked respondents whether they had ever visited an active farm. Prior farm experience is an important factor in shaping visitors' expectations in agritourism. Scaglione and Mendola (2017) noted that individuals with prior farm experience tend to seek more authentic and educational experiences, whereas those without such experience often prefer guided and structured activities. Suhartanto et al. (2020) emphasized that segmenting visitors by prior farm experience enables managers to design tailored marketing strategies and customize consumer experiences accordingly. Similarly, Lanfranchi and Giannetto (2021) found that individuals with farm experience report higher satisfaction with hands-on and interactive activities, highlighting the value of tailoring agritourism offerings to prior exposure. Prior farm experience has also been linked to repeat visitation, loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth (Tew and Barbieri, 2012). Moreover, Cummins et al. (2016) argued that recognizing consumers' familiarity with farms allows hosts to adjust the depth and complexity of educational content provided.

Table 5.10 presents the distribution of responses, and Figure 5.10 provides a visual summary. The findings reveal that most respondents (432, 72.97%) had never visited an active farm, while only 160 respondents (27.03%) reported prior farm experience. This distribution highlights a strong representation of novice participants in the sample, which has direct implications for designing introductory, structured agritourism experiences.

Table 5.10 Previous Farm Visit Experience of Respondents

Previous Farm Visit Experience among Respondents		
Replies	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	160	27,03
No	432	72,97
Total	592	100

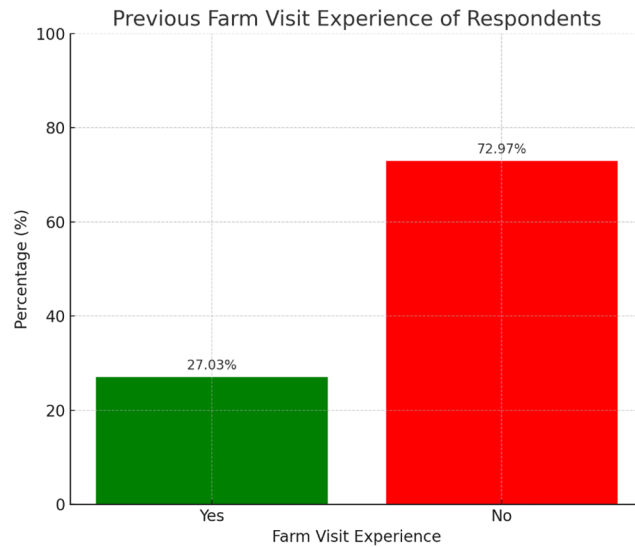


Figure 5. 10 Previous Farm Visit Experience of Respondents

5.1.2.4. Respondents’ Opinions on Spending Time on an Active Farm

Following the questions on holiday patterns, two statements; Statement 11: “I would like to visit an active farm daily rather than staying for a few nights.” and Statement 12: “I would like to spend a few days of my holidays on an active farm.” were proposed to respondents to capture their preferences regarding time spent on an active farm. The aim was to distinguish between those who prefer daily visits and those who favor multi-day stays, a distinction that has important implications for agritourism market segmentation, service design, and local economic impact.

Demirel and Kaçmaz (2023), in their study conducted in the Serdivan region of Sakarya, Türkiye, found that families living in areas with established tourism activity show a high tendency to participate in agritourism. Scholars have emphasized the importance of differentiating between consumers who prefer short, daily farm visits and those who seek extended stays. Barbieri et al. (2016) argued that such differentiation is crucial for tailoring offerings and creating customized experiences for diverse target groups. Similarly, Melstrom and Murphy (2018) noted that identifying preferences for daily visits versus

overnight stays enables effective market segmentation, allowing managers to design services that accommodate both day-trippers—through workshops and farm tours—and long-stay visitors, who may require accommodation-based packages.

Zawadka et al. (2022) highlighted that the choice between daily and overnight visits also influences resource allocation, staffing, and operational planning, as managers must optimize schedules, activities, and services based on visitor patterns. Economic contributions vary accordingly: daily visitors typically spend on food and activities, while multi-day guests generate additional revenue through accommodation and extended services (Reyes et al., 2021). Flanigan et al. (2015) further observed that daily visitors often prefer quick, immersive experiences, whereas overnight guests are more likely to pursue deeper engagement with farm life, such as participating in chores or educational programs.

These preferences are also shaped by external factors. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many tourists opted for short visits to reduce contact and maintain safety (Man and Aspany, 2020). Moreover, daily visitors and overnight guests may display different loyalty and revisit patterns, information that is valuable for developing targeted marketing strategies and loyalty programs (Yamagishi et al. (2024), Liang et al., (2021)).

Table 5.11 and Figure 5.11 present the distribution of responses provided for Statement 11: “I would like to visit an active farm daily rather than staying for a few nights.” The results show that 172 respondents (29.05%) strongly agreed, while 173 respondents (29.22%) remained neutral. Another 93 respondents (15.71%) strongly disagreed, with smaller proportions falling between. The computed weighted mean for this item was 3.28, as figures on Table 5.12, suggesting that, on average, respondents were neutral regarding daily farm visits. This result may be influenced by the fact that 72.97% of respondents had never previously visited an active farm, potentially limiting their inclination to plan such visits.

Table 5.11 Respondents' Preference for Daily Farm Visits (Statement 11)

Statement 11 - "I would like to visit an active farm daily rather than staying for a few nights"		
Likert Scale	Frequency	Percentage
5	172	29,05
4	82	13,85
3	173	29,22
2	72	12,16
1	93	15,71
TOTAL	592	100

Table 5.12 The weight of Survey Respondents' Replies for Statement 11

Weight of Replies Provided by Respondents to the Statement 11 Proposed as "I would like to visit an active farm daily rather than staying for few nights"			
Likert Scale	Frequency	Overall Score	Weight
5	172	860	3,28
4	82	328	
3	173	519	
2	72	144	
1	93	93	
Total	592	1944	

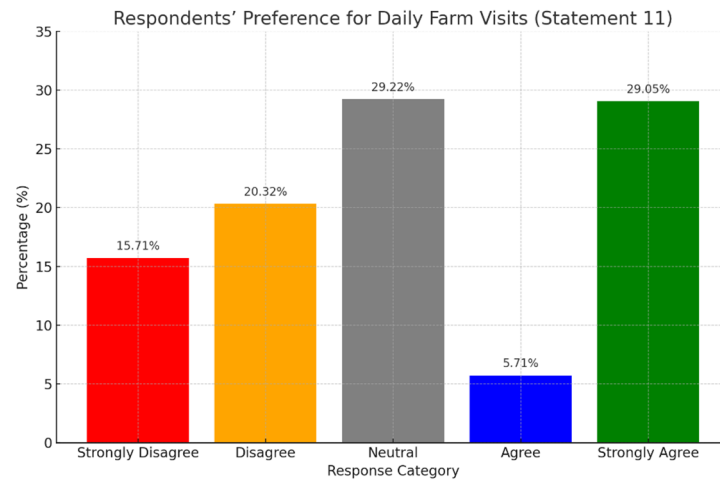


Figure 5. 11 Respondents' Preference for Daily Farm Visits (Statement 11)

Table 5.13 and Figure 5.12 summarize the responses provided for Statement 12: “I would like to spend a few days of my holidays on an active farm.” Here, 214 respondents (36.15%) strongly agreed, with another 134 respondents (22.63%) agreeing, and 123 respondents (20.78%) neutral. Only 58 respondents (9.80%) strongly disagreed. Table 5.14 displays that the weighted mean was 3.64, indicating agreement with the statement. This suggests that respondents are more inclined toward multi-day stays on farms than daily visits, consistent with literature highlighting the appeal of immersive, extended agritourism experiences.

This statement gauges respondents' interest in extended farm stays, which is crucial for agritourism operators seeking to design accommodation and immersive experiences. Research shows that tourists opting for multi-day farm visits often pursue deeper cultural and educational engagement, guiding the development of more tailored services (Zawadka, 2019). Distinguishing between consumers who prefer daily visits and those who favor multi-day stays enables effective market segmentation. Agritourism businesses can then design packages such as weekend retreats that combine farm activities, lodging, and local culinary experiences (Roman, 2015).

Extended stays also generate greater economic benefits for rural communities. Tourists who remain for several days not only spend on accommodation but also contribute to local food markets, activities, and crafts, thereby promoting sustainable rural development (Bagi and Reeder, 2012). For visitors seeking immersive agritourism experiences—such as hands-on farming, educational workshops, and nature-based activities—overnight stays are essential (Tew and Barbieri, 2012). However, multi-day visits also require more complex operational strategies, including staffing for hospitality services, meal planning, and maintaining living quarters (Zawadka et al., 2022).

During and after the COVID-19 pandemic, many tourists preferred isolated, extended holidays on rural farms as a safe and restorative option. Thus, preferences for multi-day stays not only highlight current consumer expectations but also inform how agritourism operators can adapt offerings to broader tourism trends (Wojcieszak-Zbierska et al., 2020).

Table 5.13 Respondents’ Preference for Multi-Day Farm Stays (Statement 12)

Statement 12 - “I would like to spend a few days of my holidays on an active farm”		
Likert Scale	Frequency	Percentage
5	214	36,15
4	134	22,63
3	123	20,78
2	63	10,64
1	58	9,80
TOTAL	592	100

Table 5.14 The weight of replies provided by respondents to Statement 12

Weight of Replies Provided by Respondents to the Statement 12 Proposed as “I would like to spend a few days of my holidays on an active farm”			
Likert Scale	Frequency	Overall Score	Weight
5	214	1070	3,64
4	134	536	
3	123	369	
2	63	126	
1	58	58	
Total	592	2159	

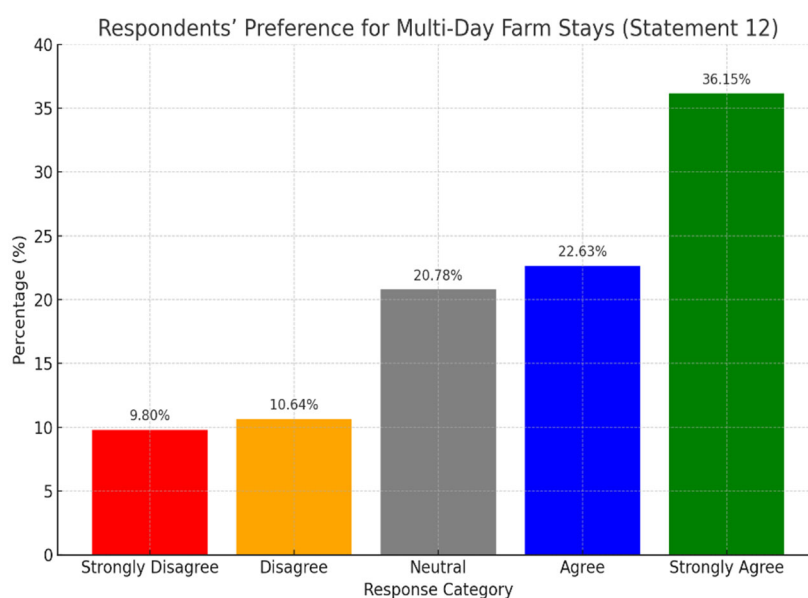


Figure 5.12 Respondents' Preference for Multi-Day Farm Stays (Statement 12)

5.1.2.5. Respondents' Opinions on Participating in Farm Work

To determine customers' point of view about helping with the farm works on an active farm, three statements are proposed to the respondents: Statement 13 – “I would like to help with farm work when I spend my holidays on an active

farm”, Statement 14 - “I would like to spend a few days of my holiday on an active farm helping with farm work and I would like to help with the following (You can choose more than one option)” and Statement 15– “I would like to contribute to farm works even though I am there for a daily visit”.

First, the replies provided by respondents for Statement 13- “I would like to help with farm work when I spend my holidays on an active farm”, are assessed. The reason for proposing this statement is explained below based on a literature review.

The research conducted by Anabestani and Barani Aliakbari (2024) indicates that consumers who express an interest in participating in farm work often seek a more immersive and authentic experience. This helps agritourism operators identify guests who are not only looking for leisure but also for educational and experiential travel opportunities.

Understanding customers’ interest in farm work can also influence staffing and resource management. Agritourism sites can organize structured volunteer programs or work exchanges that help reduce operational costs while offering guests a unique experience (Hasanloo et al., 2024).

Engaging consumers in farm activities can promote sustainable tourism practices in a farm. It can help to build a deeper connection between consumers and rural communities.

Many tourists, especially families and school groups, value hands-on learning opportunities. Offering the chance to participate in farm work can transform a simple visit into an educational experience that supports agritourism’s broader goals of community engagement and learning (Dehghani et al., 2024).

And finally, the study of Alam et al. (2024) argues that consumers who take part in farm work often develop a sense of ownership and connection with the place, increasing their likelihood to return or recommend the experience to others.

The replies provided by respondents to the Statement 13 which is proposed as “ I would like to help with farm work when I spend my holidays on an active

farm” are first analyzed and below frequency and percentage distributions are obtained :

Table 5.15 Respondents’ Willingness to Help with Farm Work (Statement 13)

Statement 13- “I would like to help with farm work when I spend my holidays on an active farm”		
Likert Scale	Frequency	Percentage
5	196	33,11
4	113	19,09
3	120	20,27
2	73	12,33
1	90	15,20
TOTAL	592	100

Table 5.16 The weight of Survey Respondents’ Replies for Statement 13 proposed as “ I would like to help with farm work when I spend my holidays on an active farm” is as follows:

Weight of Replies Provided by Respondents to the Statement 13 Proposed as “I would like to help with farm work when I spend my holidays on an active farm”			
Likert Scale	Frequency	Overall Score	Weight
5	196	980	3,42
4	113	452	
3	120	360	
2	73	146	
1	90	90	
Total	592	2028	

The weight of the Likert Scale concerning statement 13 “I would like to help with farm works when I spend my holidays on an active farm” is computed

as 3,42 and this computation indicates that the consumers agree with this statement. However, it is very close to the scale of being neutral about the very statement.

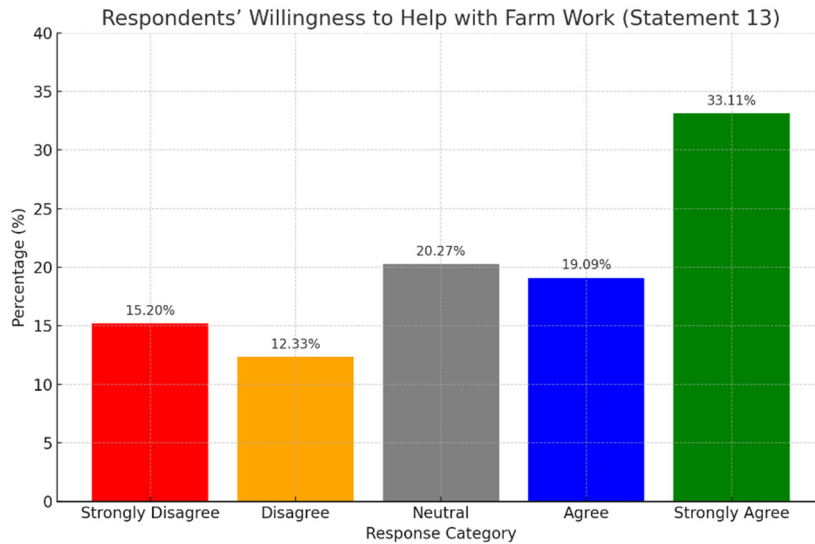


Figure 5.13 Respondents' Willingness to Help with Farm Work (Statement 13)

The fourteenth statement asked respondents whether they would like to spend a few days of their holidays on an active farm helping with specific farm tasks, and to select the activities they would be most interested in. The options included:

- Sowing/planting
- Harvesting
- Collecting (e.g., eggs, honey, mushrooms, forest fruits)
- Processing harvested products
- Animal feeding/care
- Sheep shearing
- Milking
- Making yogurt, cheese, or butter
- Other

Understanding which tasks consumers prefer is valuable for designing tailored agritourism experiences. Safari Ali Akbari (2024) noted that structured activities such as guided farming tasks, sustainability workshops, and educational sessions significantly enhance customer satisfaction. Abiyat et al. (2025) further emphasized that identifying consumers interested in active participation, rather than passive observation, allows for better market segmentation. Similarly, Anabestani et al. (2024) highlighted that this niche market often seeks educational, eco-tourism, and sustainable experiences. Knowing the most popular activities also enables agritourism providers to allocate resources efficiently and organize volunteer or work-exchange opportunities that reduce labor costs while enriching visitor experiences (Amini and Kavooosi-Kalashami, 2024). Dehghani et al. (2024) suggested this kind of data can inform the development of educational programs (e.g., farm schools, seasonal workshops) that contribute to the cultural and economic sustainability of rural areas.

As this question allowed multiple responses, percentages cannot be aggregated into a single weighted score. Instead, results are presented by the frequency of preferences. Table 5.17 and Figure 5.14 show that respondents were most interested in collecting (eggs, honey, mushrooms, fruits), followed by sowing/planting and harvesting. Making dairy products such as yogurt, cheese, and butter ranked fourth. Animal care and processing, harvested products were selected at similar levels, followed by milking, sheep shearing, and other activities, which were less frequently chosen.

Table 5.17 Respondents' Preferences for Farm Work Activities

Farm Works the Respondents Would Like to Contribute	
	Frequency
Sowing/Planting	341
Harvesting	339
Collecting	396
Processing	199
Animal care	199
Shearing	61
Milking	111
Making yogurt, cheese, butter	325
Other	17

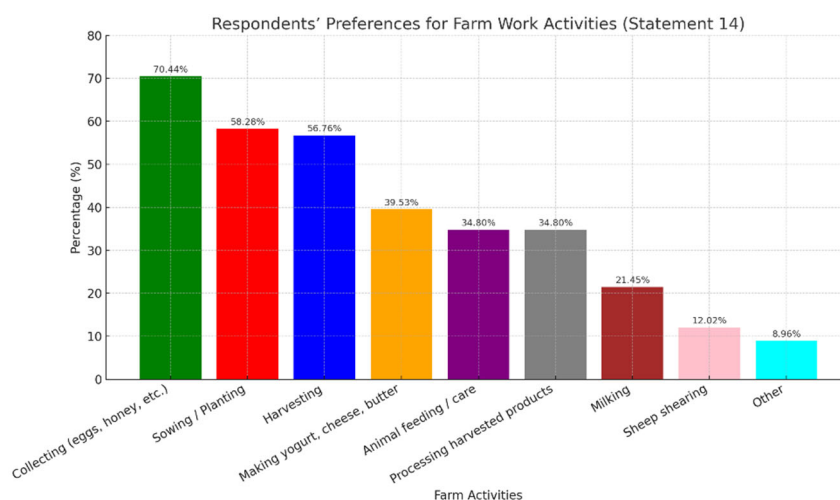


Figure 5.14 Respondents' Preferences for Farm Work Activities

The fifteenth statement asked respondents whether they would be willing to contribute to farm work even when visiting for a single day. This question sought to identify the extent to which short-term visitors value hands-on participation in agritourism.

The literature highlights several benefits of such engagement. Barbieri et al. (2016) noted that daily consumers who participate in farm activities often

support educational objectives, particularly for urban visitors with limited exposure to agricultural practices. This helps foster awareness of sustainable agriculture and local food systems. Scaglione and Mendola (2017) emphasized that allowing consumers to contribute to farm tasks, even temporarily, can provide a supplementary labor resource, which is particularly valuable for small farms. Roman (2015) further observed that daily participation enhances the sustainability of agritourism by encouraging active involvement in local agricultural practices, thereby strengthening the bond between visitors and rural communities.

Wojcieszak-Zbierska et al. (2020) found that short-term visitors who contribute to farm activities often report higher satisfaction, as they perceive their visit to have purpose and meaning. This can generate positive word-of-mouth and increase visitor numbers. Moreover, Choo and Park (2022) argued that identifying such participants helps agritourism operators develop targeted marketing strategies and create unique packages that highlight opportunities for hands-on involvement, even for short durations.

Table 5.18 presents the distribution of responses, while Figure 5.15 illustrates the results. The weighted mean score of 3.43 presented by Table 5.19 suggests overall agreement with the statement, though it remains close to neutrality. This indicates a mixed but generally positive inclination among respondents toward contributing to farm work during daily visits.

Table 5.18 Respondents' Willingness to Contribute to Farm Work During Daily Visits (Statement 15)

Statement 15 - I would like to contribute to farm works even though I am there for a daily visit		
Likert Scale	Frequency	Percentage
5	203	34,29
4	106	17,90
3	120	20,27
2	67	11,32
1	96	16,22
Total	592	100

Table 5.19 The weight of Survey Respondents' Replies for Statement 15 proposed as "I would like to contribute to farm works even though I am there for a daily visit" is as follows:

Weight of Replies Provided by Respondents to Statement 15 Proposed as "I would like to contribute to farm works even though I am there for a daily visit"			
Likert Scale	Frequency	Overall Score	Weight
5	203	1015	3,43
4	106	424	
3	120	360	
2	67	134	
1	96	96	
Total	592	2029	

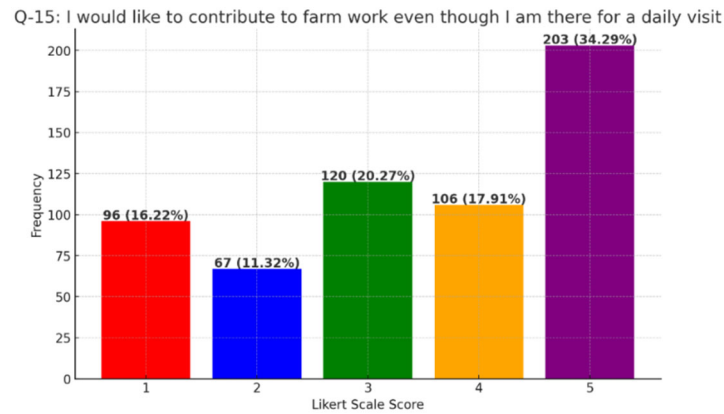


Figure 5.15 Respondents' Willingness to Contribute to Farm Work During Daily Visits (Statement 15)

5.1.2.6. Respondents' Preferences Regarding Accommodation Style on an Active Farm

The seventeenth statement asked respondents whether, when spending holidays on an active farm, they preferred authentic farm conditions to the comforts of a modern hotel room. This statement aimed to distinguish between consumers seeking immersive rural experiences and those prioritizing modern amenities.

Research shows that tourists who prefer authentic farm conditions are typically motivated by experiential tourism, emphasizing genuine interaction with the environment and local culture (Singh and Patted, 2023). Designing experiences that highlight rustic accommodation, hands-on activities, and organic meals can enhance satisfaction among this group (Grudzień et al., 2020). Moreover, encouraging consumers to choose authentic farm settings can boost rural economies by promoting local produce, traditional crafts, and community-based tourism (Malkanathi and Routray, 2012). Sidalı and Schulze (2010) further noted that this preference often corresponds to visitors who actively participate in farm activities, purchase local products, and promote rural cultural heritage.

For agritourism operators, these findings provide strategic insights. Marcuta et al. (2024) argued that authenticity can be emphasized in promotional campaigns targeting consumers who value unique and immersive experiences

over standardized comforts. Similarly, Chen et al. (2023) highlighted that integrating traditional aesthetics with basic comfort allows farms to optimize infrastructure costs while attracting niche markets.

Table 5.20 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of responses, while Figure 5.16 provides a visual overview. Results show that 212 respondents (35.81%) strongly agreed and 134 respondents (22.64%) agreed with the statement, while 126 respondents (21.28%) remained neutral. By contrast, 67 respondents (11.32%) strongly disagreed and 53 respondents (8.95%) disagreed.

Table 5.20 Respondents’ Preferences Regarding Accommodation Style on an Active Farm (Statement 17)

Statement 17 - When spending my holidays on an active farm, I prefer authentic farm conditions to the comforts of a modern hotel room		
Likert Scale	Frequency	Percentage
5	212	35,81
4	134	22,64
3	126	21,28
2	53	8,95
1	67	11,32
Total	592	100

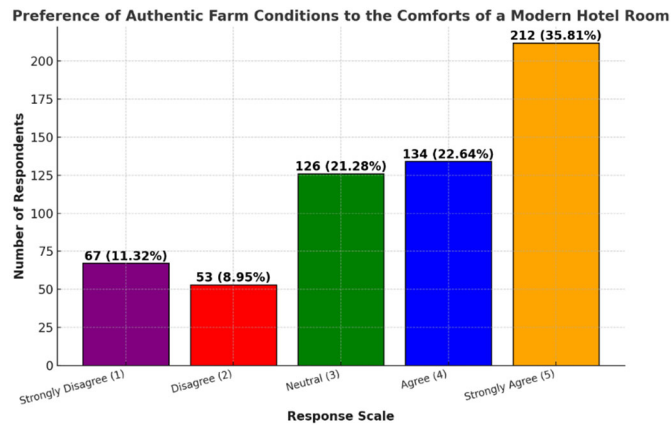


Figure 5.16 Respondents’ Preferences Regarding Accommodation Style on an Active Farm (Statement 17)

The weighted mean, presented by Table 5.21 for this statement was calculated as 3.63, indicating overall agreement.

Table 5.21 The weight of Respondents’ Preferences Regarding Accommodation Style on an Active Farm (Statement 17)

Weight of Replies Provided by Respondents to Statement 17 Proposed as “When spending my holidays on an active farm, I prefer authentic farm conditions to the comforts of a modern hotel room.”			
Likert Scale	Frequency	Overall Score	Weight
5	212	1060	3,63
4	134	536	
3	126	378	
2	53	106	
1	67	67	
Total	592	2147	

This finding suggests that respondents are inclined toward authentic farm experiences rather than modern hotel-like comforts. Importantly, it challenges

the concerns of farmers who are hesitant to enter agritourism due to the perception that consumers will only accept modern facilities. Instead, these results affirm that many consumers welcome authenticity, providing reassurance for farms considering agritourism initiatives.

5.1.2.7. Respondents' Purchase Intentions Regarding Local Farm and Artisan Products

Purchase behavior during and after agritourism visits plays a critical role in sustaining local economies. Kim et al. (2019) demonstrated that agritourism participation often reshapes consumers' purchasing patterns, leading to higher demand for local agricultural products and long-term economic benefits. Pine and Gilmore (1999) further observed that contemporary tourists are drawn to unique products, while Verhoef et al. (2009) noted that such offerings can strengthen customer loyalty. Suhartanto et al. (2020) found that post-visit purchases not only boost regional economies but also foster positive word-of-mouth and repeat visitation. Other scholars have similarly emphasized the contribution of local agrifood products to rural sustainability (Madaleno et al., 2019; Back et al., 2020), claiming that increased post-visit purchases and strengthen the local economy and create new opportunities for small-scale producers. It is also argued that purchasing local products during or after an agritourism experience plays the role of nostalgia in driving purchases of traditional goods (Kastenholz et al., 2021), while post-visit purchases are described as a vital component of an inclusive agritourism model, supporting smallholder livelihoods and promoting a sustainable local economy by Addinsall et al. (2017).

To explore this dynamic, respondents were asked two statements about purchasing farm products and handicrafts.

Statement 19: "I would like to purchase natural products from the farm that I consumed during my time spent there."

Table 5.22 and Figure 5.17 present the results. The findings reveal that 288 respondents (48.65%) strongly agreed and 161 respondents (27.20%) agreed

with this statement, while only 36 respondents (6.08%) expressed disagreement. This result suggests that agritourism can generate ongoing revenue streams for farmers, as many consumers are likely to continue purchasing products they first encountered during their stay.

Table 5.22 Respondents' Intention to Purchase Farm Products Consumed During Their Stay (Statement 19)

Statement 19 - I would like to purchase natural products from the farm that I consumed during my time spent there		
Likert Scale	Frequency	Percentage
5	288	48,65
4	161	27,20
3	107	18,07
2	22	3,72
1	14	2,36
Total	592	100

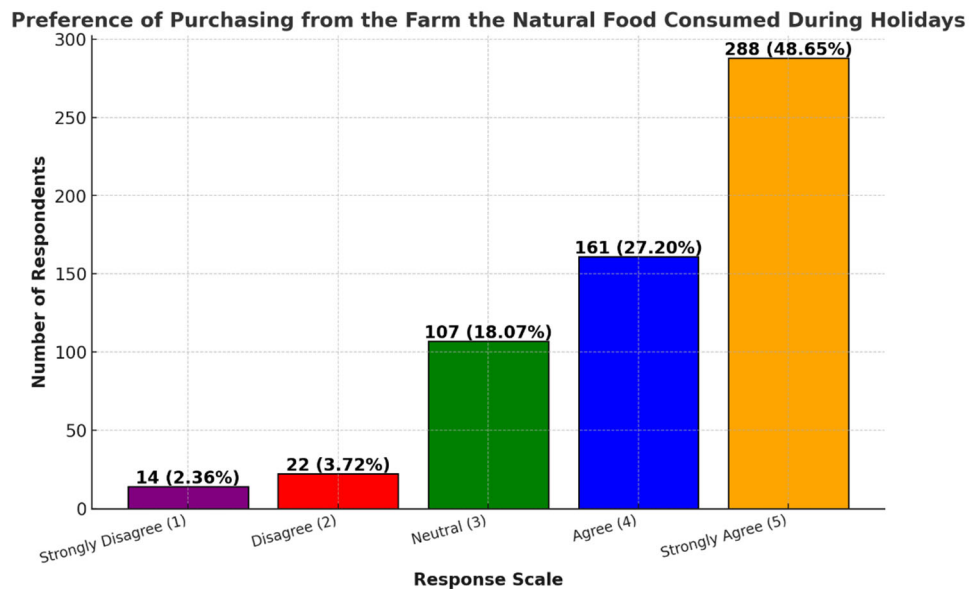


Figure 5.17 Respondents' Intention to Purchase Farm Products Consumed During Their Stay (Statement 19).

Following table 5.23 highlights a weight mean of 4.16 indicating a strong agreement for statement 19.

Table 5.23 The weight of Respondents’ Intention to Purchase Farm Products Consumed During Their Stay (Statement 19)

Statement 19 - I would like to purchase natural products from the farm that I consumed during my time spent there			
Likert Scale	Frequency	Overall Score	Weight
5	288	1440	4,16
4	161	644	
3	107	321	
2	22	44	
1	14	14	
Total	592	2463	

Statement 20: “I can buy local handicrafts from nearby villages while spending my holidays on a farm.”

Table 5.24 and Figure 5.18 summarize the responses. Results show that 241 respondents (40.71%) strongly agreed and 174 respondents (29.40%) agreed, with only 41 respondents (6.92%) disagreeing. The weighted mean of 4.01, shown in Table 2.25 indicates an agreement with Statement 20. These findings underscore the potential of agritourism to stimulate not only farm-level income but also the broader rural economy, as visitors express strong interest in supporting local artisans and surrounding communities.

Table 5.24 Respondents' Intention to Purchase Local Handicrafts from Nearby Villages (Statement 20)

Statement 20 - I can buy local handicrafts from nearby villages while spending my holidays on a farm		
Likert Scale	Frequency	Percentage
5	241	40,71
4	174	29,40
3	136	22,97
2	24	4,05
1	17	2,87
Total	592	100

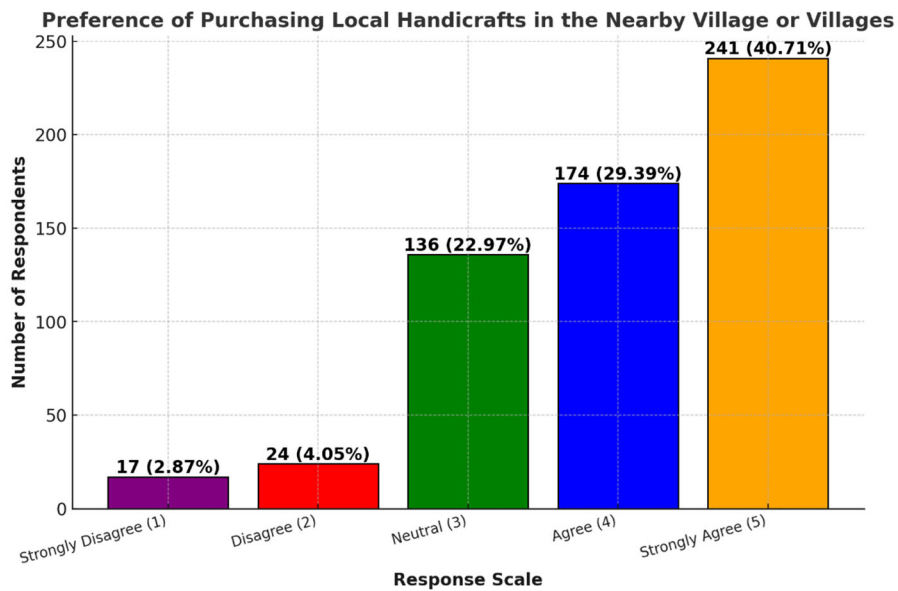


Figure 5.18 Respondents' Intention to Purchase Local Handicrafts from Nearby Villages (Statement 20)

Table 5.25 The weight of Respondents’ Intention to Purchase Local Handicrafts from Nearby Villages (Statement 20)

Statement 20- I can buy local handicrafts from nearby villages while spending my holidays on a farm			
Likert Scale	Frequency	Overall Score	Weight
5	241	1205	4,01
4	174	696	
3	136	408	
2	24	48	
1	17	17	
Total	592	2374	

Assessed together, these results highlight the significant role of post-visit and ancillary purchases in sustaining rural livelihoods, extending the economic impact of agritourism beyond the farm gate.

5.1.2.8. Respondents’ Perceptions of the Well-Being Benefits of Farm-Based Holidays

Literature widely acknowledges the role of agritourism in promoting well-being by offering respite from urban stress, opportunities for relaxation, and meaningful engagement with nature and local communities. Agritourism farms allow visitors to escape daily pressures (Ajagunna et al., 2017; Sachaleli, 2020; Zawadka, 2019), enjoy tranquility (Klakočar and Pavić, 2024; Pesonen and Komppula, 2010), strengthen family bonds (Moraru, 2019), and enhance physical and mental health through both leisure and participation in farm activities (Chen et al., 2023; Kaplan, 2014; Rezaei et al., 2021). In another study Zawadka et al. (2022) argue that agritourism offers a peaceful atmosphere, which is particularly appealing to those seeking a quiet environment. The calmness of rural areas allows consumers to reconnect with nature, fostering a sense of peace and rejuvenation. Against this backdrop, four statements were presented to respondents to assess their perceptions of the well-being benefits of farm-based holidays.

Statement 21: “Spending a few days of my holidays on an active farm would be a nice break from my busy life.” Was the first statement proposed to respondents. Their respective replies are presented as follows :

Table 5.26 and Figure 5.19 present the results of respondents responses’ frequency and percentage. As they indicate, a majority of respondents strongly agreed (51.86%) or agreed (22.64%) with the statement, while only 8.11% expressed disagreement.

Table 5.26 Respondents’ Perception of Farm Holidays as a Break from Busy Life (Statement 21)

Statement 21 - Spending a few days of my holidays on an active farm would be a nice break from my busy life		
Likert Scale	Frequency	Percentage
5	307	51,86
4	134	22,64
3	103	17,40
2	25	4,22
1	23	3,89
Total	592	100

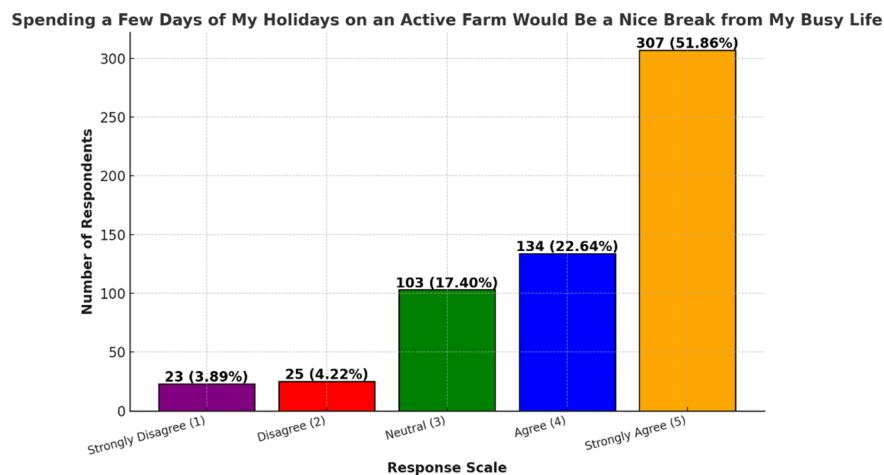


Figure 5.19 Respondents’ Perception of Farm Holidays as a Break from Busy Life (Statement 21).

The weighted mean for Statement 21 was 4.14, indicating broad agreement that farm-based holidays provide relief from busy lifestyles.

Table 5.27 The weight of Respondents’ Perception of Farm Holidays as a Break from Busy Life (Statement 21)

Statement 21 - Spending a few days of my holidays on an active farm would be a nice break from my busy life			
Likert Scale	Frequency	Overall Score	Weight
5	307	1535	4,14
4	134	536	
3	103	309	
2	25	50	
1	23	23	
Total	592	2453	

Then, Statement 22: “Spending my holidays on an active farm means spending quality time for me.” was proposed to the respondents.

As provided in Table 5.28 and Figure 5.20, nearly three-quarters of respondents strongly agreed (48.14%) or agreed (27.54%), while fewer than 9% disagreed.

Table 5.28 Respondents’ Perception of Farm Holidays as Quality Personal Time (Statement 22)

Statement 22 - Spending my holidays on an active farm means spending quality time for me		
Likert Scale	Frequency	Percentage
5	285	48,14
4	163	27,54
3	93	15,71
2	33	5,57
1	18	3,04
Total	592	100

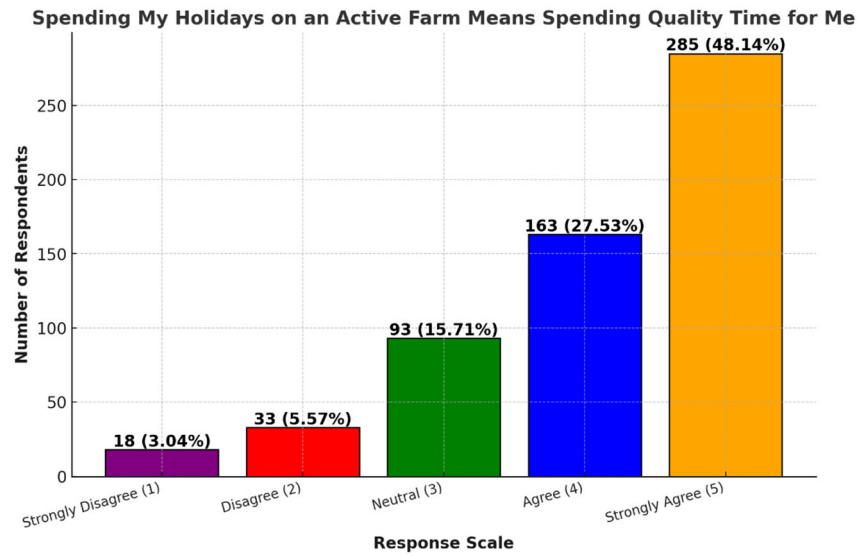


Figure 5.20 Respondents’ Perception of Farm Holidays as Quality Personal Time (Statement 22)

The weighted mean of 4.12 again demonstrates overall agreement, suggesting that respondents perceive farm stays as a valuable opportunity for quality personal time.

Table 5.29 The weight of Respondents’ Perception of Farm Holidays as Quality Personal Time (Statement 22)

Statement 22 - Spending my holidays on an active farm means spending quality time for me			
Likert Scale	Frequency	Overall Score	Weight
5	285	1425	4,12
4	163	652	
3	93	279	
2	33	66	
1	18	18	
Total	592	2453	

Statement 23: “Spending my holidays on an active farm will be more relaxing as it will be in a quieter environment.” is the third statement proposed to respondents.

Table 5.30 and Figure 5.21 summarize the distribution. A combined 76.02% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, with only 7.09% in disagreement. The weighted mean was 4.13, confirming agreement. These results underscore the importance of quiet and natural surroundings as central to the restorative appeal of agritourism.

Table 5.30 Respondents’ Perception of Farm Holidays as More Relaxing in a Quiet Environment (Statement 23)

Statement 23 - Spending my holidays on an active farm will be more relaxing as it will be in a quieter environment		
Likert Scale	Frequency	Percentage
5	278	46,96
4	172	29,06
3	100	16,89
2	25	4,22
1	17	2,87
Total	592	100

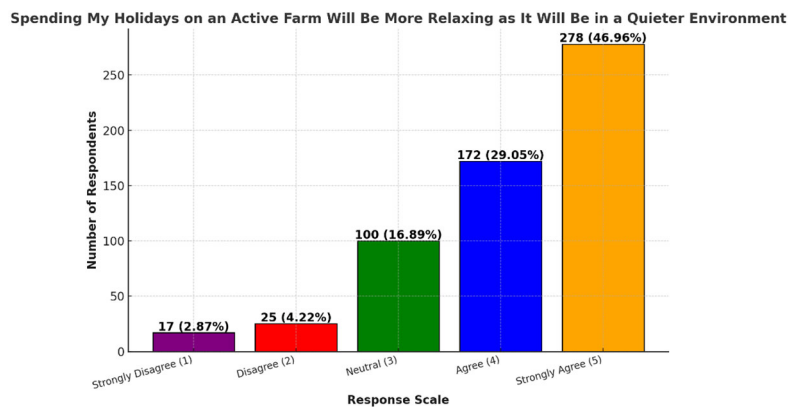


Figure 5.21 Respondents’ Perception of Farm Holidays as More Relaxing in a Quiet Environment (Statement 23)

The weighted mean of 4.13, presented in Table 5.31 indicates strong agreement, reflecting that many respondents view agritourism as directly contributing to physical and mental health.

Table 5.31 The weight of Respondents’ Perception of Farm Holidays as More Relaxing in a Quiet Environment (Statement 23)

Statement 23 - Spending my holidays on an active farm will be more relaxing as it will be in a quieter environment			
Likert Scale	Frequency	Overall Score	Weight
5	278	1390	4,13
4	172	688	
3	100	300	
2	25	50	
1	17	17	
Total	592	2453	

Finally, Statement 24: “My health will also be positively affected.” is proposed to respondents.

Responses, presented in Table 5.32 and Figure 5.22, reveal the strongest support among the four items. A clear majority strongly agreed (55.58%) or agreed (28.04%), and only 5.91% disagreed.

Responses, presented in Table 5.32 and Figure 5.22, reveal the strongest support among the four items. A clear majority strongly agreed (55.58%) or agreed (28.04%), and only 5.91% disagreed. The weighted mean of 4.31 indicates strong agreement, reflecting that many respondents view agritourism as directly contributing to physical and mental health.

Table 5.32 Respondents' Perception of Farm Holidays as Beneficial to Health (Statement 24)

Statement 24 - My health will also be positively affected		
Likert Scale	Frequency	Percentage
5	329	55,58
4	166	28,04
3	62	10,47
2	19	3,21
1	16	2,70
Total	592	100

My Health Will Also Be Positively Affected as I Will Consume Natural Products While Spending My Holidays on an Active Farm

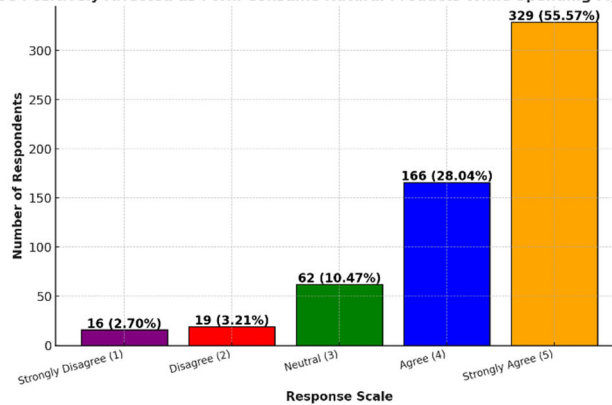


Figure 5.22 Respondents' Perception of Farm Holidays as Beneficial to Health (Statement 24).

The weighted mean of 4.31, presented in Table 5.33 indicates strong agreement, reflecting that many respondents view agritourism as directly contributing to physical and mental health.

Table 5.33 The weight of Respondents' Perception of Farm Holidays as Beneficial to Health (Statement 24)

Statement 24 - My health will also be positively affected			
Likert Scale	Frequency	Overall Score	Weight
5	329	1645	4,31
4	166	664	
3	62	186	
2	19	38	
1	16	16	
Total	592	2453	

Assessed together, the findings across these four statements suggest that respondents strongly associate farm-based holidays with relaxation, quality time, tranquility, and improved health. These results reinforce the role of agritourism not only as an alternative tourism model but also as a contributor to broader well-being outcomes.

5.1.2.9. Respondents' Perceptions of the Environmental Benefits of Farm-Based Holidays

Agritourism is increasingly linked to environmental sustainability through the promotion of green practices, low-impact tourism, and resource efficiency. Studies emphasize that agritourism can contribute to environmental conservation by enabling visitors to appreciate natural landscapes (Yamagishi et al., 2021; Morales-Zamorano et al., 2020), supporting waste reduction and recycling through circular economy principles (Tavares de Carvalho et al., 2024; Ingrassia et al., 2023), and fostering composting, eco-friendly construction, and zero-waste practices (Némethy et al., 2022; Gajić et al., 2024; D'Alessandro, 2016). Such practices not only benefit the environment but also enhance visitor satisfaction and contribute to sustainable rural development.

To capture respondents' views, two statements were presented. First Statement 25: "Spending my holidays on an active farm will cause less environmental pollution." is proposed.

As shown in Table 5.34 and Figure 5.23, the majority of respondents agreed with this statement: 306 respondents (51.69%) strongly agreed, and 139 respondents (23.48%) agreed, compared to only 48 respondents (8.11%) who disagreed. Statement 26: "Spending my holidays on an active farm will allow me to address the issue of recycling more effectively."

Table 5.34 Respondents' Perception of Farm Holidays as Causing Less Environmental Pollution (Statement 25)

Statement 25 - Spending my holidays on an active farm will cause less environmental pollution		
Likert Scale	Frequency	Percentage
5	306	51,69
4	139	23,48
3	99	16,72
2	25	4,22
1	23	3,89
Total	592	100

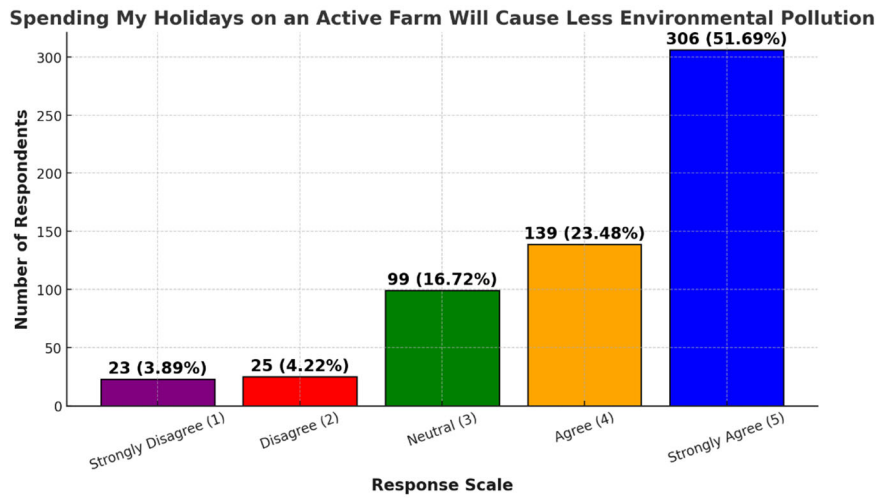


Figure 5.23 Respondents’ Perception of Farm Holidays as Causing Less Environmental Pollution (Statement 25).

The weighted mean was 4.15, indicating agreement as indicated in Table 5.35. These findings suggest that respondents perceive farm holidays as less environmentally harmful compared to conventional tourism, reflecting the eco-friendly image of agritourism.

Table 5.35 The weight of Respondents’ Perception of Farm Holidays as Causing Less Environmental Pollution (Statement 25)

Statement 25 - Spending my holidays on an active farm will cause less environmental pollution			
Likert Scale	Frequency	Overall Score	Weight
5	306	1530	4,15
4	139	556	
3	99	297	
2	25	50	
1	23	23	
Total	592	2456	

Then Statement 26: “Spending my holidays on an active farm will allow me to address the issue of recycling more effectively” is proposed to respondents.

Table 5.36 and Figure 5.24 present the results. A majority again expressed agreement, with 252 respondents (42.57%) strongly agreeing and 157 respondents (26.52%) agreeing, while 65 respondents (10.98%) disagreed.

Table 5.36 Respondents’ Perception of Farm Holidays as Enhancing Recycling Practices (Statement 26)

Statement 26 - Spending my holidays on an active farm will allow me to address the issue of recycling more effectively		
Likert Scale	Frequency	Percentage
5	252	42,57
4	157	26,52
3	118	19,93
2	36	6,08
1	29	4,90
Total	592	100

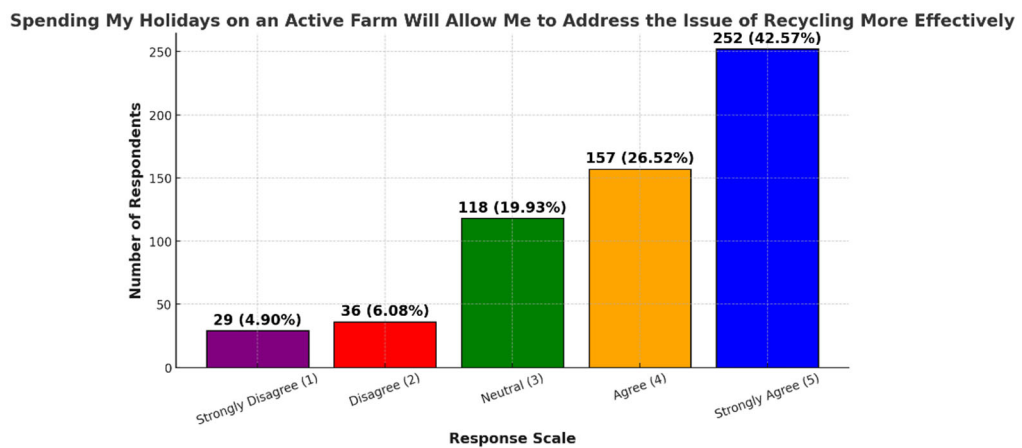


Figure 5.24 Respondents’ Perception of Farm Holidays as Enhancing Recycling Practices (Statement 26)

The weighted mean of 3.96 confirms also an agreement as indicated on Table 5.37 that follows. Respondents thus view farm holidays as an opportunity to engage more consciously with recycling practices, in line with the emphasis on resource efficiency and waste reduction in sustainable agritourism.

Table 5.37 Respondents’ Perception of Farm Holidays as Enhancing Recycling Practices (Statement 26)

Statement 26 - Spending my holidays on an active farm will allow me to address the issue of recycling more effectively			
Likert Scale	Frequency	Overall Score	Weight
5	252	1260	3,96
4	157	628	
3	118	354	
2	36	72	
1	29	29	
Total	592	2343	

Together, these results demonstrate that respondents recognize the environmental benefits of farm-based holidays, both in terms of reduced pollution and enhanced recycling awareness. This reinforces agritourism’s positioning as a model of low-impact, environmentally responsible tourism.

5.1.2.10. Respondents’ Perceptions of the Economic Impact of Farm-Based Holidays on Rural Areas

Agritourism is widely recognized as a driver of rural economic development. Scholars have emphasized that it generates additional revenue for farmers and creates employment opportunities, thereby contributing to the long-term sustainability of rural communities (Yamagishi et al., 2021; Wilson et al., 2006; Rauniyar et al., 2020; Prayukvong et al., 2015; Tew and Barbieri, 2012; Hara and Naipul, 2008). Forleo et al. (2017) highlighted its role in disadvantaged rural areas with limited alternative employment, while Bannor et al. (2022) stressed that diversification through agritourism not only raises farm income but

also strengthens regional economies. Van Sandt and McFadden (2016) remark on agrioturism’s primary role as boosting rural economies. Recent studies similarly affirm its contribution as a valuable secondary income stream and a catalyst for local development (Shinde and Bhinka, 2023; Willaddara and Ranaweera, 2024; Agrawal, 2023; Grillini et al., 2024).

To assess respondents’ perspectives on these economic impacts, two statements were proposed.

Statement 27: “Spending my holidays on an active farm will be beneficial in terms of creating a second source of income for the farm.”

Table 5.38 and Figure 5.25 present the results. A majority of respondents agreed: 245 respondents (41.39%) strongly agreed and 166 respondents (28.04%) agreed, while only 78 respondents (13.17%) disagreed. Statement 28: “Spending my holidays on an active farm will also be beneficial for local development.” are proposed to respondents respectively.

Table 5.38 Respondents’ Perception of Farm Holidays as a Second Source of Farm Income (Statement 27)

Statement 27 - Spending my holidays on an active farm will be beneficial in terms of creating a second source of income for the farm		
Likert Scale	Frequency	Percentage
5	245	41,39
4	166	28,04
3	103	17,40
2	43	7,26
1	35	5,91
Total	592	100

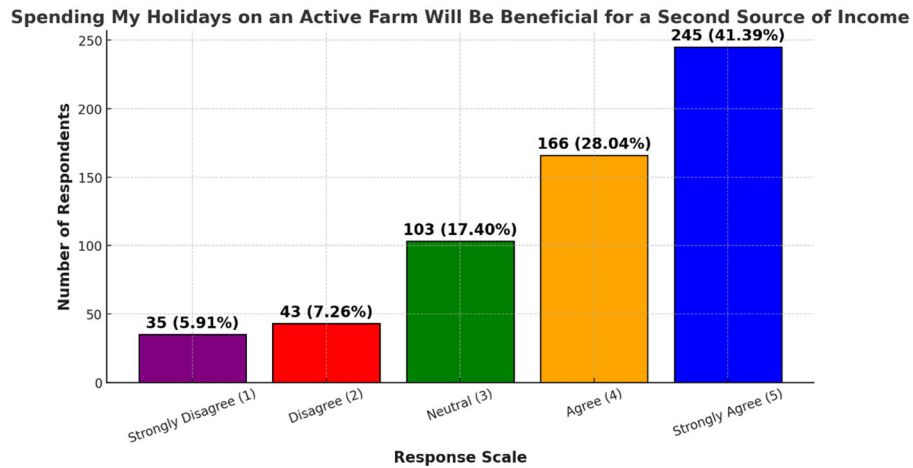


Figure 5.25 Respondents’ Perception of Farm Holidays as a Second Source of Farm Income (Statement 27) Then the weight of the same statement is computed as presented below.

The weighted mean of 3.92, presented in Table 5.39 indicates overall agreement, suggesting that respondents recognize agritourism as a supplementary income stream for farmers.

Table 5.39 The weight of Respondents’ Perception of Farm Holidays as a Second Source of Farm Income (Statement 27)

Statement 27 - Spending my holidays on an active farm will be beneficial in terms of creating a second source of income for the farm			
Likert Scale	Frequency	Overall Score	Weight
5	245	1225	3,92
4	166	664	
3	103	309	
2	43	86	
1	35	35	
Total	592	2319	

As shown in Table 5.40 and Figure 5.26, support was even stronger for this statement: 301 respondents (50.84%) strongly agreed and 177 respondents (29.90%) agreed, compared to only 39 respondents (6.59%) who disagreed.

Table 5.40 Respondents’ Perception of Farm Holidays as Beneficial for Local Development (Statement 28)

Statement 28 - Spending my holidays on an active farm will also be beneficial for local development		
Likert Scale	Frequency	Percentage
5	301	50,84
4	177	29,90
3	75	12,67
2	22	3,72
1	17	2,87
Total	592	100

The bar chart of the frequency and percentage outcomes is provided here below for a better visualization of this statement.

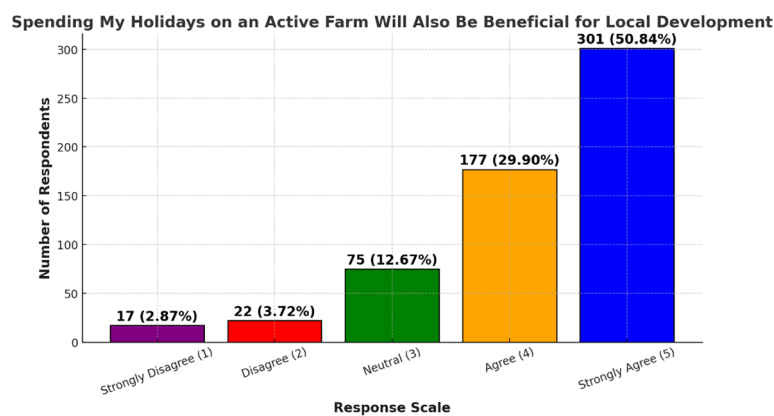


Figure 5. 26 Respondents’ Perception of Farm Holidays as Beneficial for Local Development (Statement 28)

The weighted mean presented in Table 5.41 was 4.22, reflecting strong agreement. These results highlight that respondents view agritourism not only as beneficial for farmers but also as a significant contributor to wider local development, supporting artisans, restaurants, and service providers in rural economies.

Table 5.41 The weight of Respondents’ Perception of Farm Holidays as Beneficial for Local Development (Statement 28)

Statement 28 - Spending my holidays on an active farm will also be beneficial for local development			
Likert Scale	Frequency	Overall Score	Weight
5	301	1505	4,22
4	177	708	
3	75	225	
2	22	44	
1	17	17	
Total	592	2499	

Taken together, these findings confirm that respondents strongly associate farm-based holidays with positive economic impacts at both the farm and community levels. This reinforces the role of agritourism as a tool for poverty alleviation, economic diversification, and sustainable rural development.

5.1.2.11. Respondents’ Preferences Regarding Travel Distance to Farm Holiday Destinations

Travel distance is a critical factor influencing agritourism participation, shaping both expectations and decision-making. Van Trung and Mohanty (2021) found that shorter distances are often prioritized by day consumers, who value affordability and accessibility, whereas longer-distance travelers are more likely to seek unique and exclusive experiences. Accessibility is thus often as important

as the farm activities themselves, determining whether consumers choose to visit a destination.

To assess these preferences, two statements were proposed. First Statement 32: “To spend my holidays on an active farm, I can also choose farms that are not more than 300–400 km away.” is proposed.

As shown in Table 5.42 and Figure 5.27, the majority of respondents agreed: 223 respondents (37.67%) strongly agreed and 145 respondents (24.50%) agreed, compared to 88 respondents (14.86%) who disagreed.

Table 5.42 Respondents’ Preference for Holiday Farm Destinations Within 300–400 km (Statement 32)

Statement 32 - To spend my holidays on an active farm, I can also choose farms that are not more than 300-400 km away		
Likert Scale	Frequency	Percentage
5	223	37,67
4	145	24,50
3	136	22,97
2	44	7,43
1	44	7,43
Total	592	100

Q-32: To spend my holidays on an active farm, I can also choose farms that are not more than 300-400 km away

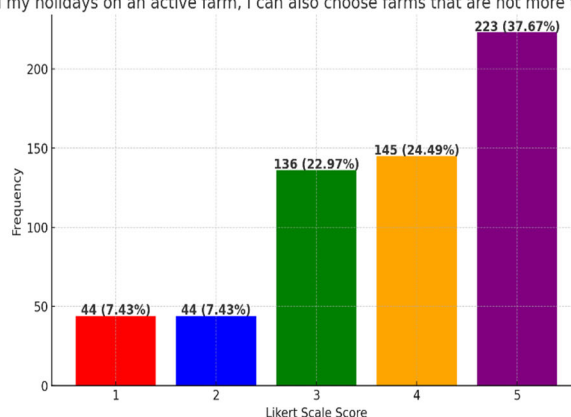


Figure 5.27 Respondents’ Preference for Holiday Farm Destinations Within 300–400 km (Statement 32).

The weighted mean was 3.77, indicating agreement as presented in Table 5.43. These results suggest that respondents are willing to travel moderate distances for multi-day farm holidays, particularly when the experience promises uniqueness and added value.

Table 5.43 The weight of Respondents' Preference for Holiday Farm Destinations Within 300–400 km (Statement 32)

Statement 32 - To spend my holidays on an active farm, I can also choose farms that are not more than 300-400 km away			
Likert Scale	Frequency	Overall Score	Weight
5	223	1115	3,77
4	145	580	
3	136	408	
2	44	88	
1	44	44	
Total	592	2235	

Then Statement 33: “To spend a day on an active farm, I prefer farms that are no more than 150 km away.” is proposed.

Table 5.44 and Figure 5.28 summarize the responses. While 111 respondents (18.75%) strongly agreed and 99 respondents (16.72%) agreed, a notable share expressed disagreement (138 respondents, 23.31% strongly disagreed; 93 respondents, 15.71% disagreed).

Table 5.44 Respondents' Preference for Day-Trip Farm Destinations Within 150 km (Statement 33)

Statement 33 - To spend a day on an active farm, I prefer farms that are no more than 150 km away		
Likert Scale	Frequency	Percentage
5	111	18,75
4	99	16,72
3	151	25,51
2	93	15,71
1	138	23,31
Total	592	100

Q-33: To spend a day on an active farm, I prefer farms that are no more than 150 km away.

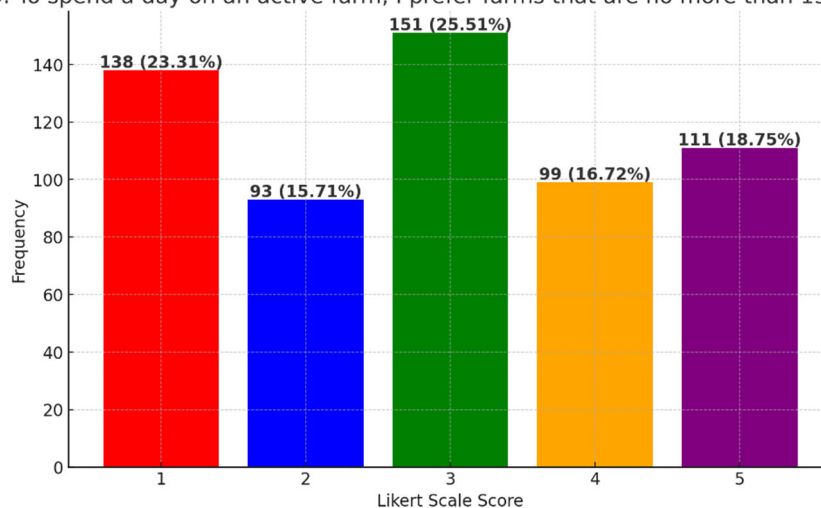


Figure 5.28 Respondents' Preference for Day-Trip Farm Destinations Within 150 km (Statement 33).

With a weighted mean of 2.91, as presented in Table 5.45, the responses are neutral overall, reflecting uncertainty. This indicates that while some respondents are open to longer day trips, many prioritize proximity, reinforcing the importance of accessibility in planning short-term agritourism experiences.

Table 5.45 The weight of Respondents' Preference for Day-Trip Farm Destinations Within 150 km (Statement 33).

Statement 33 - To spend a day on an active farm, I prefer farms that are no more than 150 km away			
Likert Scale	Frequency	Overall Score	Weight
5	111	555	2,91
4	99	396	
3	151	453	
2	93	186	
1	138	138	
Total	592	1728	

Taken together, these findings reveal a clear distinction between expectations for holiday and day-trip agritourism. Respondents appear more flexible about travel distance for multi-day farm stays, but more cautious about longer distances for single-day visits. This suggests that agritourism marketing should differentiate between day-trip and holiday segments, emphasizing accessibility for the former and immersive, high-value experiences for the latter.

5.1.3. Farmers' Demographics

There are no significant numbers of surveys and/or research in literature that consider farmers' points of view regarding agritourism. This fact is a lack of agritourism activities, especially when it is known that farmers' decision to start and implement agritourism activities on their farm depends on the circumstances they are enduring such as; socio-demography, economy, and their willingness and ability to diversify their farm business into agritourism.

Bagi and Reeder (2012) conducted a study to find out what influences US farmers' involvement in agritourism. The study's findings indicate that a variety of factors may positively or negatively impact an agritourism business's ability to operate successfully. According to the same study paying to take advice in starting an agritourism business is another factor affecting farmers' decisions. In general, a farmer's decision to participate in agritourism activities is based on

the maximum utility he anticipates receiving from net income from the business (Yeboah et al., 2017)

Bannor et al. (2022) classify these factors as variables under three groups which are socio-demographic variables, economic variables and institutional variables. According to these researchers age, gender, educational degree, experience of the farmers in the business, the location they live in and the number of people in the household constitute the socio-demographic variables. The size of the farm, the main business carried out in the farm, their off-farm occupations and the revenues and expenses of the family are classified under the economic variables. Finally, they include access to motorable roads into institutional variables.

According to other researchers (Tew and Barbieri, 2012) farmers implement agritourism activities for economic reasons such as improving their quality of life by reaching new consumers other than their regular customers.

Through empirical studies, it is shown that besides the landscape and environmental variables, the economic scale of a farm, the field or fields the farm specializes in, and farmers' characteristics are the variables affecting the probability for a farm in carrying out agritourism activities (Lupi et al., 2017).

Like the studies of Bagi and Reeder (2012), there are other studies that categorized factors affecting farmers' decisions to implement agritourism activities under four categories which are ;

a) Physical properties of the farm and the features of the farm activities such as its owned acres, (McGehee and Kim, 2004), the size of the farm (Evans and Ilbery, 1992; Bernardo et al., 2004; Sonnino, 2004) and farm's esthetic and attractive features (Hilchey, 1993; Rilla, 2011);

b) Wealth of the whole farm family (Sonnino, 2004);

c) Demographic and personal characteristics of the farmer such as the age and education degree of the farmer (Barbieri and Mshenga, 2008), whether the farmer has social skills and how outgoing s/he is (Hilchey, 1993; Rilla 2011) ; and

d) Geographical features of the farm such as its vicinity to an urban center (Hilchey, 1993; Che, 2007; Che et al., 2005; Veeck et al., 2006; Bernardo et al., 2004), and the geographical characteristics such as natural assets, cultural assets, socio-economic conditions (Che, 2007; Sonnino 2004).

Some researchers such Carter (1998), Nickerson et al. (2001) and Mace (2005) stated that the characteristics of the farmer and the farm play a remarkable role in deciding to implement agritourism activities.

56 farmers who participated in this survey are located in various regions of Türkiye. While 3 of them are from Düzyurt village of Trabzon , 1 farmer is from Foça village of Izmir and 1 is from Ihsaniye village of Kocaeli, remaining 51 farmers are from Hatay province, namely Antakya, Defne, Dört Yol, Samandağ and Altınözü.

Düzyurt village is located in Trabzon province in the North Sea region of the country. The village is known for its flat and arable lands in a geography where flat lands, allowing agricultural operations, are very rare. People of the village are cultivating mostly hazelnut and corn apart from the vegetables they consume for their own household.

The farmers contacted for the survey declared that they used to breed cows as well, but very recently they sold them, because of high breeding costs. They also claimed that the milk they were obtaining was more than their daily needs and as they didn't know how to sell it, or the butter, cheese and yoghurt they were making, they finally had to sell them. Learning about the aspects of agritourism, providing an opportunity to sell their products, they declared, had they known this possibility, they wouldn't have sold their animals.

The only farmer contacted in Foça, is operating a very small apiary, welcoming people on her 2 daa land during weekends, but not charging any services she provides them with. She has few fruit trees which are producing more than her needs and she is simply distributing the extra harvest to her surrounding. Learning that she can make an extra income from these operations, she showed a huge interest in learning how to proceed.

The farmer from Ihsaniye village of Kocaeli is a fruit producer, carrying out his farming activities on 40 daa. The farmer has an associate degree in tourism and is the only one among all 56 farmers who knew about agritourism and who replied to question 19 asking “Do you know what is agritourism?” by saying “Yes, of course I do. It’s my future plan to carry out agritourism activities on my land.”

The remaining 51 farmers with whom the survey was conducted reside in different regions of Hatay province, which was intentionally selected due to being the city most affected by the earthquake of February 6, 2023. The delicate socioeconomic conditions faced by the survivors of the earthquake require sustainable models for recovery in terms of the economy and social resilience. Therefore, this thesis focused on the farmers of Hatay to explore agritourism as a second source of income and a strategy to generate value-added in the development of the province.

5.1.3.1. Gender of farmers

It is argued that farms operated by women tend to rely more on agritourism to diversify their income (Savage et al., 2023). The same researchers claim that gendered responsibilities and values were shown to shape the way women approach agritourism activities on their farm.

McGehee et al. (2007) state that in Virginia, United States of America (USA), women operating a farm are more motivated for agritourism, perceiving it as a way to enhance their family income and bonds with the community. They state that men, on the other hand, are more interested in financial goals.

The research conducted by Quella et al. (2023) in the USA revealed a link between gender and success perception. They claim that women are more likely

to associate success with social and community benefits, rather than financial ones.

Similarly, Barbieri and Mshenga (2008) indicate that the gender of farm operators influences outcomes; women tend to manage smaller but more diversified operations.

Based on the above literature insights, the gender of the farmers participating in the survey is recorded. The outcomes are displayed below through a table and then a bar chart showing the frequency and percentage.

Table 5. 46 Gender distribution of farmers

Gender Distribution of Farmers Who Participated in the Survey		
Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	17	30,35
Male	39	69,65
Total	56	100

Below the bar chart of farmers' gender distribution is provided for better visualization.

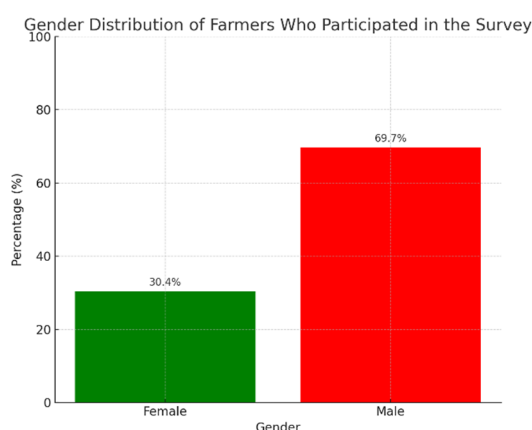


Figure 5.29 Gender distribution of farmers

The survey results indicate that 30,35% (17 out of 56) of farmers are female, while 69,65% (39 out of 56) are male.

5.1.3.2. Age of farmers

Literature suggests that age plays a significant role in farmers' engagement with agritourism activities. Barbieri (2010) claims that farmers under 50 years of age are more interested in diversification and innovation through agritourism operations. Older farmers need to be encouraged by their families to engage in new operations. The survey of Tew and Barbieri (2012) found out that the age group 40-59 is more active in agritourism operations.

According to Phelan and Sharpley (2012), age-related differences in risk tolerance and innovation influence agritourism adoption. Compared to older farmers, younger farmers are more risk-tolerant and market-oriented. It is also argued that older farmers are often less inclined to invest in hospitality unless government provides significant support (Kizos and Iosifides, 2007).

Fleischer and Tchetchik (2005) claim that age plays a significant role in innovation acceptance. Younger farmers, compared to older ones, are more likely to use tourism models.

Based on the above insights, the age of the farmers participating in the survey are asked and the outcome is displayed as follows.

Table 5.47 The age distribution of farmers

Distribution of Age of the Farmers Participating in the Survey		
Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
-30	0	0
31-50	10	17,86
51-60	19	33,93
61+	27	48,21
Total	56	100

For better visualization bar chart of farmers' age distribution is displayed below.

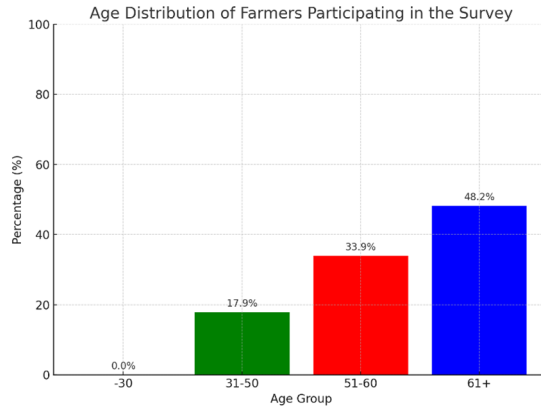


Figure 5.30 The age distribution of farmers who participated in the survey

5.1.3.3. Locations where farmers live

Researchers (Hilchey, 1993; Che, 2007; Che et al., 2005; Veeck et al., 2006; Bernardo et al., 2004), determined easy public access to the farm and proximity of the farm to big cities as positive factors in agritourism operations. Access to a motorable road is also indicated by the farmers interviewed for this thesis, living in Düzyurt village of Trabzon province. They stated that they need the completion of their motorable road, which still lacks a few kilometers. And without access to a motorable road, they do not believe that, although they are willing to implement agritourism activities to increase their household income, consumers will not come. The same subject is brought forward by farmers of Hatay region who are deeply affected by the earthquake of February 6, 2023. They all claim that the motorable roads of the region, especially in the remote towns and villages, are still in a miserable state, causing transport of their products to take longer than the times prior to the earthquake. One of the farmers even said “The nearest location of the past is the farthest since the earthquake.”

Therefore, it can be claimed that farms which are closer to urban areas, equipped with better infrastructure, are more likely to engage in agritourism activities.

Although the distance to the province center of each farm is not determined for this thesis, their distribution as per provinces is provided below.

Table 5.48 Farmers' distribution as per province they are located.

Distribution of Farmers as per Province where they are located		
Province	Frequency	Percentage
Izmir	1	1,78
Trabzon	3	5,35
Kocaeli	1	1,78
Hatay	51	91,09
Total	56	100

A bar chart is displayed below for better visualization of the distribution of farmers as per provinces where they are located.

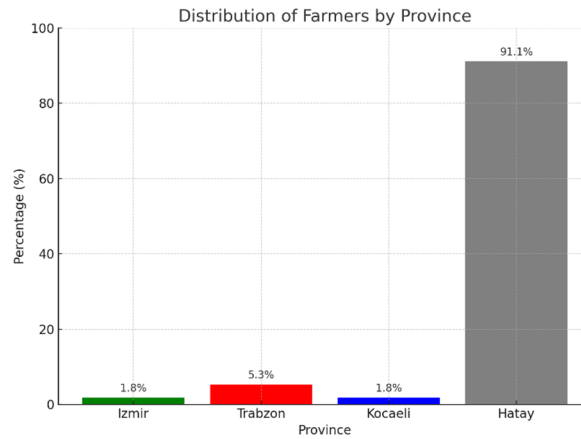


Figure 5.31 The distribution of province where farmers who participated in the survey are located.

5.1.3.4. Education level of farmers

Yeboah et al. (2017) indicate that farmers' college-level education has a considerable impact on implementing agritourism activities.

Bannor et al. (2022) classify the education level of farmers under the socio-demographic variables affecting farmers' decision to participate in agritourism activities.

Observing that educational level of farmers plays a significant role in implementing agritourism operations, education level of farmers is asked and recorded, yielding below outcomes.

Table 5.49 The distribution of farmers' education level

Education Level Distribution of Respondents		
Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage
High school and inferior	41	73,22
Associate's Degree	2	3,57
Bachelor's Degree	12	21,43
Graduate Degree	1	1,78
PhD	0	0
Total	56	100

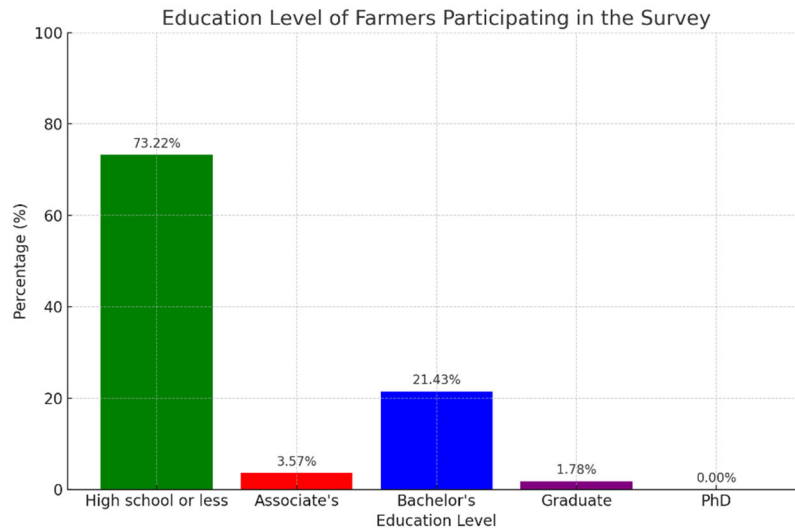


Figure 5.32 The distribution of farmers' education level

As presented in Table 5.49, the majority of farmers are graduated from High School or have an inferior degree. While 2 farmers have associate's degree, 12 farmers have Bachelor's degree and only one farmer had a graduate degree.

5.1.3.5. Civil Status of farmers

Literature indicates that the civil status of farmers significantly influences their decision to engage in agritourism. Studies suggest that married farmers are more likely to participate in agritourism due to the availability of family labor, a shared decision-making process, and a greater risk-sharing capacity. However, single farmers are more open to innovation, although they lack social support or resources.

Agustin and Cucio (2023) claim that married farmers, having children are more inclined to pursue agritourism to support household income. The same researchers indicate that married farmers are more likely to involve family members in agritourism activities.

Dinh et al.(2022) state that being married positively influenced collaboration in agritourism ventures.

Taking into account the findings in the literature, farmers are asked about their civil status and the following outcomes are obtained.

Table 5.50 that follows is indicating that only 7 farmers are single while 49 are married. Here it has to be emphasized that widows farmers are also considered as “single”, because this fact means that they have no spouse to share the responsibility of a farm with.

Table 5.50 Civil status of farmers participating in the survey. This table includes the “widows” under the “Single” status.

Distribution of Civil Status of farmers who participated in the survey		
Civil Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	7	12,50
Married	49	87,50
Total	56	100,00

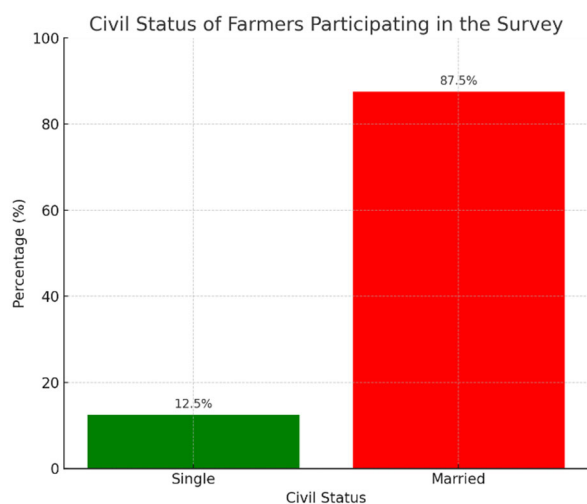


Figure 5.33 Civil status of farmers. This bar chart includes the “widows” under the “Single” status.

5.1.3.6. Number of Children of farmers

Like in civil status number of children in a farmer's household influences their motivation and capacity to engage in agritourism operations. Studies show that farmer families with multiple children participate more actively in agritourism operations. This is mostly due to the availability of labor within the family, the desire of the farmer to diversify his/her income needed to support the children who depend on him/her. Their engagement in agritourism is also a succession plan because agritourism becomes a way to involve the next generations in farm-based entrepreneurship.

Agustin and Cucio (2023) state that farmers who have multiple children are more likely to display positive attitudes toward agritourism for income diversification and to provide long-term stability.

Therefore, farmers' number of children is asked, and the outcomes are listed in the table below.

Here we see on Table 5.51 that ten farmers have no child, while five farmers have one child only. Eight farmers have eight children while 17 farmers have seventeen children and sixteen of them have more than three children.

Table 5.51: Number of Children of Farmers Participating in the Survey

Distribution of Farmers' Number of Children		
Number of Children	Frequency	Percentage
No child	10	17,86
1 child	5	8,93
2 children	8	14,28
3 children	17	30,36
+3 children	16	28,57
Total	56	100

Bar chart displaying the number of children of farmers is provided as follows:

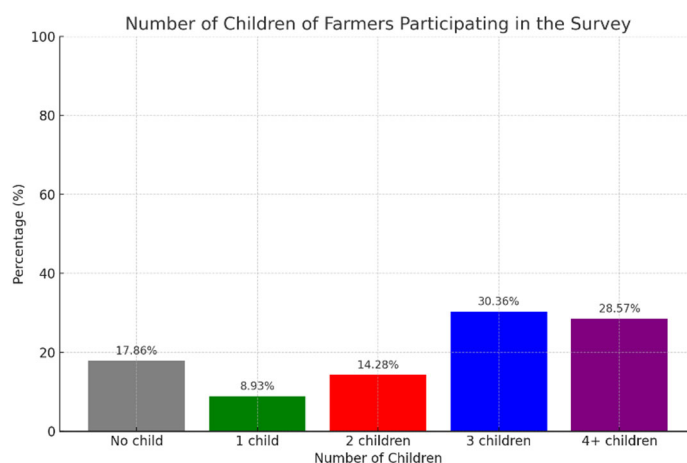


Figure 5.34 Number of Children of Farmers Participating in the Survey

5.1.4. Preferences and Perceptions Regarding Agritourism: Farmers' Perspectives

Without any doubt, local residents are the primary actors in a region's development process. Similarly, local resources must be taken into consideration for the development and its sustainability ((van der Ploeg, (2000a, van der Ploeg, (2000b)). Farmers are the most important element of rural region resources. Therefore, their point of view, expectations, and most importantly, the conditions they live in, must be studied meticulously to achieve rural development requirements. Any solution proposed without acknowledging the existing local conditions, no matter how rational they are, cannot be a remedy for rural impoverishment, unless they are based on the locally available resources. For, the essence of rural development is not only implementing development processes, but providing their sustainability, particularly in the environmental aspect. This is where small or medium-sized farms get into the scene, for they are deemed to be well-established to provide environmental sustainability in rural regions (Lane,1994).

5.1.4.1. Farmers' Preference regarding the duration of consumers' farm visits

According to Mahaliyanaarachchi (2015) farmers note that consumers who stay overnight tend to purchase more farm products; however managing overnight consumers requests more costs and causes complexity. Torquati et al. (2017) indicate that many farmers show interest in daily visiting consumers rather than stay-in consumers, because daily visiting consumers are much more focused on farm experiences than accommodation facilities. Amoako (2020) adds that to preserve their household privacy especially older farmers, and the ones having a family living on the farm, prefer daily visits compared to stay-ins. Also, farmers who have limited living space and resources prefer daily visits in terms of agritourism activities (Bhatta, 2021). Raley (2023) noted also that farmers in Kansas prefer short-term, daily visits because this way long-term hosting duties' stress is avoided.

To determine the preferences of farmers who participated in the survey, they are asked during the interview, questions number 23 and 24 which are “Do you prefer to engage in agritourism activities that will bring additional income to your family through daily visits?” and “ Would you consider starting with daily visits and then switching to an overnight stay system as well?” respectively.

Table 5. 52 Frequency and percentage of farmers' preference on daily visits of consumers to their farm.

Question 23 - “Do you prefer to engage in agritourism activities that will bring additional income to your family through daily visits?”		
Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	51	91,1
No	5	8,9
I do not know/ I am not sure	0	0,00
Total	56	100,00

Table 5. 53 Frequency and percentage of farmers’ preference on overnight staying of consumers on their farm.

Question 24 - “Would you consider starting with daily visits and then switching to an overnight stay system as well?”		
Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	20	35,7
No	32	57,1
I do not know/ I am not sure	4	7,1
Total	56	99,9*

*: percentages may not totally be 100% due to rounded results.

For better visualization, the related bar charts of responses provided for questions 23 and 24 are displayed as follows consecutively.

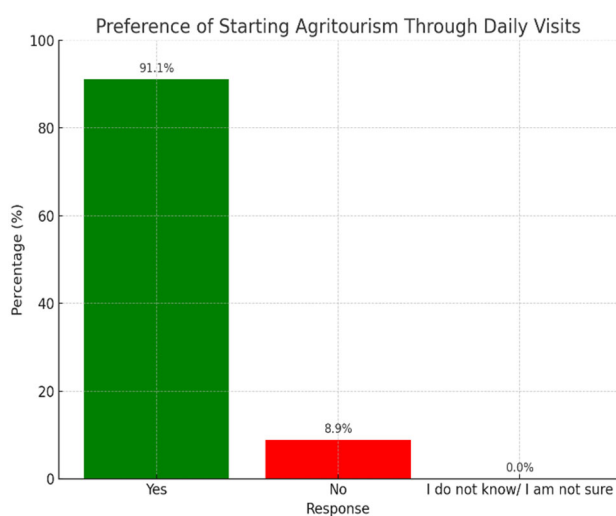


Figure 5.35 Bar chart showing the preference of farmers regarding starting agritourism activities on their farm through daily visits.

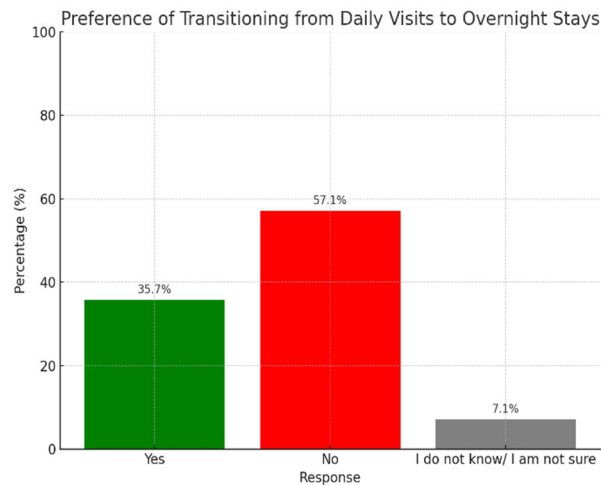


Figure 5.36 Bar chart showing the preference of farmers regarding transitioning from daily visits to overnight stays during agritourism activities on their farm through daily visits.

To have a better understanding about the preferences of farmers regarding daily visits and overnight staying of consumers, the weight of their replies is computed. To perform this computation replies are coded as follows:

2 for Yes

1 for I do not know / I am not sure

0 for No.

The following formula is used to compute the weight of farmers' preferences on the questions they are asked.

$$\text{Weight Score: } \Sigma (\text{Frequency} \times \text{Weight}) / \text{Total Responses}$$

This computation provides a numerical value that reflects the overall tendency of respondents, the weight of their responses, on a scale from 0 to 2:

When the computation is closer to 2, this result shows a strong positive inclination, meaning that the responding group's opinion/preference is affirmative about the asked question.

When the computation is around 1, this means the responding group is neutral or unsure about the asked question.

When the computation yields a figure closer to 0, this outcome indicates that the responding group’s opinion/preference is predominantly negative or resistant to the asked question.

Computed weights of responses provided for each question are as follows:

Table 5.54 Weight computation of the responses provided for question 23, which asked farmers to determine their preference regarding engaging in agritourism activities through daily visits.

Weight of Replies Provided by Respondents to the Question 23 asked as “Do you prefer to engage in agritourism activities that will bring additional income to your family through daily visits?”				
Responses	Frequency	Overall Score	Weight	Weighted Score
Yes	51	102	2	1,82
I do not know / I am not sure	0	0	1	
No	5	0	0	
Total	56	102		

The computation “1,82”, which is closer to “2”, shows a strong positive inclination of farmers towards the idea of starting agritourism operations on their farm through daily visits.

Then the weight of responses provided for Question 24 is computed. The computation provided below outcome.

Table 5.55 Weight computation of the responses provided for question 24 asked to farmers to determine their preference regarding switching to an overnight staying system later.

Weight of Responses Provided by Respondents to Question 24 asked as “Would you consider starting with daily visits and then switching to an overnight stay system as well?”				
Responses	Frequency	Overall Score	Weight	Weighted Score
Yes	20	40	2	0,79
I do not know / I am not sure	4	4	1	
No	32	0	0	
Total	56	44		

The computation “0,79” which is much closer to neutral or negative value, shows that farmers are less enthusiastic or more hesitant about extending agritourism operations into overnight stays.

5.1.4.2. Farmers’ Preferences for Outsourcing Services Versus Directly Serving Agritourism Visitors

Raschi and Melo Figueiredo (2013) noted that farmers prefer to outsource consumer services because they want to continue to be producers, but they don’t want to become hosts. Schilling et al. (2012) documented that especially during high seasons, outsourcing consumer services is a key success strategy in agritourism. Phillip et al. (2010) defined “passive agritourism” as a category where farmers only provide space, while services are handled externally or by visitors themselves. Kline et al. (2016) determined that sustainable farms often outsource visitor operations like meals, workshops, or lodging, reducing the direct time investment by farmers. Also, Mahaliyanaarchchi (2015) claimed that labor constraints push farmers to partner with local youth and volunteers for service delivery rather than directly serving tourists.

To observe the preference of farmers about outsourcing the accommodation services to consumers visiting their farm or staying there overnight, question 22, which is “Would you consider getting help from someone from your family or nearby village to serve food to your visitors?” is asked to farmers.

The outcomes of farmers’ replies are distributed as below:

Table 5.56 The outcomes of replies provided for the question that was asked to observe the preference of farmers regarding outsourcing the accommodation services to consumers visiting their farm.

Question 22 - “Would you consider getting help from someone from your family or the nearby village to serve food to your visitors?”		
Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	36	64,28
No	17	30,36
I do not know/ I am not sure	3	5,36
Total	56	100,00

For better visualization, the related bar chart of responses provided for question 22 is displayed as follows.

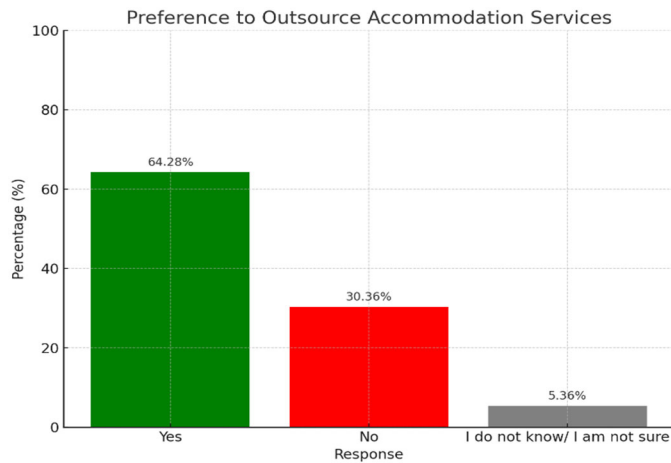


Figure 5.37 The bar chart of responses provided for the question that was asked to observe the preference of farmers regarding outsourcing the accommodation services to consumers visiting their farm.

Then, the weighted score of farmers’ responses is computed to see their tendency to outsource the accommodation services.

Table 5.57 Weight of responses showing the tendency of farmers to outsource the accommodation services to be provided to consumers.

Weight of Responses Provided by Respondents to the Question 22 - “Would you consider getting help from someone from your family or the nearby village to serve food to your visitors?”				
Responses	Frequency	Overall Score	Weight	Weighted Score
Yes	36	72	2	1,34
I do not know / I am not sure	3	3	1	
No	17	0	0	
Total	56	75		

The computation 1,34, which is closer to “1”, suggests that while respondents are not strongly opposed to outsourcing accommodation services, their overall inclination is moderate and closer to neutrality.

5.1.4.3. Farmers’ Preferences Regarding Unpaid Labor Support from Agritourism Visitors

Study of Ingrassia et al. (2023) show that many farmers are open to involving tourists in tasks like planting, harvesting, or cooking with farm products. Tourists not only enjoy these hands-on activities but also develop stronger bonds with the rural lifestyle.

Liang et al. (2021) argue that engaging tourists in authentic farm activities such as feeding animals or picking fruits creates a memorable, interactive experience, which positively affects tourists' likelihood to revisit.

Bhatta and Ohe (2019) identified that dairy farms and labor-intensive operations are more cautious about tourist involvement due to hygiene, safety, and time constraints. Willingness increases when farmers can design structured activities.

According to Ciolac et al. (2020), younger farmers and those with tourism training are more likely to see visitors as collaborators rather than passive observers. These farmers actively design tasks that tourists can join in.

Based on above literature insights, question 25 is asked to farmers to gauge their preference regarding free of charge labor which can be provided by visitors.

The outcomes of the responses are as follows:

Table 5.58 Preference of farmers regarding the free of charge labor provided by consumers who visit their farm or stay there overnight.

Question 25 - “Would you like the visitors to help you in fulfilling farm works free of charge?”		
Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	27	48,2
No	21	37,5
I do not know/ I am not sure	8	14,3
Total	56	100,00

The related bar chart of responses provided for question 25 is displayed below for better visualization.

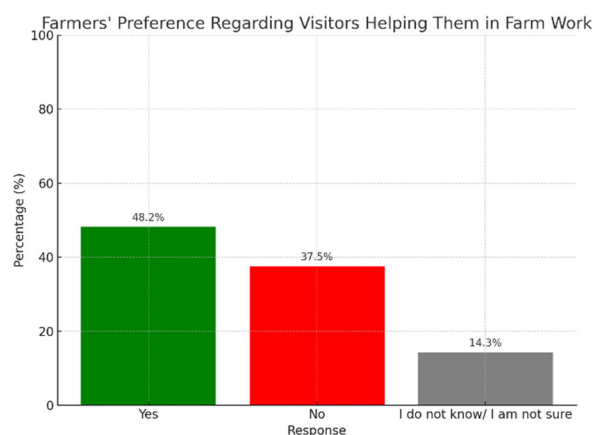


Figure 5.38 Distribution bar chart of question 25.

Then, the weighted score of farmers’ responses is computed to gauge their tendency to receive free-of-charge help on farm work from consumers who came to visit or stay in their farm.

Table 5.59 Weighted score of responses provided for question 25 asked regarding their preference in obtaining unpaid labor from consumers who came to their farm.

Weight of Responses Provided by Respondents to Question 25 - “Would you like the visitors to help you in fulfilling farm works free of charge?”				
Responses	Frequency	Overall Score	Weight	Weighted Score
Yes	27	54	2	1,11
I do not know / I am not sure	8	8	1	
No	21	0	0	
Total	56	62		

The final weighted score of 1.11, indicates that the group is slightly leaning positive about receiving unpaid labor provided by visiting consumers to carry out farm work, but still closer to neutral.

5.2. TESTING THE HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses that are constructed for this thesis are tested as explained below. Prior the testing of hypotheses, first the reliability and then the normality of the survey are tested.

5.2.1. Reliability of the consumers’ survey

Reliability testing is a fundamental aspect of research methodology that ensures a measurement instrument's consistency, dependability, and reproducibility. In social sciences, psychology, education, and industrial applications, reliability tests help researchers confirm that their tools (e.g.,

surveys, assessments, and instruments) produce stable and repeatable results over time.

Reliability refers to the degree to which a measurement instrument produces consistent results over repeated trials (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). If a test is reliable, different researchers using the same methods and instruments should obtain similar results.

Reliability's characteristics are;

Consistency: The instrument should yield similar results under similar conditions.

Stability: Results should remain stable over time.

Replicability: Other researchers should be able to use the instrument and obtain similar results.

Reliability tests are run in various fields such as education, psychology, medicine, business, marketing and social sciences.

While reliability focuses on consistency, it does not necessarily indicate validity (i.e., whether the instrument measures what it is intended to measure).

To test the hypotheses of this thesis, first, the reliability analysis of the survey is conducted via two different tests, Cronbach's Alpha and Guttman's Lambda-2, to ensure the result.

5.2.1.1. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test

The first test used to determine this thesis survey's reliability is Cronbach's Alpha.

Cronbach's alpha is a reliability coefficient that measures the internal consistency of a scale. Named after the American psychologist Lee J. Cronbach, this coefficient evaluates how well a group of items measures a single latent construct. By analyzing internal consistency, it indicates whether the survey items are reliably and consistently measuring the intended concept.

Mathematically, Cronbach's Alpha is computed by the following equation;

$$\alpha = (\kappa / \kappa - 1) (1 - \sum \sigma^2_i / \sigma^2_T)$$

Where ;

α is the Cronbach's alpha coefficient to be computed

k is the total number of items

$\Sigma\sigma^2_i$ is the Sum of variance of all items

σ^2_t is the variance for the total score

For the thesis' customer survey, these elements of the equation are as follows:

k 20

$\Sigma\sigma^2_i$ 28,44

σ^2_t 206,51

Table 5.60 Item Variance Table of the Survey's Computation

Statement	Variance
S11	1.9735
S12	1.755
S13	2.0689
S15	2.1335
S17	1.8113
S19	1.0047
S20	1.0591
S21	1.1925
S22	1.1222
S23	1.0507
S24	0.9402
S25	1.1826
S26	1.3096
S27	1.406
S28	0.9949
S29	1.1998
S30	0.7934
S31	1.9142
S32	1.5247
S33	2.0036

This table presents the variances of individual items (S11 to S33) used in the reliability analysis of the survey instrument.

The observed item variances range from 0.7934 (S30) to 2.1335 (S15). While some variation across items is expected, none of the values are exceptionally high or low to suggest poor alignment with the overall construct.

The computed Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for this set of items was 0.9077, rounded to 0.91, which falls within the range of excellent internal consistency. This suggests that the items included in the scale are sufficiently correlated and collectively measure the intended underlying construct.

Table 5.61 Item-by-Item Reliability Analysis of the Survey's Computation

Statements	Variance	Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
S11	1.9735	0.1308	0.9181
S12	1.755	0.6609	0.9017
S13	2.0689	0.6946	0.9008
S15	2.1335	0.6744	0.9016
S17	1.8113	0.631	0.9027
S19	1.0047	0.6416	0.9024
S20	1.0591	0.6009	0.9033
S21	1.1925	0.7656	0.899
S22	1.1222	0.7957	0.8983
S23	1.0507	0.7233	0.9003
S24	0.9402	0.7097	0.9009
S25	1.1826	0.6916	0.9009
S26	1.3096	0.729	0.8998
S27	1.406	0.6196	0.9028
S28	0.9949	0.6748	0.9016
S29	1.1998	0.7163	0.9003
S30	0.7934	0.6979	0.9015
S31	1.9142	0.5988	0.9039
S32	1.5247	0.2632	0.9126
S33	2.0036	0.3913	0.9107

This table presents a detailed view of each item's relationship to the scale. The item-total correlation values show how well each item correlates with the sum of the other items. Most items show moderate to strong correlations (above 0.60), suggesting they effectively contribute to the overall scale.

However, items S11 (0.1308) and S32 (0.2632) demonstrate weak correlations and could be reviewed conceptually.

The “Cronbach’s Alpha if item deleted” values indicate the impact of each item’s removal on the overall reliability. While the removal of S11 or S32 would result in a slightly higher alpha (0.9181 and 0.9126, respectively), the improvement is minimal. Thus, these items were retained based on both statistical and theoretical reasoning.

Therefore, based on both statistical and theoretical considerations, no item was removed, and the full scale was retained for subsequent analysis.

This equation computed the Cronbach’s alpha of this thesis consumers’ survey as 0,91 (rounded to two decimal places from 0.9077)

According to Cronbach’s alpha’s level of reliability table which is as follows, the survey’s reliability is “Excellent”.

Table 5. 62– Internal Consistency ranges of Cronbach’s Alpha

Cronbach’s alpha	Internal Consistency
$\alpha \geq 0,9$	Excellent Reliability
$0,9 > \alpha \geq 0,8$	Good Reliability
$0,8 > \alpha \geq 0,7$	Acceptable Reliability
$0,7 > \alpha \geq 0,6$	Questionable Reliability
$0,6 > \alpha \geq 0,5$	Poor Reliability
$0,5 > \alpha$	Unacceptable Reliability

According to Cronbach’s alpha’s level of reliability table which is as follows, the survey’s reliability is “Excellent”.

5.2.1.2. Guttman’s Lambda-2 (λ_2) Test

Aiming to assure the reliability of the consumers’ survey, a second reliability test is carried out.

The second test used to determine this thesis survey's reliability is Guttman’s Lambda-2 (λ_2) .

While the widely used reliability measure is Cronbach's Alpha, assuming equal variances and item covariances, it may not always hold. Guttman's Lambda-2 (λ_2) is a more flexible alternative, accounting for item redundancy and potentially providing a more accurate estimate of internal consistency. Guttman's Lambda-2 (λ_2) is a measure of internal consistency reliability that improves upon Cronbach's Alpha by considering inter-item covariances more effectively. The equation for Lambda-2 (λ_2) is:

$$\lambda_2 = 1 - ((\sigma^2_{T-i} + \sigma^2_i) / \sigma^2_T)$$

Where ;

σ^2_T is the variance of total test scores;

σ^2_{T-i} is the variance of the total score when item i is removed

σ^2_i is the variance of item i

For the thesis' customer survey, these elements of the equation are as follows:

σ^2_T is 28.4405

σ^2_{T-i} is 178.0703

This equation computed the Guttman's Lambda-2 (λ_2) of this thesis consumers' survey as **0,76** (rounded to two decimal places from 0.7579).

Table 5.63 Internal Consistency ranges of Gutmann's Lambda-2 (λ_2)

Guttman's Lambda-2 (λ_2)	Internal Consistency
$\lambda_2 \geq 0,9$	Excellent
$0,9 > \lambda_2 \geq 0,8$	Good
$0,8 > \lambda_2 \geq 0,7$	Acceptable
$0,7 > \lambda_2$	Need improvement

The reliability analysis carried out using Guttman's Lambda-2 (λ_2) confirms that the questionnaire items' reliability is acceptable. Since Lambda-2 (λ_2) provides a more flexible and accurate measure than Cronbach's Alpha in

some cases, it is recommended for Likert-scale research when redundancy among items is a concern.

Taking into account the results of the above provided reliability tests, the survey conducted to determine the preference of the consumers is deemed to be reliable.

5.2.2. Normality of the consumers' survey

After proving the reliability of the survey by running Cronbach's Alpha and rechecking by Guttman's Lambda-2 (λ^2), the normality analyses are carried out. Again to ensure the results, two different tests are ran ; Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk test.

5.2.2.1. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test was used to assess the normality of the survey's dataset. For a comprehensive evaluation, the test was applied individually to each survey item. The K-S test compares the cumulative distribution function (CDF) of a specified theoretical distribution (which is the normal distribution in this case) with the empirical distribution function (EDF) derived from the sample data.

The -S test is considered to be particularly useful for large datasets and is widely used in testing distributional assumptions in social science research.

The null and alternative hypotheses to test the normality are structured as follows:

H_0 (Null Hypothesis): The sample comes from a normally distributed population.

H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): The sample does not come from a normally distributed population.

The formula used for the K-S test is as follows:

$$D = \sup_x |F_n(x) - F(x)|$$

Where:

D is the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test statistic (it is the maximum absolute difference between the EDF and CDF)

\sup_x is the supremum (maximum) over all values of x

$F_n(x)$ is the empirical distribution function of the sample

$F(x)$ is the cumulative distribution function of the reference distribution (which is the normal distribution)

Here the empirical distribution function $F_n(x)$ is computed using the below formula:

$$F_n(x) = (1/n) * \sum_{i=1}^n I(X_i \leq x)$$

Where:

n is the sample size

I is the indicator function (which is equal to 1 if the condition is true, and is equal to 0 otherwise)

X_i is the observed data points

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied to the dataset of the survey and it yielded a test statistic of $D=0,909$ along with an associated p-value being < 0.05 . The large value of the test statistics, which is 0,909 indicates that there is a substantial deviation between the EDF of the sample and the theoretical CDF of a normal distribution. When it comes to p-value it remained significantly below the 0,05 threshold, supporting rejection of the null hypothesis of normality.

Below, is the table for each sample is provided to demonstrate the KS statistic and p-value.

Table 5.64 Table for KS statistic and p-values

	KS Statistic	p-value
S11	0,17962547	$3,48 \times 10^{-17}$
S12	0,207939748	$6,25 \times 10^{-23}$
S13	0,194217043	$4,89 \times 10^{-20}$
S15	0,202093094	$1,13 \times 10^{-21}$
S17	0,20433823	$3,76 \times 10^{-22}$
S19	0,285352337	$3,72 \times 10^{-43}$
S20	0,239030018	$3,00 \times 10^{-30}$
S21	0,302131119	$1,94 \times 10^{-48}$
S22	0,277912314	$6,42 \times 10^{-41}$
S23	0,271562084	$4,65 \times 10^{-39}$
S24	0,318745574	$5,44 \times 10^{-54}$
S25	0,30003991	$9,24 \times 10^{-48}$
S26	0,244463875	$1,22 \times 10^{-31}$
S27	0,233270626	$8,20 \times 10^{-29}$
S28	0,290954218	$6,98 \times 10^{-45}$
S29	0,294570721	$5,12 \times 10^{-46}$
S30	0,356409072	$8,33 \times 10^{-68}$
S31	0,16400939	$2,20 \times 10^{-14}$
S32	0,216038653	$9,82 \times 10^{-25}$
S33	0,145506363	$2,10 \times 10^{-11}$

Consequently, the null hypothesis structured for normality is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, the dataset has proved to be not normally distributed. This result leads to the application of non-parametric tests in testing the hypotheses.

5.2.2.2. Shapiro-Wilk Test

To double check the correctness of the normality results and to ensure that further hypotheses analyses would be run according to these non-normal distributions, a second test, the Shapiro-Wilk, is ran.

Shapiro-Wilk is computed using the below formula ;

$$W = ((\sum_{i=1}^n \alpha_i x_{(i)})^2) / \sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \bar{x})^2$$

For Shapiro-Wilk (S-W) Test:

W : 0.204

P-Value: 0.0

Consequently, once again the S-W statistics and the p-value showed that the dataset is not normally distributed. Both results lead to the application of non-parametric tests in testing the hypotheses.

5.2.3. Testing the Hypotheses Concerning Consumers

Since the data obtained through the survey is found to be not normally distributed as determined by Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and verified by Shapiro-Wilk test, the hypotheses in this thesis will be tested using non-parametric statistical methods.

Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 2, and Hypothesis 4 are analyzed using the Mann-Whitney U Test, as they involve comparisons between two independent groups (e.g. males and females respondents).

Hypothesis 3, and Hypothesis 6 are analyzed using the One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, because the goal is to assess respondents' evaluations of preferences and perceptions.

Hypothesis 5, Hypothesis 7, and Hypothesis 8, are tested using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, because for these hypotheses two related behaviors, statements and perceptions are tested.

5.2.3.1. Testing Hypothesis 1 on Gender-Based Differences in Accommodation Style Preferences

To test Hypothesis 1, which is “Female consumers, compared to male consumers, are less likely to look for modern life conditions and modern holiday facilities, preferring a real, authentic rural life experience without modern equipment”, the respondents were asked to rate their agreement with survey statement 17 “When spending my holidays on an active farm, I prefer authentic farm conditions to the comforts of a modern hotel room”.

The hypotheses were formulated as follows:

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): Female customers, compared to male customers, are less likely to look for modern life conditions and modern holiday facilities, preferring a real, authentic rural life experience without modern equipment.

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): Female customers, compared to male customers, are not less likely to look for modern life conditions and modern holiday facilities, and not preferring a real, authentic rural life experience without modern equipment.

Both the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests confirmed that the survey data were not normally distributed, so the Mann-Whitney U test, a non-parametric substitute for the independent samples t-test, was used. To represent the directed hypothesis (female < male in preference for modernity), a one-tailed test was selected.

The Mann-Whitney U test (described in Section 4.3.5) was used to analyze the difference in preferences between male and female respondents.

For Hypothesis 1 of this thesis, the Mann-Whitney U Test computed values as follows:

Table 5.65 Results of the computation that is run to test Statement 17 for Hypothesis 1.

Computation results for Hypothesis 1, carried out by Mann-Whitney U Test on statement 17	
U Statistic	37.724,00
p-value	0,0047 (one-tailed)
z-score	-2,51
Effect size r	-0,10

Given the p-value $0.0047 < 0.05$, the null hypothesis (H_0) “Female customers, compared to male customers, are not less likely to look for modern life conditions and modern holiday facilities, and not preferring a real, authentic rural life experience without modern equipment”, is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) “Female customers, compared to male customers, are less likely to look for modern life conditions and modern holiday facilities, preferring a real, authentic rural life experience without modern equipment” is accepted. This result suggests that female consumers are significantly less likely than male consumers to seek modern life conditions, instead demonstrating a stronger preference for authentic rural experiences while on holiday.

The Median Likert Score of the statement proposed for Hypothesis 1 is displayed as follows for a better visualization:

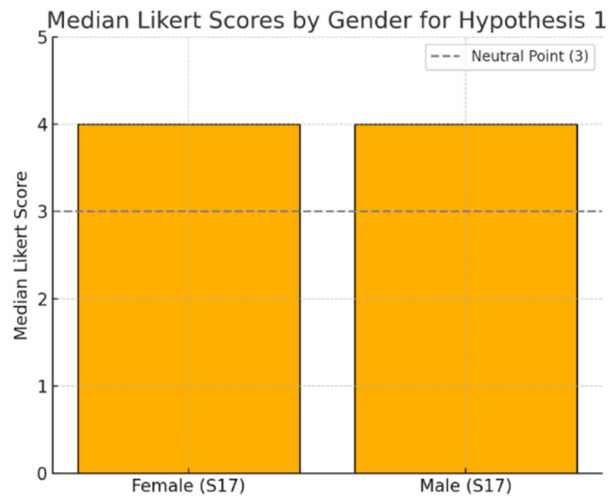


Figure 5.39 The Median Likert Score of Statement 17 proposed to test Hypothesis 1.

The Effect Size of the statement proposed for Hypothesis 1 is displayed below to provide a better visualization :

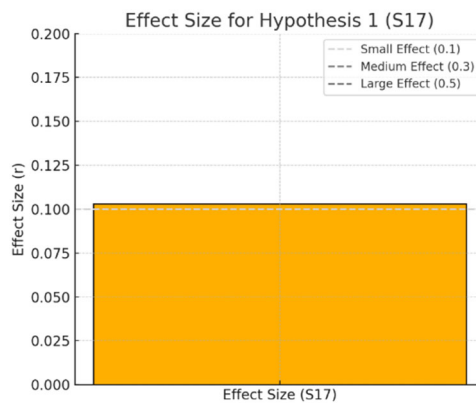


Figure 5.40 The Effect Size of Statement 17 proposed to test Hypothesis 1.

5.2.3.2. Testing Hypothesis 2 on Gender-Based Differences in Preferences for Farm Visit Duration

To test Hypothesis 2, which is “Female consumers, compared to male consumers, prefer daily visits to a farm, rather than spending their holidays there”, the respondents were asked to rate their agreement with survey statements 11 and 12 which are “I’d prefer to have a daily visit to an active farm, rather than spending my holidays in there” and “I can spend some days of my holidays on an active farm” respectively. These statements were designed to capture respondents’ preferences regarding the duration and style of engagement with agritourism experiences.

The hypotheses were formulated as follows:

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): Female customers, compared to male customers, prefer daily visits to a farm, rather than spending their holidays there.

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): Female customers, compared to male customers, do not prefer daily visits to a farm, rather than spending their holidays there.

Given that the survey data were not normally distributed (as this fact is indicated by Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and confirmed by Shapiro-Wilk test), the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test (described in Section 4.3.5) is used to test this hypothesis for both statements 11 and 12. The reason for using this test is that the Mann-Whitney U test is considered ideal for comparing two independent groups (i.e., male respondents vs. female respondents).

This hypothesis implies a directional prediction, specifically that female consumers are more likely to prefer daily visits compared to male customers. Therefore, a one-tailed test is considered to be more suitable because it directly tests if female preferences are greater than male preferences for daily visits.

For Hypothesis 2 of this thesis, the Mann-Whitney U Test computed values for Statement 11 as follows:

Table 5.66 Results of the computation run to test Statement 11 for Hypothesis 2.

Computation results for Hypothesis 2, carried out by Mann-Whitney U test on Statement 11	
U Statistic	42.948,5
p-value	0,5131 (one-tailed)
z-score	0,032
Effect size r	0,0013

and for Statement 12 values are as follows ;

Table 5. 67 Results of the computation run to test Statement 12 for Hypothesis 2

Computation results for Hypothesis 2, carried out by Mann-Whitney U test on Statement 12	
U Statistic	44.006,0
p-value	0,7142 (one-tailed)
z-score	0,545
Effect size r	0,0224

Based on the above results, p-values for Statement 11 and Statement 12 are higher than the conventional threshold of 0,05 for both statements. Thus, we cannot reject the null hypothesis H_0 . Therefore, the null hypothesis H_0 “Female customers, compared to male customers, prefer daily visits to a farm, rather than spending their holidays there” is accepted and the alternative hypothesis, H_1 which is “Female consumers prefer daily visits to a farm, rather than spending my holidays in there” is rejected. The empirical evidence did not reveal a significant gender-based difference in the preference for daily visits versus longer stays on a farm.

The Median Likert Scores of the statements proposed for Hypothesis 2 are displayed below, to allow a better visualization:

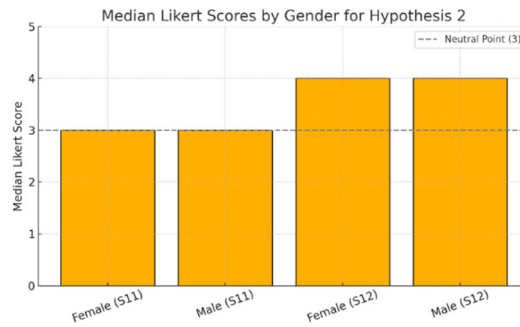


Figure 5.41 Median Likert Score of statements proposed to respondents to test Hypothesis 2.

The effect size of the statements proposed for Hypothesis 2 is also displayed below for better visualization:

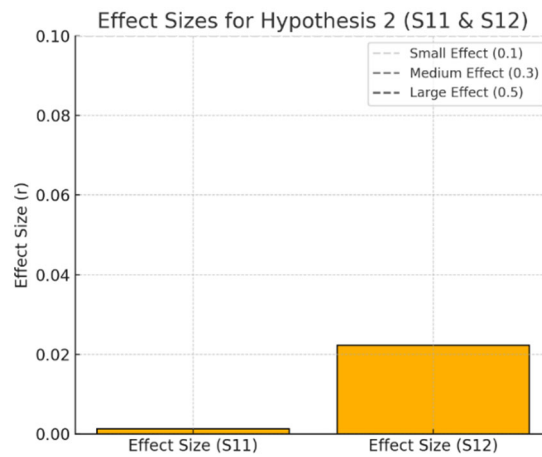


Figure 5.42 Effect Size of statements proposed to respondents for Hypothesis 2.

5.2.3.3. Testing Hypothesis 3 on Respondents' Preferences Regarding Travel Distance to Agritourism Farms

To test Hypothesis 3, which is “Consumers prefer near locations to spend their holidays on an agritourism farm”, the respondents were asked to rate their agreement with survey statement 32, which is “I’d prefer farms which are not farther than 300-400 km to spend my holidays”.

The hypotheses are constructed as follows:

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): Consumers prefer to visit near locations for agritourism activities.

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): Consumers do not prefer to visit near locations for agritourism activities.

Since the survey data are previously determined to be not normally distributed, the One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test (described in Section 4.3.7) is used for this analysis. This non-parametric test is appropriate for evaluating whether the median of the responses to Statement 32 differs significantly from a hypothesized median — in this case, the neutral midpoint of 3 on the Likert scale.

Before applying the One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test, the assumptions of ordinal level measurement, independence of observations, and symmetry of differences around the median were carefully assessed and confirmed.

The One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test for Hypothesis 3 yields the following results:

Table 5.68 Results of the computation run to test Statement 32 for Hypothesis 3.

Computation results for Hypothesis 3, carried out by One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test on Statement 32	
Test Statistic	85,804.0
p-value	1.33×10^{-35}
z-score	-0,471
Effect size r	-0,019

Since the computed p-value $1.33 \times 10^{-35} < 0.05$, the Alternative Hypothesis (H_1)“Consumers prefer to visit near locations for agritourism activities” is accepted, rejecting the Null Hypothesis (H_0) “ Consumers do not prefer to visit near locations for agritourism activities”. This result suggests that consumers demonstrate a statistically significant preference for nearer locations when considering agritourism holiday destinations.

Median Likert Score of the statement proposed for Hypothesis 3 is displayed below;

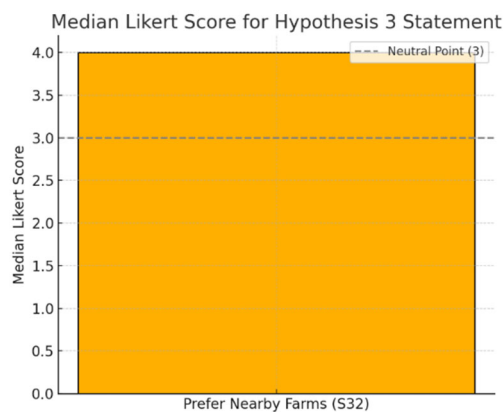


Figure 5.43 Median Likert Score of the statement proposed for Hypothesis 3

Effect size of the statement proposed for Hypothesis 3 is displayed below for a better visualization;

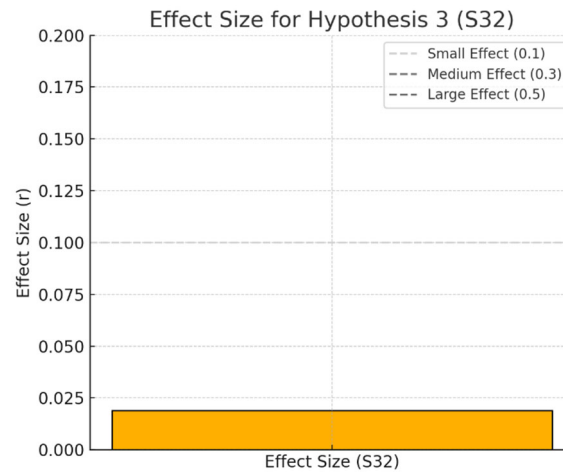


Figure 5.44 Effect size of the statement proposed for Hypothesis 3.

5.2.3.4. Testing Hypothesis 4 on Gender-Based Preferences Regarding Participation in Farm Work

To test Hypothesis 4, which is “Male consumers prefer, compared to female ones, to get involved in farm work when they spend their holidays on an active farm”, statement 13 “I would like to help farm works in a farm where I will spend some days of my holidays”, is proposed to the respondents so that they can rate their agreement with the survey statement.

The hypotheses were constructed as follows:

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): Male consumers prefer, compared to female ones, to get involved in farm work when they spend their holidays on an active farm.

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): Male consumers do not prefer, compared to female ones, to get involved in farm work when they spend their holidays on an active farm.

As indicated previously (section 5.3.2), data collected for this thesis were not normally distributed (tested by Kolmogorov–Smirnov and verified by Shapiro–Wilk tests). Therefore, the Mann–Whitney U test was selected to test this hypothesis. This non-parametric test is ideal for comparing the responses of two independent groups — in this case, male and female participants — on an ordinal scale. The test will determine if there is a statistically significant difference in the responses to Statement 13, indicating whether male consumers are indeed more inclined to help with farm work compared to female customers.

For Hypothesis 4, the Mann-Whitney U computed values as follows:

Table 5.69 Outcomes of the computation run to test Statement 13 for Hypothesis 4.

Computation results for Hypothesis 4, carried out by Mann-Whitney U test on Statement 13	
U Statistic	44.161,5
p-value	0,2614 (one-tailed)
z-score	0,621
Effect size r	0,026

Since the computed p-value 0,2614 is well above the conventional significance level of the threshold, which is 0.05, it indicates that the observed difference between male and female preferences is not statistically significant. Thus, we fail to reject the Null Hypothesis (H_0) “Male consumers do not prefer, compared to female ones, to get involved in farm work when they spend their holidays on an active farm”, meaning we do not have enough evidence to support the hypothesis that male consumers prefer farm work more than female customers. Accordingly, we cannot accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H_1) “Male consumers prefer, compared to female ones, to get involved in farm work when they spend their holidays on an active farm”.

The Median Likert Scores of the statement proposed for Hypothesis 4 are displayed here follows;

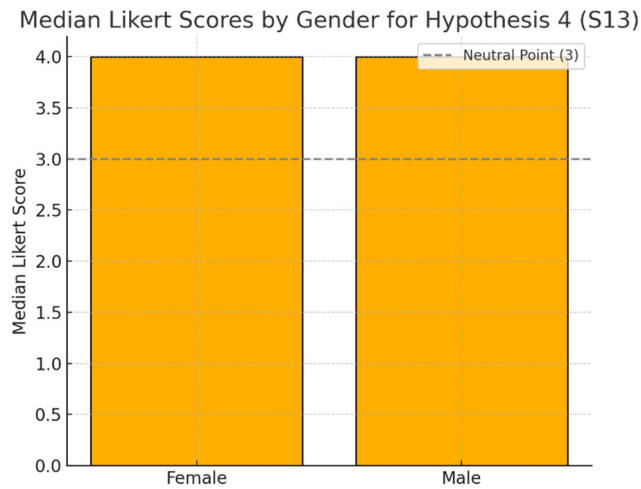


Figure 5.45 Median Likert scores by gender for hypothesis 4

Effect size of the statement proposed for Hypothesis 4 is displayed here below;

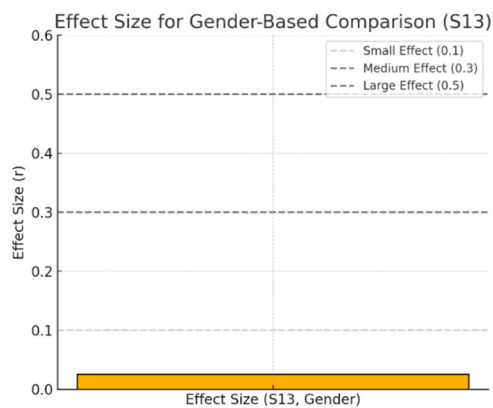


Figure 5.46 Effect size of the statement proposed to respondents to test Hypothesis 4.

5.2.3.5. Testing Hypothesis 5 on Respondents' Purchase Intentions Regarding Local Farm and Artisan Products

To test Hypothesis 5, which is “Consumers tend to purchase farm products and local handicrafts both during and after their visits, thereby supporting the rural economy”, statements 19 and 20 which are “I would like to purchase from

the farm, the natural products which I consumed during the time spent in there”, and “I can purchase some handicrafts from the nearby villages while I spend my holidays in a farm” respectively , are proposed to the respondents to measure their rate of agreement.

The hypotheses are constructed as follows:

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): Consumers tend to purchase farm products and local handicrafts both during and after their visits, thereby supporting the rural economy.

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): Consumers do not tend to purchase farm products and local handicrafts both during and after their visits, thereby supporting the rural economy.

Since the survey data were previously determined to be not normally distributed, the Paired-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was selected for this analysis. This non-parametric test is appropriate to compare two related variables measured on the same subjects, such as before-and-after measures or two different but linked survey items. It assesses whether the median difference between paired responses is significantly different from zero.

The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test yields the following results for Hypothesis 5 :

Table 5. 70 Results of the computation run to test Statement 19 for Hypothesis 5.

Computation results for Hypothesis 5, carried out by Paired-Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test on Statements 19 and 20	
Test Statistic	9.423,0
p-value	0,00051
z-score	-18,82
Effect size r	-0,773

It is important to note that the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was applied not to assess each statement individually, but to compare the responses to Statement 19 and Statement 20 as paired data. Each respondent provided an answer to both statements, and the analysis focused on the difference between these two responses per individual. This paired design allowed the test to evaluate whether there was a statistically significant shift in preference between purchasing directly from the farm and purchasing handicrafts from nearby villages.

Another important point that must be underlined is that in the case of paired Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Tests, such as applied in Hypotheses 5 in here, median Likert scores for each item are reported separately as descriptive statistics, providing insight into participants' general level of agreement with each statement individually. However, the effect size (r) is calculated based on the distribution of differences between paired responses, not the individual scores themselves. This is because the Wilcoxon test evaluates whether the median difference between two related observations (e.g., Statement 19 vs. Statement 20) is significantly different from zero. As such, the effect size represents the strength and consistency of that within-subject comparison, and is reported as a shared measure across the pair

Taking into consideration the p-value $0,00051 < 0.05$, the null hypothesis (H_0) “ Consumers do not tend to purchase farm products and local handicrafts both during and after their visits, thereby supporting the rural economy” is rejected , and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) “Consumers tend to purchase farm products and local handicrafts both during and after their visits, thereby supporting the rural economy” is accepted.

The Median Likert Scores of the statements proposed for Hypothesis 5 are displayed as follows;

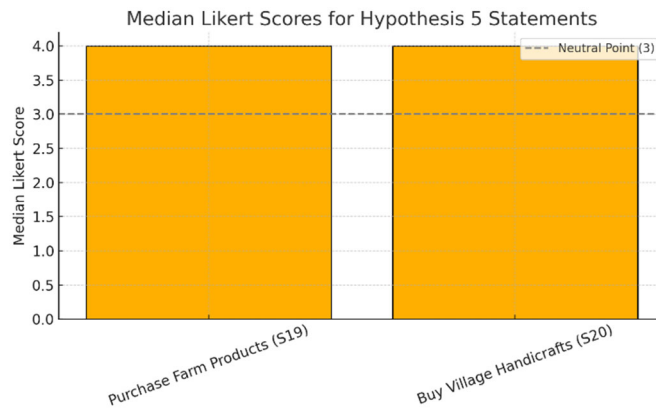


Figure 5.47 Median Likert Scores for Statements 19 and 20 proposed for Hypothesis 5.

The effect size of the statements proposed for Hypothesis 5 is displayed as follows;

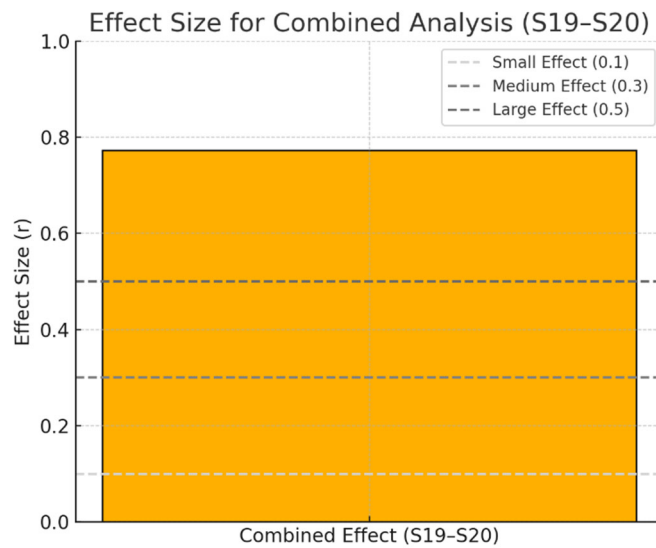


Figure 5.48 Effect Size for combined analysis of Statements 19 and 20.

5.2.3.6. Testing Hypothesis 6 on Respondents' Perceptions of the Well-Being Benefits of Farm-Based Holidays

To test Hypothesis number 6, which is “Consumers believe that spending their holidays on an active farm will be more relaxing, healthy and ensure quality time”, four statements were proposed as follows;

- Statement 21: Spending a few days of my holidays on an active farm would be a nice break from my busy life.
- Statement 22: Spending my holidays on an active farm means spending quality time for me.
- Statement 23: Spending my holidays on an active farm will be more relaxing as it will be in a quieter environment.
- Statement 24: My health will also be positively affected.

The hypotheses are constructed as follows:

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): Consumers believe that spending their holidays on an active farm will be more relaxing, healthy and ensure quality time.

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): Consumers do not believe that spending their holidays on an active farm will be more relaxing, healthy and ensure quality time.

As the data were previously found to be not normally distributed (confirmed by the Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests), the One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was applied. This non-parametric test is suitable for assessing whether the median response to each item is significantly greater than the neutral midpoint (3) on the Likert scale. The formula of the One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test is as follows:

For this hypothesis, to see the opinion of consumers for each statement the test is run separately for each one of them.

The One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test for Statement 21 “Spending some days of my holidays on an active farm will be a good break” to test Hypothesis 6 yielded the following results :

Table 5.71 Results obtained by the computation run to test Statement 21 for Hypothesis 6

Computation results for Hypothesis 6, carried out by One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test on Statement 21	
Test Statistic	110,341.5
p-value	3.88×10^{-64}
z-score	5,42
Effect size r	0,223

Secondly, the following statement proposed for this hypothesis which was Statement 22 claiming “Spending my holidays on an active farm will be having quality time for me” is tested by One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test which yielded the following results :

Table 5.72 Results of the computation for Statement 22 analyzing Hypothesis 6

Computation results for Hypothesis 6, carried out by One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test on Statement 22	
Test Statistic	115.235,5
p-value	3.06×10^{-65}
z-score	6,60
Effect size r	0,271

Then, the following statement proposed for this hypothesis, which was Statement 23, indicating “Spending my holidays on an active farm will be more relaxing for me as it will be a quiet environment” is tested once more by the One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test which yielded the following results :

Table 5.73 Results of the computation run to test Statement 23 for Hypothesis 6

Computation results for Hypothesis 6, carried out by One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test on Statement 23	
Test Statistic	112.938,0
p-value	$1,70 \times 10^{-66}$
z-score	6,05
Effect size r	0,249

And finally the last statement proposed for this hypothesis which was Statement 24 claiming “Spending my holidays on an active farm will be healthier for me as I will be consuming natural products” is tested by One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test which yielded the following results :

Table 5.74 Results of the computation run to test Statement 24 for Hypothesis 6

Computation results for Hypothesis 6, carried out by One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test on Statement 24	
Test Statistic	133.220,0
p-value	$2,60 \times 10^{-77}$
z-score	10,92
Effect size r	0,449

The above value tables show that p-values are always very small, inferior to the threshold, which is 0,05. These computations, therefore, support for all statements, the rejection of null hypothesis (H_0) “ Consumers do not believe that spending their holidays on an active farm will be more relaxing, healthy and ensure quality time” and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) “Consumers believe that spending their holidays on an active farm will be more relaxing, healthy and ensure quality time” is accepted.

The Median Likert Scores of the statements proposed for Hypothesis 6 are displayed here below;

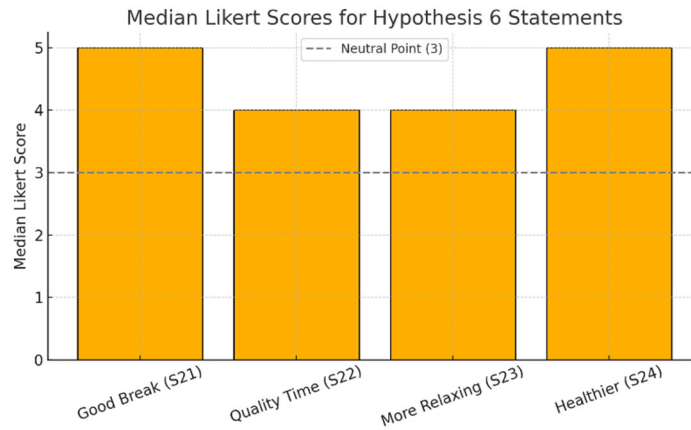


Figure 5.49 Median Likert scores of the statements proposed to respondents to test Hypothesis 6.

The effect size of the statements proposed for Hypothesis 6 is displayed as follows:

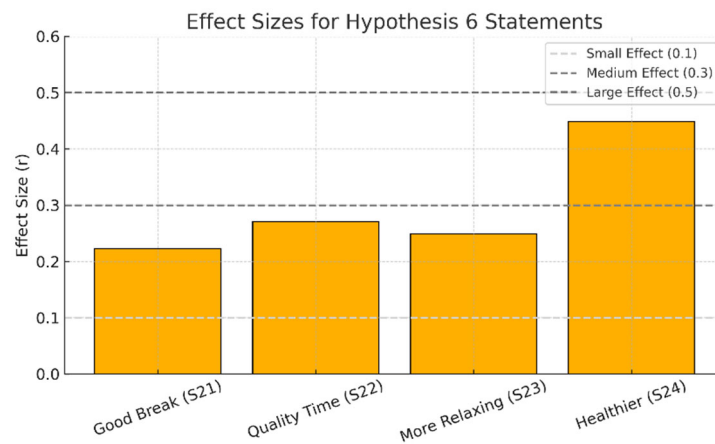


Figure 5.50 Effect size of the statements proposed to respondents to test Hypothesis 6.

To further validate the hypothesis, a composite score averaging Statements 21, 22, 23 and 24 were also tested using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test which yielded a p-value of $3.04 \times 10^{-7.9}$ which is inferior also to the threshold 0,05. This result reinforces that, even when considered collectively, respondents

express a strong and statistically significant belief in the positive impacts of farm holidays on well-being. Thus, once again, alternative hypothesis (H₁) “Consumers believe that spending their holidays on an active farm will be more relaxing, healthy and ensure quality time” is accepted.

The combined Median Likert Score of the statements proposed for Hypothesis 5 is displayed as follows;

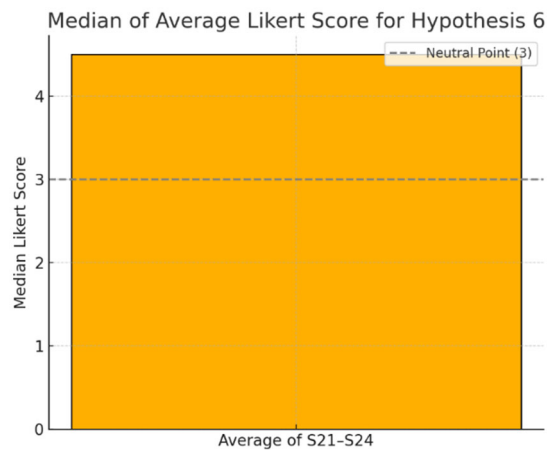


Figure 5.51 Median Likert score of the statements 21-22-23 and 24 proposed to respondents to test Hypothesis 5

The combined Effect Size of the statements proposed for Hypothesis 5 is displayed here follows;

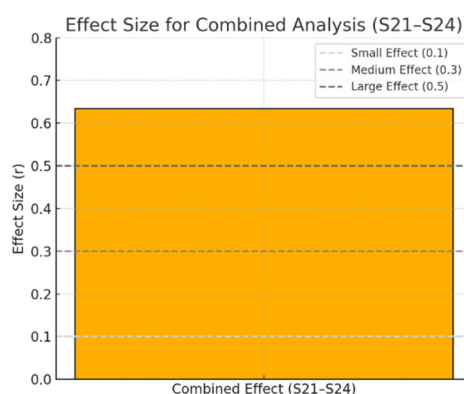


Figure 5.52 Combined effect size of the statements proposed to test Hypothesis 5.

5.2.3.7. Testing Hypothesis 7 on Respondents’ Perceptions of the Environmental Benefits of Farm-Based Holidays

To test Hypothesis 7, which is “Consumers believe that spending time on an active farm will help raise awareness concerning environmental issues”, statements below are proposed to survey respondents.

Statement 25 “Spending my holidays on an active farm will cause less environmental pollution,” and

Statement 26 “Spending my holidays on an active farm will allow me to handle recycling in a more effective way”.

The hypotheses are constructed as follows:

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): Consumers believe that spending time on an active farm will help raise awareness concerning environmental issues.

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): Consumers do not believe that spending time on an active farm will help raise awareness concerning environmental issues.

Once again, the Paired-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was selected for this analysis because the survey data were previously determined to be not normally distributed. This non-parametric test is appropriate for comparing two related variables measured on the same subjects (survey respondents) such as before-and-after measures or, as is the case for this hypothesis, two different but

linked survey items. The test assesses whether the median difference between paired responses is significantly different from zero.

The Paired-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test for Hypothesis 7 yielded the following results:

Table 5.75 Results of the computation run to test Statement 25 and 26 for Hypothesis 7

Computation results for Hypothesis 7, carried out by Paired-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test on Statements 25 and 26	
Test Statistic	3.946,5
p-value	9,43 x 10 ⁻⁹
z-score	-20,13
Effect size r	-0,827

It is important to note, once again, that the Paired-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was applied not to assess each statement individually but to compare the responses to Statement 25 and Statement 26 as paired data. Each respondent provided an answer to both statements, and the analysis focused on the difference between these two responses per individual. This paired design allowed the test to evaluate whether there was a statistically significant shift in perception between the concept of reduced environmental pollution and advanced recycling issues while spending holidays on a farm.

Another point must be underlined here, that in the case of paired Paired-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Tests, such as those applied in Hypotheses 5 previously, median Likert scores for each item are reported separately as descriptive statistics, providing insight into participants' general level of agreement with each statement individually. However, the effect size (r) is calculated based on the distribution of differences between paired responses, not the individual scores themselves. This is because the Wilcoxon test evaluates whether the median difference between two related observations (e.g., Statement

25 vs. Statement 26) is significantly different from zero. As such, the effect size represents the strength and consistency of that within-subject comparison, and is reported as a shared measure across the pair.

Given the p-value $9,43 \times 10^{-9} < 0.05$, the null hypothesis (H_0) “Consumers do not believe that spending time on an active farm will help raise awareness concerning environmental issues”, is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) “Consumers believe that spending time on an active farm will help raise awareness concerning environmental issues” is accepted. By this result it is suggested that consumers spending time on an active farm will affect their awareness of environmental issues.

The Median Likert Scores of the statements proposed for Hypothesis 7 are displayed here below:

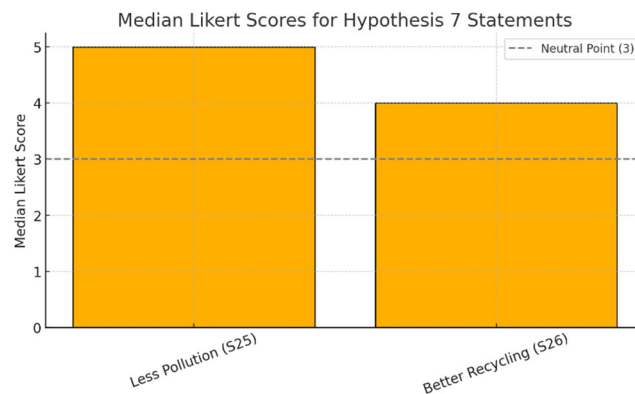


Figure 5.53 Median Likert scores for statements 25 and 26 proposed to respondents to test Hypothesis 7.

The effect size of the statements proposed for Hypothesis 7 is displayed here below:

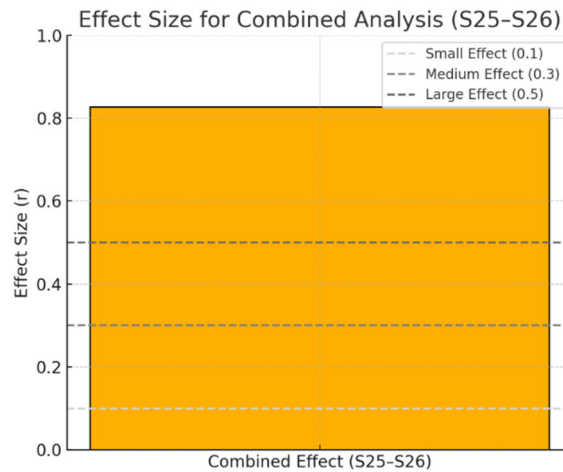


Figure 5.54 Effect size of the statements 25 and 26 proposed to respondents to test Hypothesis 7.

5.2.3.8. Testing Hypothesis 8 on Respondents’ Perceptions of the Economic Impact of Farm-Based Holidays on Rural Areas

Agritourism operations allow the region they are carried out in, the opportunity for economic regional growth (Sachaleli, 2020).

To test Hypothesis 8, “Consumers believe that spending time on an active farm will help to promote rural development”, statements number 27 and 28 are proposed to respondents. These statements are as follows;

Statement 27 is “Spending my holidays on an active farm will create a second income source for the farmer”, and

Statement 28 is “Spending my holidays on an active farm will also help rural development”.

The hypotheses are constructed as follows:

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): Consumers believe that spending time on an active farm will help to promote rural development.

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): Consumers do not believe that spending time on an active farm will help to promote rural development.

For this Hypothesis too the Paired-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was selected for, as the survey data were determined to be not normally distributed by Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk test. As explained in previous analyses, this non-parametric test is appropriate for comparing two related variables measured on the same subjects (survey respondents). Since for this hypothesis, two distinct but related survey responses are tested as a pair to assess their differences. The analysis evaluates whether the median difference between the responses is significantly different from zero.

The Paired-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test for Hypothesis 8 yielded the following results:

Table 5.76 Results of the computation run to test Statements 27 and 28 for Hypothesis 8

Computation results for Hypothesis 8, carried out by One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test on Statements 27 and 28	
Test Statistic	3.639,5
p-value	4,62 x 10 ⁻¹⁶
z-score	-20,21
Effect size r	-0,830

Once again, it is noted that the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was applied to compare the responses to Statement 27 and Statement 28 as paired data but not to assess each statement individually. This paired design allowed the test to evaluate whether there was a statistically significant shift in opinion between the concept of spending their holidays on a farm directly supporting the farmer and contributing to rural development in a broader sense.

Another point must be underlined here, that in the case of paired Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Tests, such as those applied in Hypotheses 5, and 7 previously

median Likert scores for each item are reported separately as descriptive statistics, providing insight into participants' general level of agreement with each statement individually. However, the effect size (r) is calculated based on the distribution of differences between paired responses, not the individual scores themselves. This is because the Wilcoxon test evaluates whether the median difference between two related observations (e.g., Statement 27 vs. Statement 28) is significantly different from zero. As such, the effect size represents the strength and consistency of that within-subject comparison, and is reported as a shared measure across the pair.

Since the computed p-value $4,62 \times 10^{-16} < 0.05$, the null hypothesis (H_0) “Consumers do not believe that spending time on an active farm will help to promote rural development”, is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) “Consumers believe that spending time on an active farm will help to promote rural development” is accepted. This result suggests that consumers significantly believe in the rural development-promoting effect of spending their holidays on an active farm.

Below is the median Likert Scores for the statements of Hypothesis 8 :

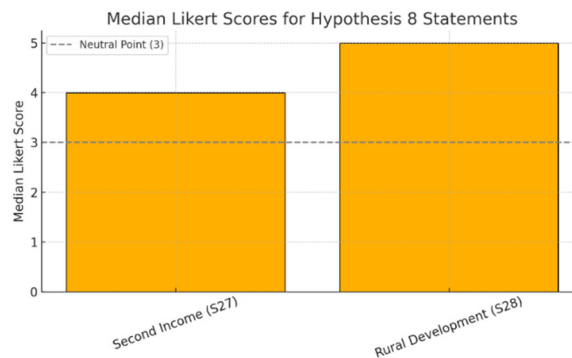


Figure 5.55 Median Likert scores for the statements of Hypothesis 8

The effect size of the statements proposed for Hypothesis 8 is displayed here below:

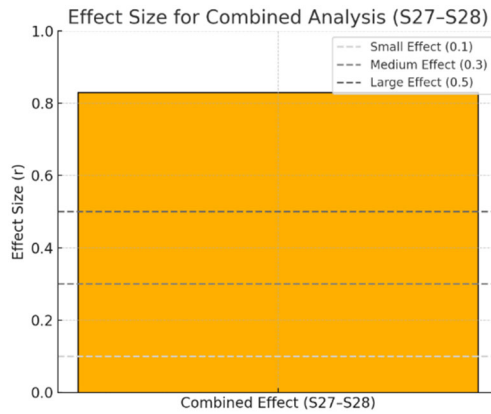


Figure 5.56 Effect size of the statements proposed to respondents for Hypothesis 8.

Below a comparative table displaying the results of the analyses conducted to test the hypotheses concerning consumers is presented to recapitulate the obtained results.

It can be observed from the table 5.77 that Hypotheses H2 and H4 are rejected as a result of the analyzes, while hypotheses H1, H3, H5, H6, H7 and H8 are accepted.

Table 5.77 Outcomes of consumers' hypotheses tests

Outcomes of Consumers' Hypotheses		
Hypotheses Concerning Consumers' Survey	Test	H₁
H1- Female customers, compared to male customers, are less likely to look for modern life conditions and modern holiday facilities, preferring a real, authentic rural life experience without modern equipment	Mann-Whitney U	Accepted
H2 - Female consumers, compared to male consumers, prefer daily visits to a farm, rather than spending their holidays there	Mann-Whitney U	Rejected
H3- Consumers prefer near locations to spend their holidays on an agritourism farm	One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank	Accepted
H4- Male consumers prefer, compared to female ones, to get involved in farm work when they spend their holidays on an active farm	Mann-Whitney U	Rejected
H5 - Consumers tend to purchase farm products and local handicrafts both during and after their visits, thereby supporting the rural economy	Paired-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank	Accepted
H6 - Consumers believe that spending their holidays on an active farm will be more relaxing, healthy and ensure quality time	One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank	Accepted
H7- Consumers believe that spending time on an active farm will help raise awareness concerning environmental issues	Paired-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank	Accepted
H8- Consumers believe that spending time on an active farm will help to promote rural development	Paired-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank	Accepted

5.2.4. Testing the Hypotheses Concerning Farmers

The farmers' survey that is conducted for this thesis helped to determine some important points. First and maybe the most important one is that farmers are mostly aged people. They are over their middle age and are already tired of working under such conditions. They are mostly not using smartphones, not having internet access, not close to modern technology, not well educated. They are not visiting local agriculture chambers unless they have an administrative problem to solve and when they are attending seminars held about new agricultural developments, pesticides, fertilizers, etc... . Even then, when they attend, they do refrain from signing the attendance forms, fearing that "signing a document can later cause problems". When they replied to the questions, they mostly declared that they would like to have a supplementary source of income, but they do not know how and they are reluctant to engage in something new. They do, in general, think that having visitors on their farm can be a change, but they are not willing to ask for a fee in exchange of their food and beverage services and even accommodation, because they think "hospitality" will be harmed.

5.2.4.1. Normality and Reliability of the Dataset

The original survey data collected from farmers consisted of open-ended or preference-based responses, which were qualitatively rich. As noted by Braun and Clarke (2006), in thematic analysis the interpretive role of the researcher is part of the process. Therefore, to enable quantitative analysis and hypothesis testing, all responses were systematically coded into three mutually exclusive categories: "Yes, I would prefer," "No, I wouldn't prefer," and "I am not sure/I don't know". These categories reflect the core attitudinal stances relevant to the thesis' research questions. To enable statistical analysis, the responses were numerically coded as follows: 1 for "Yes, I would prefer," 0 for "No, I wouldn't prefer," and 2 for "I am not sure/I don't know". These were numerically recoded as follows: 1 for "Yes," 0 for "No," and 2 for "Not sure/Don't know" This coding scheme reflects the directional intent of the responses, where "Yes" indicates

agreement with the stated preference, “No” indicates disagreement, and “Not sure/Don’t know” captures neutral or uncertain attitudes. For instance; a farmer who is asked “whether he would prefer someone from his household or a third person living nearby to serve food and beverages to the visitors, s/he first replies “No, of course I would serve my guests by myself”. Then s/he realizes that this can become a full-time serving job, and also can create employment for the person fulfilling this position, s/he continues by saying “but given a second thought, I may ask from someone from my family to perform this job”, or “there is this lady, my neighbor, she can do it and earn some money too”. So the reply which started by saying “no” ends up with a “yes”.

The coding process was conducted manually by one person alone, who is the writer of this thesis. As such, inter-coder reliability measures (e.g., Cohen’s Kappa) were not applicable. Nevertheless, steps were taken to ensure consistency and transparency in the coding procedure. A preliminary coding scheme was developed based on the semantic and thematic structure of the survey questions as proposed by scholars (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This scheme was applied to an initial subset of responses as a pilot, during which ambiguous or overlapping interpretations were resolved. The final coding rules were then refined and applied uniformly across the entire dataset.

By following this structured approach, the thesis aimed to maintain a high degree of intra-coder consistency and to minimize potential bias in the translation from qualitative to quantitative form. The resulting dataset was then used for further statistical analysis using appropriate non-parametric techniques, in line with the categorical nature of the coded variables.

5.2.4.2. Assumptions and Normality Considerations

Given the nature of the survey data — originally qualitative and later transformed into categorical variables with three levels — the assumptions underlying parametric statistical tests, such as normality and homogeneity of variance, were not met. The responses were not continuous or interval-scaled,

but rather represented ordinal-level data, in which values indicate direction of preference but do not imply equal intervals between categories.

Consequently, normality testing was not conducted, as such procedures (e.g., Shapiro-Wilk or Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests) are not appropriate for non-continuous variables (Field, 2018). Instead, the analysis proceeded with non-parametric statistical methods, which are robust to non-normal distributions and suitable for ordinal and categorical data. Specifically, the Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit Test was selected to evaluate whether the distribution of categorical responses significantly differed from hypothesized or uniform expectations.

5.2.4.3. Testing Hypothesis 9 on Farmers' Preferences Regarding Guest Visit Duration on Agritourism Farms

In line with these findings, Hypothesis 9 of this thesis proposes “Farmers prefer daily visits rather than overnight staying”

The hypotheses were formulated as follows:

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): Farmers prefer daily visits rather than overnight staying.

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): Farmers do not prefer daily visits rather than overnight staying.

To test this hypothesis, farmers were asked questions number 23 and 24 which are “Do you prefer to engage in agritourism activities that will bring additional income to your family through daily visits?” and “Would you consider starting with daily visits and then switching to an overnight stay system as well?” respectively.

Table 5.78 Results of the computation run to test Question 23 for Hypothesis 9

Question 23 - “Do you prefer to engage in agritourism activities that will bring additional income to your family through daily visits?”		
Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	51	91,1
No	5	8,9
I do not know/ I am not sure	0	0,00
Total	56	100,00

Note: percentages may not totally be 100% due to rounded results.

Table 5. 79 Results of the computation run to test Question 24 for Hypothesis 9

Question 24 - “Would you consider starting with daily visits and then switching to an overnight stay system as well?”		
Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	20	35,7
No	32	57,1
I do not know/ I am not sure	4	7,1
Total	56	99,9*

*: percentages may not totally be 100% due to rounded results.

The survey items analyzed in this section of the thesis were based on three response options: “Yes,” “No,” and “I do not know/ I am not sure,” coded numerically as 1, 0, and 2, respectively. While Likert-scale responses often support the calculation of an “Overall Score” by multiplying frequency by scale value, this approach was not applied in the present thesis. The response options in this case represent nominal or categorical preferences, not an ordinal or interval scale with meaningful progression between values. Specifically, the “I do not know/I am not sure” category (coded as 2) does not indicate a stronger or more intense preference than “Yes” (1) or “No” (0), Therefore, including it in a

weighted scoring system would be methodologically inappropriate. Accordingly, this analysis reports frequencies and percentages (i.e., normalized weights expressed as percentages), which are more suitable for categorical data than composite scoring (Field, 2018; Bryman, 2016).

The Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit test (described in Section 4.3.8 was conducted on the frequency distribution of responses to each question, using equal expected proportions across the three response categories (“Yes,” “No,” “I do not know/ I am not sure”).

The table below shows the results obtained by running the Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit test for Q23 “Do you prefer to engage in agritourism activities that will bring additional income to your family through daily visits?”.

Table 5.80 Results of the computation run to test Question 23 for Hypothesis 9.

Computation of Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit test for Q23 asking “Do you prefer to engage in agritourism activities that will bring additional income to your family through daily visits?”	
Test Statistic ()	37,79
p-value	< ,001
Effect size Cramér’s V	0,87

As presented in Table 5.80, the computation of the test statistic χ^2 is statistically significant. This computation indicates that the majority of farmers prefer daily visits.

The Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit test is conducted for Q24 as well. The table below is showing the results obtained by running the Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit test for Q24 “Would you consider starting with daily visits and then switching to an overnight stay system as well?”

Table 5.81 Results of the computation run to test Question 24 for Hypothesis 9.

Computation of Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit test for Q24 asking “Would you consider starting with daily visits and then switching to an overnight stay system as well?”	
Test Statistic (χ^2)	21,14
p-value	< ,001
Effect size Cramér’s V	0,43

Table 5.81 presents the computation of the test statistic χ^2 , which is also statistically significant. This computation indicates that farmers have an attitude towards transitioning to overnight stays, although the preference is less extreme.

Based on the above computations, since both computed test statistics are statistically significant the null hypothesis (H_0) “Farmers do not prefer daily visits rather than overnight staying” is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) “Farmers prefer daily visits rather than overnight staying” is accepted. This result suggests that farmers significantly prefer that consumers visit their farms on daily basis but not stay overnight.

To add a final explanation, due to the qualitative nature of the survey, each question has already been coded based on different but related aspects of farmers’ preferences. That’s the reason why the test is conducted separately on each question. To conduct a common test on both questions, a procedure of re-coding or merging would be necessary and this merging could distort the meanings of farmers’ replies. Therefore, the questions are analyzed separately but interpreted together — which is the most meticulous way to test Hypothesis 9.”

5.2.4.4. Testing Hypothesis 10 on Farmers’ Preferences for Outsourcing Services Versus Directly Serving Agritourism Visitors

Thus Hypothesis 10 of this thesis proposed “Farmers prefer to outsource daily services to visitors rather than sparing time and effort to serve consumers.”

The hypotheses were formulated as follows:

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): Farmers prefer to outsource daily services to visitors rather than sparing time and effort to serve consumers.

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): Farmers do not prefer to outsource daily services to visitors rather than sparing time and effort to serve consumers.

To test this hypothesis, farmers were asked question 22 which is “Would you consider getting help from someone from your family or nearby village to serve food to your visitors?”

Table 5.82 Results of the computation run to test Question 22 for Hypothesis 10.

Question 22 - “Would you consider getting help from someone from your family or the nearby village to serve food to your visitors?”		
Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	36	64,28
No	17	30,36
I do not know/ I am not sure	3	5,36
Total	56	100,00

The Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit test (described in Section 4.3.8 was conducted on the frequency distribution of responses to each question, using equal expected proportions across the three response categories (“Yes,” “No,” “I do not know/ I am not sure”).

Table 5.83 displays the results obtained by running the Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit test for Question 22 “Would you consider getting help from someone from your family or nearby village to serve food to your visitors?”

Table 5.83 Results of the computation run to test Question 22 for Hypothesis 10.

Computation of Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit test for question 22 asking “Would you consider getting help from someone from your family or nearby village to serve food to your visitors?”	
Test Statistic (χ^2)	29,39
p-value	<,001
Effect size Cramér’s V	0,51

Table 5.82 presents the computation of test statistic χ^2 is statistically significant. This computation indicates that the majority of farmers would consider getting help from someone from his/her family or nearby village to serve food to the visitors.

Based on the above computation, since the test statistic is statistically significant, therefore the null hypothesis (H_0) “Farmers do not prefer to outsource daily services to visitors rather than sparing time and effort to serve consumers” is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) “Farmers prefer to outsource daily services to visitors rather than sparing time and effort to serve consumers” is accepted. This result suggests that farmers significantly prefer to outsource the food and beverage service to the visitors on their farm.

5.2.4.5. Testing Hypothesis 11 on Farmers’ Preferences Regarding Unpaid Labor Support from Agritourism Visitors

Study of Ingrassia et al. (2023) show that many farmers are open to involving tourists in tasks like planting, harvesting, or cooking with farm products. Tourists not only enjoy these hands-on activities but also develop stronger bonds with the rural lifestyle.

Liang et al. (2021) argue that engaging tourists in authentic farm activities such as feeding animals or picking fruits creates a memorable, interactive experience, which positively affects tourists' likelihood to revisit.

Bhatta and Ohe (2019) identified that dairy farms and labor-intensive operations are more cautious about tourist involvement due to hygiene, safety, and time constraints. Willingness increases when farmers can design structured activities.

According to Ciolac et al. (2020), younger farmers and those with tourism training are more likely to see visitors as collaborators rather than passive observers. These farmers actively design tasks tourists can join in.

Based on the afore-indicated findings, Hypothesis 11 of this thesis is determined as “Farmers prefer that visitors help them free of charge in fulfilling farm works”.

The hypotheses were formulated as follows:

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): Farmers prefer that visitors help them free of charge in fulfilling farm works.

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): Farmers do not prefer that visitors help them free of charge in fulfilling farm works.

To test this hypothesis farmers were asked question 25 “Would you like the visitors to help you in fulfilling farm works free of charge?”.

Below the frequency and percentage of farmers’ replies are displayed for a better understanding.

Table 5.84 Results of the computation run to test Question 25 for Hypothesis 11.

Question 25 - “Would you like the visitors to help you in fulfilling farm works free of charge?”		
Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	27	48,2
No	21	37,5
I do not know/ I am not sure	8	14,3
Total	56	100,00

Once again, the Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit test (described in Section 4.3.8) was conducted on the frequency distribution of responses to each question, using equal expected proportions across the three response categories (“Yes,” “No,” “I do not know/ I am not sure”).

The table 5.85 below shows the results obtained by running the Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit test for question 25, which asked “Would you like the visitors to help you in fulfilling farm works free of charge?”

Table 5.85 Results of the computation run to test Question 25 for Hypothesis 11.

Computation of Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit test for Q25 asking “Would you like the visitors to help you in fulfilling farm works free of charge?”	
Test Statistic (χ^2)	10,11
p-value	< ,001
Effect size Cramér’s V	0,30

As can be observed from the table above, the computation of test statistic χ^2 is statistically significant for this hypothesis as well. This computation indicates that the majority of farmers would like the visitors to help them in fulfilling farm works free of charge.

Based on the above computation, since the test statistic is statistically significant, therefore the null hypothesis (H_0) “Farmers do not prefer that visitors help them free of charge in fulfilling farm” is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) “Farmers prefer that visitors help them free of charge in fulfilling farm” is accepted. This result suggests that farmers significantly prefer that visitors help them with farm work free of charge.

Table 5.85 displays the results of the analyses conducted to test the hypotheses concerning farmers.

Table 5.86 Outcomes of farmers’ hypotheses tests.

Outcomes of Farmers’ Hypotheses		
Hypotheses Concerning Farmers’ Survey	Test	H₁
H9- Farmers prefer daily visits rather than overnight staying	Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit	Accepted
H10 - Farmers prefer to outsource daily services to visitors rather than sparing time and effort to serve consumers	Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit	Accepted
H11- Farmers prefer that visitors help them free of charge in fulfilling farm works	Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit	Accepted

As can be observed from Table 5.86, all hypotheses constructed concerning farmers’ preferences are accepted.

5.3. SUMMARY RESULTS

Following the detailed hypothesis testing for both consumers and farmers, this section provides a condensed overview of the key outcomes.

For the consumers’ survey, results indicated that female consumers do not, contrary to general opinion, prefer modern life conditions on a farm. Instead, they seek authentic rural environments, supporting Hypothesis 1 (see Section 5.2.3.1). By contrast, Hypothesis 2, which suggested that female consumers prefer daily visits to a farm over overnight stays, was rejected (see Section 5.2.3.2).

The analysis further confirmed that consumers show a clear preference for nearby locations when engaging in agritourism, leading to the acceptance of Hypothesis 3 (see Section 5.2.3.3). However, Hypothesis 4, which proposed that male consumers are more likely than female consumers to prefer involvement in farm work, was rejected (see Section 5.2.3.4).

Furthermore, the analysis confirmed that consumers are willing to purchase farm products and local handicrafts both during and after their visits, thereby supporting the rural economy, leading to the acceptance of Hypothesis 5 (see Section 5.2.3.5). Similarly, consumers’ belief in the health, relaxation, and

overall benefits of spending time on a farm was validated, resulting in the acceptance of Hypothesis 6 (see Section 5.2.3.6).

In addition, perceptions related to broader impacts of agritourism were supported: Hypothesis 7, concerning increased environmental awareness, and Hypothesis 8, suggesting that agritourism contributes to rural development, were both accepted (see Sections 5.2.3.7 and 5.2.3.8).

Turning to the farmers' survey, the results indicate that daily visits are preferred by farmers over overnight stays, leading to the acceptance of Hypothesis 9 (see Section 5.2.4.3). Similarly, Hypothesis 10, which proposed that farmers prefer outsourcing daily services to visitors rather than dedicating their own time and effort to serve consumers, was also accepted (see Section 5.2.4.4). Finally, Hypothesis 11, suggesting that farmers prefer visitors to assist them free of charge in fulfilling farm work, was supported by the results and accepted (see Section 5.2.4.5).

In summary, the hypotheses testing has provided a clear picture of both consumers' and farmers' preferences, attitudes, and perceptions regarding agritourism. While consumers demonstrated strong support for authentic rural experiences, local product consumption, and the wider social benefits of agritourism, gender-based differences were less conclusive, with some assumptions rejected. Farmers, on the other hand, expressed a preference for daily visits, outsourcing of services, and visitor contributions to farm work. Assessed together, these outcomes establish a solid foundation for the concluding discussion, where their broader implications for agritourism development and rural sustainability will be addressed.

5.4. POLICY AND IMPLICATIONS

In Türkiye, the agritourism sector holds considerable untapped potential. If approached strategically—through regional planning, agricultural-tourism integration, effective local management, and supportive public policy—it can serve as a transformative mechanism for rural development. Moreover, as

revenues from traditional coastal tourism decline due to market saturation and environmental stressors, agritourism offers a viable, regenerative alternative. It contributes to rural development in measurable ways, including generating supplementary income for microenterprises, creating added value in regional economies, providing employment opportunities, promoting environmental stewardship, and alleviating rural poverty.

Funds can be allocated to encourage farmers to diversify their activities by engaging in agritourism. Regulating agritourism activities can also contribute to the development of non-agricultural activities in farms, leading to the provision of a second income source for farmers.

Establishing local networks and online booking and purchase platforms can be another point of focus, facilitating not only agritourism activities but also after-visit purchases of consumers from the farm they spent their time.

Specific incentives and/or grants can be offered for converting agricultural buildings into accommodation facilities for tourism purposes under rural development plans supported by local governments. Farmers offering agritourism services can benefit from reduced Value-Added Tax (VAT) rates and simplified tax regimes.

Special training programs can be conducted to allow farmers to explore how to provide consumer service through agritourism activities. Agricultural Chambers can be the authorized centers for these trainings, consulting on business models, pricing, and online marketing.

During the surveys conducted among farmers for this thesis, it was observed that only one farmer knew about “agritourism” concept. Apart from that farmer, who in fact graduated in Tourism Management, none of the participating farmers had ever heard about agritourism. Thus, farmers must be informed about this possibility and guided accordingly if they want to engage.

Furthermore, a cluster analysis of farmers is conducted to support targeted policy development. By conducting this analysis, it is aimed to identify the farmers as per their interest in engaging in agritourism, their knowledge on the subject and their willingness to start. The analysis allowed grouping the farmers

into three clusters. The first cluster is composed of traditional farmers who have not heard about agritourism before. The farmers in this cluster, who are all participating farmers except one, have not heard about agritourism. They are hesitating, not believing and do not see how agritourism can be a second source of income for them. Hence, they need the necessary training and guidance on how to proceed. The second cluster is the one who have not heard about agritourism but who are willing to learn and engage in it. They also need training but in an advanced level, including digital marketing. The third and last cluster is the one composed of farmers who are open-minded, ready to try initial activities of agritourism and who are eager to learn and advance on this path.

As a last word we have to emphasize that policy integration between tourism and agricultural agencies is a must. Inter-sectoral contributions will ensure the success of agritourism activities. Policies and implications must be expanded beyond limited regions and cover the entire country to allow agritourism to reach its potential.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Rural regions in Türkiye, particularly those not located along prominent coastal or mountainous areas, have long struggled with structural poverty and underdevelopment. These areas often lack access to adequate income opportunities, healthcare, education, infrastructure, and vibrant social or cultural networks. This persistent deprivation has led to waves of rural-to-urban migration, further diminishing the socio-economic vitality and demographic stability of these communities.

Efforts to revitalize rural regions have frequently proved ineffective, largely due to top-down policies designed by actors unfamiliar with local realities. This disconnect between policy design and lived rural experience continues to hinder sustainable progress. Against this backdrop, agritourism has emerged over the past four decades as a promising alternative development pathway. Drawing upon the intrinsic assets of rural landscapes, local agricultural practices, and cultural heritage, agritourism offers both economic revitalization and community resilience.

Empirical research conducted in diverse contexts—including the research conducted by Wicks and Merrett (2003) in the U.S., Marandola et al. (2006) in Italy, Civelek et al. (2014) in Türkiye, and Fountain et al. (2021) in New Zealand—consistently affirms agritourism's ability to stimulate rural economies and attract a new generation of tourists. These studies emphasize the growing demand for authentic, experiential, and food-centered tourism, a niche now increasingly referred to as agrifood tourism. Agritourism not only aligns with contemporary tourism preferences but also strengthens rural sustainability and heritage preservation.

The online survey carried out for this thesis, examining the preferences and expectations of potential agritourism consumers, revealed that potential agritourism consumers prefer authentic experiences, associating farm stays with health benefits, relaxation, and quality leisure time. They believe agritourism can reduce environmental impact while encouraging sustainable practices such as recycling.

Consumers also expressed interest in participating in farm-related activities and purchasing locally produced goods, thereby supporting farmers economically and recognizing agritourism's role in rural development. Moreover, consumers demonstrated a preference for nearby farms over distant travel when considering agritourism activities.

The face-to-face farmer survey revealed that while many farmers require encouragement and capacity-building to engage in agritourism, they are generally open to its opportunities. Farmers indicated a preference for day visitors rather than overnight guests, showed willingness to delegate consumer services to household members or third parties, and expressed openness to receiving visitor assistance with routine farm tasks. They also emphasized the need for training in online marketing and e-commerce to successfully participate in agritourism markets.

Overall, the surveys suggest that fostering a supportive ecosystem for agritourism requires the promotion of short-distance, daily farm visits, which would generate mutual benefits for both consumers and farmers. Farmers should be supported with training in online sales, digital marketing, and promotional techniques, while regional platforms should be developed to advertise farms and facilitate the sale of local products. Collaboration between farmers and academic researchers is also essential to ensure community-oriented and evidence-based development strategies. These findings carry direct implications for policymakers, local governments, and development agencies seeking to address rural poverty.

Finally, this thesis contributes to the agritourism literature by providing empirical insights from Türkiye, a context often underrepresented in international academic discourse. What distinguishes this research is its dual-perspective approach: unlike many existing studies that focus on either the supply or demand side of agritourism, this thesis integrates the perceptions and preferences of both farmers and consumers. By doing so, it offers a more holistic understanding of how agritourism can function as a mutually beneficial system

— one that supports rural livelihoods while responding to evolving tourist preferences.

By situating agritourism at the intersection of rural development, cultural preservation, and sustainable tourism, this study underscores its potential as a regenerative pathway for the sustainable future of Türkiye’s rural regions.

I hope humankind will never forget that every unplanted field conserves the memory of the past but also preserves the key to a more sustainable future.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. A compilation of agritourism definitions.

Definition	References
“All kind of practice carried out on a working farm aiming to attract visitors”	Barbieri and Mshenga (2008)
“A supplementary agricultural venture operated by an owner of the farm aimed at providing enjoyment and education to the public, promoting farm products, and consequently generating extra revenue for the farm”	Beall (1996)
“Any agricultural activity that entails the retailing of or services pertaining to agricultural products directly at the producing site to the public”	Che et al. (2005)
“Rural tourism occurring on operational farms, where the working environment constitutes a component of the consumer's experience”	Clarke (1996)
“A type of rural tourism whereby paying visitors can stay on working farms or visit them as day visitors to experience farming life.”	Davies and Gilbert (1992)
“Tourism in agricultural regions, utilizing a rural setting inhabited by a peasant community that showcases and shares its unique identity, agricultural practices, and natural surroundings through dialogue, cultural expressions, and socio-productive activities”	Domínguez Estrada (2015)
“Phenomenon of attracting people onto agricultural holdings”	Evans and Ilbery (1989)

Tourism businesses operated on active farms that function primarily as a secondary addition to the farm's core agricultural operations.	Frater (1982)
Agritourism serves as an additional activity alongside agriculture, allowing farmers to host and provide services to tourists and visitors on their farms.	Frumkin (2019)
Agricultural activities conducted on operational farms or similar rural settings that are designed to provide educational or recreational experiences.	Gil Arroyo et al. (2013)
Tourism is closely integrated with farming operations and frequently contributes to the financial sustainability of the farm household.	Gladstone and Morris (2000)
Tourism initiatives carried out in rural areas by people primarily employed in agriculture, industry, or other sectors outside the service economy.	Iakovidou (1997)
Hosting visitors on farms and engaging them directly in daily agricultural routines and production processes.	Iakovidou (1997)
A form of alternative farm-based enterprise that represents one of seven recognized approaches to diversifying and developing agricultural businesses.	Ilbery et al. (1998)
"Any form of tourism that is directly connected to agricultural practices and the surrounding rural environment.	Jansen-Verbeke (1990)
Tourism initiatives that are small-scale and typically organized by families or cooperatives	Kizos and Iosifides (2007)

in rural settings, primarily run by individuals working in the agricultural sector.	
A diversified business model that combines value-added or non-conventional agricultural production and marketing with tourism activities based on visits to farms or ranches.	Maetzold (2002)
A form of travel that integrates rural or agricultural environments with farm-produced goods, offering tourists a range of experiences, services, and amenities directly provided by farmers.	Manhas (2012)
A distinct form of rural tourism where accommodations are located within a working agricultural property, occupied by the owner, and where guests can participate in farming or related activities on-site.	Marques (2006)
Rural businesses that combine active agricultural operations with commercial tourism services or experiences.	McGehee (2007); McGehee et al., (2007)
A form of rural tourism that, beyond showcasing local landscapes, highlights regional resources such as cuisine, crafts, agricultural products, and agro-industrial activities — turning them into key motivations for visitors to travel to and stay in the area.	Morán et al. (2014)
Operational farms that diversify their core agricultural activities by integrating tourism-related services or enterprises.	Murphy (1985)
Tourism businesses operating on active farms, specifically excluding bed-and-breakfast	Ollenburg and Buckley (2007)

services, nature tourism, and entertainment activities not directly tied to agricultural production.	
Experiential and educational services provided to paying visitors within the setting of a functioning farm, allowing for participation or observation of agricultural practices.	Ollenburg (2006)
A subtype of rural tourism characterized by accommodations situated on farms, whether the farm operates part-time or full-time, which serves as the key distinguishing factor.	Oppermann (1996)
The term is now widely applied to various activities that, in some cases, share little direct connection with farming aside from being hosted on land managed by a farmer.	Roberts and Hall (2001)
Tourism offerings that are directly linked to agricultural settings, farm-based products, or accommodations situated within agrarian environments.	Sharpley and Sharpley (1997)
Hospitality-related services provided by farmers and their families, which must remain closely linked to and supportive of their ongoing agricultural operations.	Sonnino (2004)
Offering tourism experiences within the setting of operational, working farms.	Wall (2000)
Combine an active agricultural setting with a commercially operated tourism element.	Weaver and Fennel (1997)
An activity that links visitors to the heritage, natural landscapes, or distinctive food	Wilson et al. (2006)

experiences associated with the agricultural sector in a specific rural region.	
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Source: Phillip et al.(2010) and Busby and Rendle (2000)

APPENDIX B. Questions for Customers Survey

QUESTIONS FOR CUSTOMERS SURVEY	
1-	Gender – (Female-Male)
2-	Age – (25 and younger; 26-35; 36-45; 46-55; 56-65; 65+)
3-	Place of residence – (81 provinces are listed)
4-	Educational status – (High School; Associate Degree ; Bachelor's Degree ; Master's Degree; Doctorate)
5-	Your Occupation – (Student; Housewife; Tradesman; Worker; Civil Servant; Private sector; Self-employed; Retired; other)
6-	Marital status – (Single ; Married)
7-	Number of children (if any) – (No children; 1 child; 2 children; 3 children; 3+ children)
8-	How many times a year do you go on vacation? (Once a year; Twice a year; More; I don't go on vacation)
9-	How many days do your vacations last on average? (One-two days; three-four days; Five-six days; One week; Two weeks; More than two weeks)
10-	Have you ever been on an active farm with production? Yes() No()
11-	Instead of staying on an active farm, I would like to pay a one-day visit. (Likert 1- Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree)
12-	I can spend a few days of my holiday on an active farm. (Likert 1- Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree)
13-	When I spend a few days of my holiday on an active farm, I also want to help with farm work. (Likert 1- Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree)
14-	When I want to spend a few days of my holiday involved in farm work on an active farm, I would like to help with the following (you can mark more than one option)
	- Sowing or planting /
	- Harvesting
	- Collecting (eggs, honey, mushrooms, forest fruits, etc.)
	- Processing of harvested product/

- Feeding / caring for animals
- Wool trimming /
- Milking.
- Making yogurt, cheese, butter/
- Others (specify):
15- I would also like to help on a farm where I go day by day. (Likert 1- Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree)
16- When I spend a few days of my holiday on a farm, with or without helping with farm work, I also like to have other opportunities such as the following (you may pick more than one) - horse riding - fishing - hunting - local cuisine workshop - local handicrafts workshop - Other
17- When spending my holidays on an active farm, I prefer authentic farm conditions to the comforts of a modern hotel room. (Likert 1- Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree)
18- What are the reasons/reasons why I want to spend my holiday on an active farm (You can mark more than one option). - Relaxing in a calm and quiet environment - Being alone with nature - Being close to animals - Being at the starting point of the food chain - Exploring our bonds with nature - Consuming fresh and natural products - Other (specify)
19- I would like to purchase natural products from the farm that I consumed during my time spent there. (Likert 1- Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree)
20- I can buy local handicrafts from nearby villages while spending my holidays on a farm. (Likert 1- Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree)
21- Spending a few days of my holiday on an active farm would be a nice break from my busy life. (Likert 1- Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree)
22- Spending my holidays on an active farm means spending quality time for me. (Likert 1- Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree)

23- Spending my holidays on an active farm will be more relaxing as it will be in a quieter environment. (Likert 1- Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree)
24- My health will also be positively affected. (Likert 1- Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree)
25- Spending my holidays on an active farm will cause less environmental pollution. (Likert 1- Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree)
26- Spending my holidays on an active farm will allow me to address the issue of recycling more effectively (Likert 1- Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree)
27- Spending my holiday on an active farm will be beneficial in terms of creating a second source of income for the farm. (Likert 1- Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree)
28- Spending my holiday on an active farm will also be beneficial for local development. (Likert 1- Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree)
29- Spending my holiday on an active farm will also help prevent food waste when you see the labor given at the starting point of the food. (Likert 1- Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree)
30- Spending my holiday on an active farm will enable me to learn about food production. (Likert 1- Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree)
31- With the knowledge I have gained while spending my holiday on an active farm, I can consider starting small-scale agricultural production myself in the future. (Likert 1- Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree)
32- To spend my holidays on an active farm, I can also choose farms that are not more than 300-400 km away. (Likert 1- Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree)
33- To spend a day on an active farm, I prefer farms that are no more than 150 km away. (Likert 1- Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree)
34- The daily fee per person that I will set aside to spend my holiday on an active farm, including accommodation and three meals, is maximum;
- TRY 2,000 – TRY 4,000
- TRY 4,000 – TRY 6,000
- TRY 6.000 – TRY 8.000
- + TRY 8.000

APPENDIX C. Statement – Hypotheses Matches for Consumers Survey

Hypotheses	Statements
<p>H1- Female customers, compared to male customers, are less likely to look for modern life conditions and modern holiday facilities, preferring a real, authentic rural life experience without modern equipment.</p>	<p>Statement 17- When spending my holiday on an active farm, I prefer authentic farm conditions to modern hotel room comfort.</p>
<p>H2- Female customers, compared to male customers, prefer daily visits to a farm, rather than spending their holidays there.</p>	<p>Statement 11 - I'd prefer to have a daily visit to an active farm, rather than spending my holidays there.</p> <p>Statement 12 - I can spend some days of my holidays on an active farm.</p>
<p>H3- Consumers prefer near locations to spend their holidays on an agritourism farm.</p>	<p>Statement 32 - I'd prefer farms which are not farther than 300-400 km so spend my holidays on an active farm.</p>
<p>H4- Male consumers prefer, compared to female ones, to get involved in farm work when they spend their holidays on an active farm.</p>	<p>Statement 13- I would like to help farm works in a farm where I will spend some days of my holidays.</p>
<p>H5- Consumers prefer to purchase products from the farm even after</p>	<p>Statement 19- I would like to purchase from the farm, the natural</p>

<p>their visits and purchase handicrafts from surrounding villages during their visits to help the rural local economy.</p>	<p>products which I consumed during the time spent there. Statement 20- I can purchase some handicrafts from the nearby villages while I spend my holidays on a farm.</p>
<p>H6- Consumers believe that spending their holidays on an active farm will be more relaxing, and healthy and ensure quality time.</p>	<p>Statement 21- Spending some days of my holidays on an active farm will be a good break. Statement 22- Spending my holidays on an active farm will be having quality time for me. Statement 23- Spending my holidays on an active farm will be more relaxing for me as it will be a quite environment. Statement 24- Spending my holidays on an active farm will be healthier for me as I will be consuming natural products.</p>
<p>H7- Consumers believe that spending time on an active farm will help to raise awareness concerning environmental issues.</p>	<p>Statement 25- Spending my holidays on an active farm will cause less environmental pollution. Statement 26- Spending my holidays on an active farm will allow me to handle recycling in a more effective way.</p>
<p>H8- Consumers believe that spending time on an active farm will help to promote rural development</p>	<p>Statement 27- Spending my holidays on an active farm will create a second income source for the farmer.</p>

	Statement 28- Spending my holidays on an active farm will also help rural development.
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APPENDIX D. Questions of Farmers Survey

Survey Questions for Farmers

First Section

- 1- Your name
- 2- Your age
- 3- Residing place
- 4- Your education
- 5- Your profession (to indicate if you have any other profession other than farming, if you have worked in another sector)
- 6- Marital status
- 7- Number of children, if any

Second Section

- 8- Do you make a living only from farming?
- 9- Do all members of your family help you in agricultural operations?
- 10- On how many acres in total are you performing agricultural operations and for how long?
- 11- What do you produce to sell?
- 12- Apart producing to sell, do you also produce for the needs of your family? If yes, what do you produce for your family?
- 13- Do you only plant and sow or do you also raise livestock?
- 14- How many animals do you have in total and what kind of animals do you breed?
- 15- Do you market your produce directly or by the intermediary of an agent?
- 16- Do you use the internet to sell what you produce?
- 17- What are the financial difficulties you face during the production process?
- 18- What are the other challenges you face during the production process (manpower, seasonal changes, drought, sales difficulties, etc.)?

Third Section

19- Do you know what agritourism is?

20- If you were to engage in agritourism, would you accept tourists visiting your farm and spending time on daily basis just to try how the business goes?

21- If not, what are the reason(s) for this refusal? For example, it will disrupt your daily work, it will bring extra burden, etc.

22- Would you consider having someone from your family or village to help you in serving tourists in your farm?

23- Given that agritourism can become an additional source of income for your family, would you prefer to perform it as daily visits?

24- Would you consider starting with daily visits and then switching to a system with accommodation?

25- Would you like future tourists to help you free of charge with farm work?

26- Would you like to open your farm for agritourism only at certain times of the year or continuously?

27- What are the problems you face in your agricultural activities, what would you suggest to overcome these problems?

APPENDIX E. Questions – Hypotheses Matches for Farmers’ Survey

H9- Farmers prefer daily visits rather than overnight staying.

Question 23 - Do you prefer to engage in agrotourism activities that will bring additional income to your family through daily visits?

Question 24 - Would you consider starting with daily visits and then switching to an overnight stay system?

H10- Farmers prefer to outsource daily services to visitors rather than sparing time and effort to serve consumers.

Question 22 - Would you consider getting someone else from your family or village to help you serve food to visitors?

H11- Farmers think that having visitors all the time can hinder their daily work.

Question 21 - If you would not agree, to get engaged into agritourism what are the reason(s)? For example, because it would hinder your daily work, it would be an extra burden, etc.

H12- Farmers prefer that visitors help them to fulfill daily farm tasks.

Question 25- Would you like future tourists to help you fulfill your daily farm tasks for free?

CURRICULUM VITAE