

Review of: "Agritourism: a source for socio-economic transformation in developing economies"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Agritourism: a source for socio-economic transformation in developing economies

Queros

Reviewer report by Prof Dr Milena Ivanovic

The topic is important in the context of growing tourist demand for authentic, unique and educational/learning experiences. Agritourism can indeed play an important role in the socio-economic revitalisation of some rural areas while providing financial security to small farmers after the farming season is over. This correlation is not established in the introduction. In addition, the word 'transformation' in the title is misleading because in most developed and developing countries (except for the wine and cheese routes in South Africa) agritourism is only an auxiliary activity to farming. It can only evolve into a transformative force through the application of specific tourism development strategies, such as theming and clustering. Otherwise, in the context of this article, agritourism should be discussed as Special Interest Tourism.

1. Introduction

- gives too much emphasis to Europe and America which are not part of developing economies.
- pg 3 para 2 line 2 "Agritourism is concentrated on a particular **type of offering**, primarily young families with children, youngsters going with their school, groups of friends, and urban people looking out for rural origins" These are not offerings but rather the market segments. Offerings should refer to agritourism products- farm accommodation, preparing food with natural ingredients, learning about animals and farming the land, hiking and walking trails, etc. A discussion about different products is lacking.
- is structured as a section of the literature review rather than an introduction to the article
- Cross-referencing between agriculture and tourism is inconsistent and somewhat misleading. Small farmers resort to agritourism to supplement their income which is not the case with big agricultural companies. The overall contribution of agriculture to a country's GDP is not indicative of the potential of agritourism. It would rather be the number of smallholdings and family farms in the country.
- should conclude with the general and specific aims of the article and a basic intro into the structure of the article.

1. Methodology

- Pg 4, Line 1: "The objective of **this literature review** is to examine the influence of agritourism as a driver of socio-

economic transformation

in developing economies, **specifically focusing on Zimbabwe.** First, what literature review? Second, agritourism can become a driver of socio-economic transformation of the whole area in cases when the agricultural activities are themed and developed as routes as is the case of the Western Cape- wine route, cheese route etc. Also, many farms in Southern/South Africa offer game viewing which serves to enrich the experiential offerings of the destination. Third, Zimbabwe was not even mentioned in the introduction despite the article's specific focus. Fourth, there is a blurred distinction between objective and aim.

- “It also aims to investigate **the factors** that impact the success of

agritourism ventures **in these contexts** and **how they can be applied to Zimbabwe.** Neither of these was discussed or achieved.

- Pg 4, last line: “The conceptual framework developed assumes that the **sustainable development of agritourism relies on factors** such as location, funding, product quality, marketing techniques, infrastructure, and legislative support as highlighted in the literature.” First, the focus of the article unexpectedly turns to sustainable development, contrary to what was indicated in the title. Second, the methodology does not explain how these factors were selected and how the model was tested.

1. Conceptual framework

- Pg 4, para 1, line 1: “The conceptual framework of this paper presupposes that sustainable agritourism **should consider factors** such as location, funding, product quality, marketing techniques, infrastructure, and legislative support.” Still not explained how these factors were identified and selected as part of this model.
- The requirements describing Location are contradictory- it cannot be accessible and underdeveloped (remote) at the same time. Not convinced the safety of facilities is part of the location.
- Pg 6 under infrastructure says: “With the utilisation of good routes, buildings, Wi-Fi, roads, and online payment systems, customers will be able to reach a site simply and receive high-quality service and goods all in one place.” Not sure what is referred to as good routes vs. roads and buildings. This is likely the Eurocentric take on infrastructure.
- Policy support pg 6/7 in a discussion goes back and forth from general to Zimbabwe. It says: “Agritourism has been proposed as a different strategy, particularly in Zimbabwe, to aid local economies in recovering from the severe economic crisis that has afflicted the populace.” It mentions Zimbabwe for the first time without any insight (in the introduction) of the nature of the severe economic crisis. Also, during Robert Mugabi’s presidency, white-owned farms were confiscated and forcefully taken away from their owners which led to food shortages and a severe economic crisis in Zimbabwe which continues to this day. Was the research done For this reason, a few examples of successful and above all safe agritourism farms should be presented and discussed.

1. Literature review

- The Literature review focuses on four African countries, namely South Africa, Kenya, Morocco, and Tanzania. It reveals

another major weakness of the article due to the inconsistency of the aim evident from the title to methodology, from aim/objective to literature. The authors seem to be unsure what the focus of the article is.

- The case of Kenya pg 8 para 2, line 4 states: "As a result of changing tastes, destructive lifestyles, drug abuse, prostitution, and other factors, farming communities lament the erosion of their traditional customs." Is this a reference to indigenous communities or working farms?
- In the case of South Africa authors do not mention wine, cheese, and wildlife farms.
- A discussion of Zimbabwe is superficial as it comprises general statements about the potential of agritourism failing to mention one area or farm which is already known as an agritourism destination/attraction.
- Table 1 is insightful and well-presented.
- Even though the festivals are mentioned on a few occasions, their role was not explained and not one was specifically described or mentioned.

1. Benefits of agritourism

Nicely explained. Should focus on Africa following a discussion in the literature review.

1. Agritourism and Sustainable Development Goals

- Not sure how it fits in. Any type of tourism that is typical of Africa, eg. nature-based, indigenous or rural, can make the same contributions to the SDGs.

1. Lessons learnt

- Admittedly there are a few very good points in this section particularly the mention of **festivals** which are the key to farming communities. They should be emphasised more especially in the introduction and literature. Overall not convinced by this section.

1. Implications to Practice and Policy

- Zimbabwe like any other country can develop agritourism. The connection is superficial and not relatable to Zimbabwe. There was nothing specific about the current situation in Zimbabwe which would justify the conceptual framework. There is no relevance to Zimbabwe.