

Research Article

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

Promise Zvavahera¹, Farai Chigora²

1. IBSUniversity, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea; 2. Africa University, Zimbabwe

This literature review aims to examine the influence of agritourism as a driver of socio-economic transformation in developing economies, with reference to Zimbabwe. 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. This conceptual paper employs an extensive examination of literature to assess how agritourism can catalyse socio-economic transformation in emerging economies, specifically with a focus on Zimbabwe. The literature review encompasses various themes, including the conceptual framework of agritourism, its advantages, challenges, and the factors influencing its success in promoting socio-economic transformation. The literature reveals that agritourism has the potential to generate employment for local communities, create additional income streams for farmers, and contribute to rural development. It can also play a significant role in poverty alleviation and promoting food security. Furthermore, agritourism fosters empowerment and entrepreneurship among farming communities, enabling them to capitalise on their agricultural resources, cultural heritage, and unique tourist attractions. Moreover, it promotes resilience and long-term economic growth by encouraging sustainable farming practices, knowledge sharing, and capacity building. However, the literature also identifies several challenges that may impede the growth of agritourism in developing economies, particularly in Zimbabwe. These challenges include inadequate supportive legislation, limited infrastructure on farms, insufficient marketing and branding initiatives, and restricted access to funding. The recommendations encompass the creation of comprehensive policies and regulatory frameworks, the establishment of funding mechanisms, the implementation of capacity-building programmes, and the adoption of effective marketing and promotion strategies. Overall, this literature review contributes to the existing knowledge by synthesising and analysing the literature on agritourism as a means of socio-economic transformation in developing economies, with a specific focus on Zimbabwe.

Corresponding authors: Promise Zvavahera, promisezvavahera@gmail.com; Farai Chigora, fchigora@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

Around the world, agritourism is gaining momentum and showing enormous promise in improving the socio-economic status of farmers and the surrounding communities. According to van Zyl and Merwe (2021; Chase, 2020), agritourism is the practice of inviting guests to an agricultural operation with the goal of purchasing farm goods and having fun. It combines chances for outdoor recreation, agricultural education, and agricultural recreation (Barbieri, 2014). It allows visitors to experience rural life, participate in farming activities, and learn about agricultural practices. Visitors are keen to learn about rural life and the products that draw it, and this form of tourism has been rapidly growing throughout the world. As a result

of this new development, farmers must diversify their operations to attract more customers and improve their socio-economic standing (Lak and Khairabadi, 2022). According to Sznajder, Przezbórska, and Scrimgeour (2009), the literature suggests that a significant portion of some family members' income, approximately 90%, is derived from agriculture. Carpio et al. (2008) estimate that agritourism contributes between USD 800 million and USD 3 billion to the United States of America's economy. Given the thriving state of agritourism in the United States of America, these figures may have tripled. India's agritourism is also experiencing a steady growth rate of 20% per year contributing 13.5% to the GDP (<https://www.nicheagriculture.com/agritourism-backbone-of-indias-gdp/>). In South Africa, the tourism industry accounted for 2.9% of the GDP (and indirectly, 8.6%), whereas the agriculture industry's contribution was 1.88% of the country's GDP in 2019. Therefore, both sectors are important (Grillini, 2021). Agriculture in Morocco has contributed to around 33% of all jobs and approximately 12% of the country's GDP (European Training Foundation, 2021). A study conducted by Nyova (2023) in Tanzania reveals that the poverty observed in farming communities and their surrounding areas can be attributed to the impact of COVID-19, specifically the constraints imposed on transporting agricultural goods to markets. This underscores the crucial role of agritourism in sustaining livelihoods.

European agritourism is rapidly growing as farmers are supplying tourists with high-quality goods and services (Slavic and Schmitz, 2013). The European Union (EU) has supported farmers' efforts in agritourism through finance, regulation, capacity building, and upgrading, leading to lucrative enterprises (Brandth and Haugen, 2011). The Multi-annual Financial Framework of the EU includes a number of financial schemes that support tourism in rural areas during the years 2021–2027. The most relevant EU financial programmes to support the establishment, operation, and growth of agritourism within member states are the Cohesion Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), which are all part of the second pillar of rural development. In the EU the value chain through agritourism is believed to have the ability to build smart towns and provide prosperous jobs for the local communities and beyond. The farming communities have the chance to develop unique value chains like the bio-economy, renewable energy, and circular economy by providing a variety of tourism products that can promote growth by generating jobs for local communities (EAFRD, 2013). Due to the impact that agriculture has on communal life, the EU has developed initiatives to support it (Bacsi and Száltekei, 2022).

Because agritourism cannot compete with hotels and other similar businesses, agritourism is viewed in Europe as an ancillary to the primary tourism industry. 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 (Cigale, Lampi and Potonik, 2012) and Dubois and Schmitz (2012). Agritourism is increasingly diverse and complements traditional tourism in France with activities that are well-liked in farming communities, like festivals (Marsat, 2012). In Italy and the United States of America, where agritourism was originally introduced in the 1920s when travel had become more widely used, farmers still participate in celebrations of harvests and achievements today (van Zyl and van der Merwe, 2004). This extensive approach has contributed to the growth and success of this kind of tourism (Akwii, and Kruszewski, 2021). Now that people may sell agricultural goods and related services to tourists, remote farmers can improve their revenue.

Agritourism was recognised in Italy in 1985 in conformity with the Italian Framework Law (Italian Framework Law. Discipline of Agritourism. No. 730 of 5 December 1985). It is now being managed in accordance with Law No. 96 of February 20, 2006 (Discipline of Agritourism No. 730 of December 5, 1985), following evaluations. By allowing visitors to their farms

and removing any potential obstacles posed by local land use laws that might forbid such businesses in farming communities, Act 143 seeks to provide a minimum level of support for agritourism businesses across the state and enable farms to diversify their services and sources of income.

The tourism business in the Philippines is booming, and the country is looking into the possibility of agritourism as a replacement. The country has shown commitment by ranking among the top eight agritourism destinations worldwide. Agritourism has a lot of benefits, including social benefits, economic growth, and the preservation of cultural and ecological heritage (Cultural and Society, 2013). The majority of the population in Japan preferred sight and surroundings on their domestic journeys, according to a survey done there in 2021. Stakeholders view rice planting, harvesting outings, and culinary tours as crucial agritourism facilitators. Agritourism-related farms in Taiwan showed an increase in farm income, which aided in the prosperity of the family, according to a study by Chang, Mishra, and Lee (2019). The family members preferred working on the farm over working outside. Additionally, employing locals would be a way to raise households' socio-economic position (Runganga and Mhaka, 2021). In Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea, the contributions of smallholder farmers to agriculture are decreasing, which has an effect on the contribution of agritourism to economic growth. The potential for agritourism has emerged in each of the three nations as a result of consumers' increasing demand for leisure time and declining pricing for agricultural goods.

2. Methodology

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. 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. To effectively gather relevant literature, the researchers utilised keywords such as developing economies, farm tourism, emerging economies, and agritourism during their search. They employed various databases including Scopus, PubMed, and Web of Science, focusing on areas such as development studies, agriculture, and tourism. A total of 105 academic articles and reports were reviewed, and the most pertinent literature was chosen for this paper. The credibility and quality of the literature were evaluated based on academic research articles and official reports specific to the region and countries. By incorporating literature from different countries, the researchers were able to draw solid and dependable conclusions, as several developing economies faced similar challenges to Zimbabwe. The researchers organised the findings in a chronological and logical manner after analysing the compiled literature. 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 (refer to Figure 1).

3. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this paper is informed by literature. 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 (Baipai, Chikuta, Gandiwa and Mutanga, 2023; Brandth and Haugen, 2011) (see Figure 1). The linkages and interdependencies between the different elements are shown by the arrows. The core of the idea is agritourism, which is basically the goal of providing visitors with a pleasurable and instructive experience while engaging in

sustainable agriculture and improving local lives. Farmers are ensured favourable returns on their investments once all of these are in place.

3.1. Location

The location needs to be carefully considered in order to draw tourists. Accessibility and closeness to necessary amenities like highways and refreshments, among others, may entice visitors. It is essential to provide stunning scenery in undeveloped areas. Safety for visitors, parking, accommodation, restrooms, dining areas, and entertainment facilities are necessities. Tourists would want to stay longer in such serene locations, away from the clamour and distractions of city life, provided these fundamental components are available. Chigora et al. (2020), who stated that local residents increase the location's attraction by providing indigenous foods and beverages, decent accommodation, and a distinct traditional dress code, concur with this. The literature further suggests that culture is essential in ensuring that tourists have a thorough understanding of rural living (Cigale, Lampi and Potonik, 2012; Dubois and Schmitz, 2012).



Figure 1. Model for agritourism transformation

3.2. Funding

Financial resources are necessary for agritourism to prosper and endure (Badulescu et al., 2015). Most agritourism initiatives need financial support from banks, partner companies, and the government. For instance, the European Union (EU) has supported farmers' efforts in agritourism through finance, regulation, capacity building, and upgrading of infrastructure, leading to lucrative enterprises (Brandth and Haugen, 2011). Fruit picking, hayrides, wine tasting, and farm-to-table eating are some examples of these activities. For these enterprises, infrastructure investments are required, including those for farming equipment, kitchens for preparing food, marketing, and transportation. Additionally, in order to cover all of their costs, including those for maintaining the farm or ranch, agritourism businesses must be able to effectively manage their funds. For instance, upkeep expenses for infrastructure, fences, irrigation systems, and other equipment are ongoing and necessitate continuous investment. Funding is one of the key elements in the model. In order to attract visitors to their farms and ranches, agritourism businesses must invest in marketing, which entails allocating funds for activities like website

development and advertising. The ability to access financial resources can also give agritourism businesses the freedom to expand their product lines and invest in new businesses (Radović et al., 2020). For instance, a farm that has traditionally focused on fruit picking may opt to invest in the development of a brand-new activity like a petting zoo or a farm-to-table restaurant (Marsat, 2012). If agritourism businesses have the financial means to invest in new endeavours, they can remain competitive in a market that is continuously changing. The success of agritourism businesses depends on the availability of financial resources. These funds are necessary to cover ongoing costs such as personnel salaries and maintenance, as well as to pay infrastructure upkeep, marketing, and new projects.

3.3. Product Quality

The quality of the services and products provided at the location has a significant impact on the venture's success. Visitors should be able to take pleasure in the peaceful settings as well as have access to high-quality agricultural services and products, such as farm-to-table dining, fresh produce, and animal husbandry, among others. South African and European agritourism are thriving because farmers are supplying tourists with high-quality goods and services (Slavic and Schmitz, 2013). If the products are to be more desirable, they must be authentic, developed locally, and produced sustainably (Filda et al., 2020). Visitors can learn more about the connections between sustainable agriculture and the methods utilised to produce farm goods. According to a study by Mutsikiwa, Zvavahera, and Pasipanodya (2020), visitors evaluate the quality of their vacation based on the services, commodities, attractions, accessibility, and infrastructure. With reference to Figure 1, quality products entice customers to have repeated visits and make referrals.

3.4. Marketing Strategies

Marketing is an effective method for luring visitors to the centre (see Figure). Marketing strategies including public relations, online marketing, advertising, traditional media, and social media may help promote the website and its offerings. The special features of the agritourism location, including its educational and recreational offerings, its picturesque surroundings, and the standard of its commodities, should be emphasised in the marketing efforts. In light of this, brand awareness is a crucial sign of how well consumers are aware of a brand. The consumer may be able to retrieve this information quickly and effortlessly from memory (Chigora et al., 2020; O'Guinn, Allen, and Semenik, 2009). Therefore, without marketing, it may be difficult to develop and grow agritourism in farming communities. This could be one of the reasons why there is a dearth of literature about this promising enterprise, particularly in Zimbabwe and developing countries.

3.5. Infrastructure

Infrastructure is important because it provides tourists with enjoyable and worthwhile experiences. 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. According to Mutsikiwa, Zvavahera, and Pasipanodya (2020) and Slavic and Schmitz (2013), visitors of all ages and skill levels ought to be able to use the infrastructure and experience comfort in the well-maintained environment.

3.6. Policy Support

Baipai et al. (2021), in their study conducted in Zimbabwe, highlighted the crucial role of government policy direction in ensuring the success of agritourism. Governments and regulatory authorities play a significant role in developing the legal framework required for the countries' agritourism business to prosper and grow). Grants, financial aid from agritourism businesses to farmers, and tax advantages are all potential types of policy. Laws may include zoning regulations, health and safety requirements, and environmental rules to ensure the viability of agritourism and the environment. 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 (Haggblade et al., 2010; Tew and Barbieri, 2012). The Kenyan Government encourages agritourism as a way to diversify the tourism industry and aid regional farmers because it recognises the potential of the industry (Khanal, Honey and Omobitan, 2019).

Policy-makers, academics, and governments have recently focused attention on agritourism as a tactic for the sustainable development of rural areas (Sonnino, 2003). According to McGehee (2007) and Barbieri (2013), agritourism provides advantages such as the potential for surplus income, decreased investment needs, utilisation of already-existing resources, limited impact on the environment, and recognition of cultural heritage. In Italy, agritourism is being managed in accordance with Law No. 96 of February 20, 2006 (Discipline of Agritourism No. 730 of December 5, 1985), following evaluations. The next section examines prosperous agritourism businesses from all around the world, including examples from Europe, Africa, and Asia. Zimbabwe can benefit from these lessons as well.

4. Literature review

Several African countries have actively pushed agritourism. South Africa, Kenya, Morocco, and Tanzania are a few of the well-known nations that have successfully generated agritourism goods and experiences (Nyova (2023; Magigi and Ramadhani, 2013). These nations provide a wide range of activities, such as farm tours, agricultural festivals, wine tours, cooking classes, and eco-lodges on working farms. Agritourism has a lot of potential to grow in Africa because of the continent's diversity in agricultural landscapes and richness of natural resources. Africa's numerous governments and regions have quite different agritourism policies and some of them are not effective to drive agritourism to sustainable and profitable enterprises. According to Rogerson and Rogerson (2014), agritourism has the potential to assist many African nations to diversify their economies, enhance rural development, and increase farmer income. Local governments, tourism boards, and farmers must work together to promote their regions' agricultural sectors and draw tourists. Agritourism needs to work well with communities in order to succeed. By incorporating local farmers, craftspeople, and citizens, agritourism projects aim to empower communities, uphold traditional practices, and create sustainable livelihoods. In a number of African countries, community-based tourism approaches are being used to ensure that the benefits of agritourism reach local populations. Agritourism in Africa faces a variety of challenges despite its potential. These challenges include insufficient funding, poor infrastructure on the farms' locations, ineffective marketing and promotion, and a lack of awareness among potential tourists. It is crucial to address these problems if agritourism is to thrive across the continent.

4.1. The Case of Kenya

Kenya is noted for its diverse agricultural sector. Agritourism is a special opportunity for travellers to explore the nation's rich agricultural heritage and participate in rural farm activities. According to Kipkorir, Nzomo, and Gogo (2002), Kenyan agritourism largely focuses on demonstrating diverse agricultural methods, such as crop production, livestock husbandry, dairy farming, and gardening. Visitors can take part in activities including picking fruit, visiting tea or coffee plantations, feeding animals, milking cows, and discovering traditional farming practices (Agayi, and Gündüz, 2020). In particular, during COVID-19, agritourism developed into a substitute for traditional tourism (Adom, Atabek and Gouthami, 2021). The Central and Rift Valley tea and coffee districts, the flower farms around Naivasha, and the agricultural farms in outlying places like Laikipia and Nanyuki are just a few of the major agritourism destinations in Kenya (Kipkorir, Nzomo and Gogo, 2022). Visitors have the chance to enjoy Kenya's natural beauty and wildlife while also learning about agriculture at these locations.

The Kenyan government has taken steps to encourage agritourism as a way to diversify the tourism industry and aid regional farmers because it recognises the potential of the industry (Khanal, Honey and Omobitan, 2019). Infrastructure development, agritourism site accessibility, and training for farmers on hospitality and tourism-related services have all been prioritised. Agritourism has boosted the worth and dignity of the indigenous population in Kenya, resulting in better living conditions. As a result of changing tastes, destructive lifestyles, drug abuse, prostitution, and other factors, farming communities lament the erosion of their traditional customs (Kipkorir, Nzomo and Gogo, 2022). Conflicts between people and wildlife have also increased as a result of farmers encroaching on nearby forests as a result of the expansion of agritourism through infrastructure development. It is good that agritourism has helped to combat poverty and unemployment. Zimbabwe is given hope by Kenya as an example.

4.2. The Case of Tanzania

Tanzania's burgeoning agritourism industry has enormous promise. Tanzania, like Kenya, offers a rich agricultural terrain, and agritourism lets visitors experience the local farming and way of life in the countryside. The majority of towns depend on regional tourism for their income (Anderson, 2018). According to Epaphra and Mwakalasya (2017), agritourism in Tanzania typically focuses on excursions to coffee and tea plantations, spice farms, fruit orchards, and vegetable farms. In addition to learning about conventional farming operations and cultural customs, tourists get the chance to participate in activities including harvesting, processing, and tasting agricultural goods. The coffee fields in the Arusha and Kilimanjaro regions, the spice farms in Zanzibar, and the agricultural districts in the southern highlands, such as Iringa and Mbeya, are among major agritourism attractions in Tanzania. Visitors get the opportunity to learn about the agricultural processes and interact with local farmers in these areas. According to Magigi and Ramadhani (2013), the Tanzanian Government has recognised the potential of agritourism as a way to advance rural development, boost the tourism industry, and better local communities' standard of living. Infrastructure has been developed, farmers have received training in hospitality and tourism-related activities, and associations between farmers and tour operators have been formed. According to the Sustainable Development Goals, conservation agriculture has resulted from agritourism through government support (Kahimba et al., 2014).

4.3. The Case of Morocco

In Morocco, agritourism is a booming industry that is attracting more domestic and foreign visitors. Morocco is a desirable location for agritourism due to its unique agricultural environment and traditional farming methods. Visits to organic farms, hands-on experience with traditional farming techniques, taking part in harvest events, and education on regional agricultural products are all common components of Moroccan agritourism (Jczmyk, 2014). Visitors can interact with farmers, visit rural areas, and fully experience the nation's agricultural legacy. Agritourism will enhance the socio-economic standing of communities and farmers in Morocco, where agriculture has historically provided 33% of all jobs and approximately 12% of the country's GDP (European Training Foundation, 2021). The lush plains of the Saiss region, the palm trees in the Draa Valley, the wineries in the Meknes, and the olive groves in the Rif Mountains are a few well-liked agritourism locations in Morocco (Khalil, 2009). These areas give visitors the chance to see Morocco's diverse agricultural landscape and experience rural life. The Moroccan Government has acted to encourage the growth of agritourism after seeing the industry's potential.

4.4. The Case of South Africa

An example of a success story is South Africa, where the private sector support sparked the nation's rapid growth in agritourism, where both tourism and agriculture contribute to the GDP of the nation. Agritourism started to take shape in South Africa around the 1950s when farmers concentrated mostly on ostrich farming. The farmers and locals eventually watched ostrich racing as a result of this (Grillini et al., 2022). With a focus on pursuits including photography, farm stays, trekking, animal viewing, and hunting, agritourism has grown in popularity over time (van Zyl and van der Merwe, 2021). Farmers in South Africa who are prepared to commit time to agritourism, treat it like a business rather than a side project, and have a working knowledge of the market are the key factors in its success. The government also offers support in terms of legislation (Government of South Africa, 1996). Farmers in South Africa may also be eligible for loans from banks supported by the Government. In South Africa, agritourism is viewed as a method to spread out financial risk and give farmers a voice. It has the potential to keep improving local communities' quality of life by providing employment and farmers also get income through tourists. However, it is difficult to compare different nations since South African farmers operate within diverse frameworks and settings.

4.5. The Zimbabwean Context

Based on the study by Poultona et al. (2002) and Baipai et al. (2021), agriculture and tourism, as significant sectors in Zimbabwe's economy, play a substantial role in generating employment, food production, and export revenue. Zimbabwe primarily cultivates crops such as maize, tobacco, cotton, wheat, soybeans, sugarcane, coffee, tea, and various horticultural crops like vegetables, fruits, and flowers. Livestock farming is also prevalent, involving the rearing of cattle, goats, sheep, and fowl for meat, milk, eggs, and other products. In rural areas, small-scale subsistence farming is particularly important, enabling farmers to grow commodities for personal consumption and local markets (Runganga and Mhaka, 2021). Due to its wealth of natural resources and diverse agricultural landscapes, Zimbabwe offers a significant opportunity for the growth of agritourism (Chikuta and Makacha, 2016). Despite the fact that agritourism has the potential to enhance the lives of farming communities and provide job opportunities for the local population in Zimbabwe, its economic relevance has not been

substantially investigated. In order to compete with established tourist enterprises, agritourism farmers must develop and take part in a variety of on-farm plans and initiatives involving all the significant players.

Zimbabwe offers favourable conditions for agritourism, including a conducive environment, climate, topography, and agricultural practices that significantly impact the nation's agricultural activities. Efforts are being made to promote afforestation, conservation, and sustainable agricultural techniques. However, Zimbabwe faces challenges due to reduced rainfall and shifted seasons caused by climate change. To sustain crop production throughout the year, irrigation is essential in regions with scarce rainfall. Hence, irrigation plans and reservoirs have been implemented in arid areas. This requires adequate funding and support (Mushore et al., 2021).

Chikuta and Makacha (2016) conducted a study and found that agritourism is a viable option in Zimbabwe, as some farms already possess the necessary resources. The authors urge the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority and the Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism, and Hospitality Industry to enhance agritourism through legislation and financial assistance. On a positive note, the Kenyan Government recognises the potential of agritourism and encourages its development as a means to diversify the tourism industry and support regional farmers (Khanal, Honey and Omobitan, 2019).

Agritourism holds significant value in industrialised economies and is flourishing in many countries worldwide (Grillini et al., 2022). However, there is a lack of research on agritourism in developing countries, particularly Zimbabwe (Chikuta and Makacha, 2016). Experts believe that agritourism has the potential to foster socio-economic development in farming communities, benefiting rural areas. Research conducted by Chikuta and Makacha (2016) suggests that agritourism could be a viable alternative to conventional tourism in Zimbabwe, although it is still a relatively new concept that has yet to gain widespread popularity.

Zimbabwe, with its predominantly agricultural economy, abundant land for farming, and favourable climate, presents a lucrative opportunity for agritourism (Sanderson and Pierre Le, 2017). Some farmers have already started offering farm stays and guesthouses to tourists, providing them with the chance to engage in farming activities, witness agricultural processes, and immerse themselves in the farming way of life. This trend has led to an increase in organic farming practices and permaculture projects in Zimbabwe, attracting tourists interested in sustainable agricultural practices ((Baipai, 2023; Arru et al, 2019). Certain farms and rural areas also offer programs and workshops on sustainable agriculture, organic farming, and sustainable food production.

Agritourism initiatives are recognised for their unique appeal, encompassing the nation's abundant natural resources and diverse regional cultural traditions (Arru et al., 2019). To foster sustainable agritourism in farming communities, it is essential to integrate local cultural values, social structures, environments, economies, and identities. Successful promotion, development, and implementation of agritourism can contribute to ongoing rural development (Wijijayanti et al., 2023). Zimbabwe places great emphasis on domestic tourism development, and agritourism can play a critical role. Local communities actively participate by extending invitations, showcasing their agricultural practices, and facilitating cultural exchanges. Agritourism programs aim to support local communities by providing economic opportunities and preserving their cultural heritage.

In Zimbabwe, an increasing number of agricultural festivals and events, known as field days, allow tourists to engage with farmers, participate in local traditions, and honor the country's agricultural heritage. Similar practices can be observed in

Italy and the United States, where farmers participate in celebrations of harvests and accomplishments (van Zyl and van der Merwe, 2004). These festivals often include exhibitions, agricultural displays, culinary markets, and cultural performances. They have proven to be a means for farmers to enhance their income, thereby stimulating regional economies. However, the agritourism industry in Zimbabwe encounters challenges that are common among many other African countries, such as inadequate infrastructure, insufficient marketing and promotion efforts, limited funding, and the need for capacity building. Overcoming these challenges is essential for the sustainable growth of Zimbabwe's agritourism sector.

Aspect	Zimbabwe	South Africa	Tanzania	Kenya	Morocco
Agricultural Focus	Farmlands, Tea, Coffee, Wildlife	Vineyards, Fruit, Livestock, Game Reserves	Coffee, Tea, Spices	Coffee, Tea, Fruit Farms, Dairy Farms	Olive Groves, Vineyards, Citrus Farms
Policy Support	No established policies directly supporting agritourism	Well-established policies supporting agritourism	Policies promoting agritourism	Government initiatives supporting agritourism	Policies supporting agritourism
State of Infrastructure	Varied; some areas may have limitations	Well-developed infrastructure	Developing infrastructure	Developing infrastructure	Well-developed infrastructure
Funding	Limited access to funding sources	Availability of funding from various sources	Limited availability of funding	Availability of funding from various sources	Availability of funding from various sources
Marketing Strategies	Limited efforts to promote agritourism sector	Extensive marketing campaigns and promotions	Marketing initiatives underway	Marketing campaigns targeting tourists	Marketing campaigns targeting tourists
Quality of Products	Diverse agricultural products	High-quality agricultural products	Growing focus on quality products	High-quality agricultural products	High-quality agricultural products

Table 1. Comparison of Zimbabwe's agritourism with selected developing economies

Zimbabwe has been recognised as lacking well-established policies, funding, and effective marketing strategies to promote agritourism. While each country offers unique agritourism experiences, their common goal is to provide visitors with a deep understanding of agricultural practices, cultural traditions, and the inherent natural beauty associated with farming in their specific regions. In contrast, the Government of Morocco is actively supporting the growth of agritourism through policies and funding (Magigi and Ramadhani, 2013). This highlights the situation in Zimbabwe and aligns with the findings of Rogerson and Rogerson (2014), who argue that some countries are not fully harnessing the potential of agritourism. Zimbabwe has an opportunity to draw inspiration from successful agritourism models in neighboring countries like South Africa, which is also a developing nation in Africa. The following section explores the benefits of agritourism.

4.6. Benefits of Agritourism

Agritourism offers farmers new sources of income, leading to economic diversification in local communities. It creates employment opportunities in both the tourism and agricultural sectors, such as farming, harvesting, and animal husbandry, thereby reducing unemployment rates and increasing income levels in farming areas (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2014). Moreover, it revitalises rural communities by attracting investments and visitors. Agritourism encourages entrepreneurship and the growth of small businesses, including farm stays, farmers' markets, and wine tours. This, in turn, stimulates supporting industries such as transportation, lodging, dining, and handicrafts, benefiting neighboring companies and communities (Jczmyk, 2014).

Agritourism plays a crucial role in preserving traditional farming methods and cultural heritage (Roman and Grudzie, 2021). Visitors have the opportunity to learn about the background and significance of farming within a community, fostering a sense of pride and appreciation for local agricultural traditions. Through agritourism, people of all ages can gain new knowledge, allowing urban dwellers to reconnect with nature, understand the source of their food, and gain hands-on experience with sustainable agricultural practices. This promotes awareness about the importance of environmental conservation, biodiversity preservation, and regional agriculture (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2014).

Agritourism encourages community engagement by bringing people together. Local farmers, artisans, and residents often collaborate to promote their products and traditions, fostering a sense of unity and pride among the community members (Paniccia and Leoni, 2019). Festivals, workshops, and farm-to-table dining experiences facilitate interaction between locals and visitors, fostering cultural exchange and building connections between people.

Agritourism promotes environmentally responsible behavior and sustainable agricultural practices. Operations within agritourism often emphasize organic farming, conservation methods, and the preservation of natural resources (Muresan et al., 2016; Ammirato et al., 2020). It highlights the value of proper land management, water conservation, and biodiversity preservation, contributing to the overall sustainability of the community.

Agritourism serves as a unique attraction, drawing tourists to rural areas that may not typically be considered tourist destinations. It expands the range of tourism options in a country, appealing to food enthusiasts, nature lovers, and those seeking authentic cultural experiences (Jczmyk, 2014). This can increase overall tourist numbers, visitor spending, and the visibility and reputation of the local community.

In conclusion, agritourism supports local economies, societies, and cultures. It promotes environmental sustainability, boosts local economies, preserves agricultural heritage, provides educational opportunities, and strengthens community bonds. By embracing agritourism, communities can build a sustainable and prosperous future while showcasing their distinctive agricultural assets to the world.

5. Agritourism and Sustainable Development Goals

Agritourism has the potential to significantly contribute to the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Zimbabwe and other developing economies. The SDGs were established by the United Nations in consultation with member states, aiming to address various social, economic, and environmental challenges faced by the global community.

SDGs that may be addressed agritourism	The impact
SDG 1: No Poverty	Agritourism may provide farming communities opportunities to make money, reduce poverty and improve quality of life. By attracting tourists to their farms and rural communities, local farmers and towns can increase their revenue through lodging, guided tours, and the sale of commodities. Agritourism can develop moral farming practices and increase food security, advancing
SDG 2: Zero Hunger	Agritourism destinations give visitors the chance to learn about organic farming, conventional agricultural practices, and local food production. This information exchange can help improve farming methods, increase crop yields, and reduce the rates of hunger and malnutrition.
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	Agritourism creates jobs, particularly in rural areas where employment opportunities may be few. Numerous businesses, including hospitality, travel and transportation, and handicrafts can benefit from its job-creating potential. By diversifying the local economy, agritourism promotes economic growth and improves livelihoods.
SDG 12: Responsible Production and Consumption	In keeping with SDG 12 on responsible production and consumption, agritourism promotes sustainable and moral practices in both agriculture and tourism. It encourages the use of organic farming methods, the preservation of biodiversity, and proper waste management practices. By promoting local food consumption, agritourism reduces the carbon footprint caused by a long-distance shipment of goods. Agritourism can aid in efforts to adapt to and reduce climate change.
SDG 13: Climate Action	By incorporating sustainable agricultural methods including agroforestry, water conservation, and the use of renewable energy, agritourism destinations can reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Agritourism also has the potential to inform visitors about the importance of conservation and living sustainably.
SDG 15: Life on Land	Visitors can pick up information on employing sustainable land management practices and conserving wildlife, and native plants. Agritourism offers financial incentives for protecting natural places, which helps to conserve ecosystems and preserve animals
SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	Agritourism promotes cooperation among various stakeholders, including farmers, local communities, governmental organisations, and tourism organisations.

Table 2. Agritourism and Sustainable Development Goals

6. Lessons Learnt

Zimbabwe and other developing economies can draw valuable lessons and inspiration from successful agritourism stories in Asia, Europe, and Africa. These lessons are important for farmers, tourism regulatory agencies, funders, and governments. Financial institutions may need to initiate discussions about supporting farmers in agritourism, considering its proven success in developing nations like Kenya and South Africa.

Government policies play a crucial role in recognizing the significance of agritourism in the socio-economic development of farming communities and rural areas, as demonstrated by Kenya, South Africa, and Tanzania. Financial support, including infrastructure development such as accommodation, roads, and value addition, is essential. In the absence of government and banking assistance, farmers can come together and pool their resources to support each other.

Agritourism is still in its early stages in Zimbabwe and other developing economies, resulting in a lack of literature on the subject. Effective marketing strategies are crucial to raise awareness and promote this form of tourism. With proper support, agritourism has the potential to enhance the socio-economic status of farming communities by creating employment opportunities and alternative sources of income.

In addition, agritourism can contribute to achieving various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Zimbabwe and other developing countries. These goals include reducing poverty, ensuring food security, promoting sustainable agriculture, decent work, and responsible consumption, combating climate change, protecting biodiversity, and fostering partnerships for sustainable development. By advancing these goals, agritourism can contribute to the overall progress and prosperity of communities in Zimbabwe and beyond.

7. Implications to Practice and Policy

Zimbabwe has a bright future ahead for its agritourism industry as it strives to develop its tourism sector and promote sustainable farming practices. With its agrarian economy and rich agricultural heritage, Zimbabwe provides a solid foundation for the growth of agritourism. By integrating agricultural experiences with traditional tourism offerings, the country has the potential to diversify its tourism economy and attract a broader range of visitors. Agritourism serves as a valuable tool for farmers to showcase and market their value-added agricultural products. Tourists can sample and purchase locally produced foods, beverages, crafts, and other agricultural goods, generating additional income for farmers and fostering agricultural entrepreneurship.

Through collaborations with academic institutions and research groups, agritourism can also contribute to experiential learning opportunities and agricultural research, providing funding for educational programs and research in the agricultural sector. Zimbabwe is renowned for its diverse wildlife and pristine landscapes, which can be combined with agritourism to create synergies between agriculture, tourism, and environmental conservation. Visitors can participate in wildlife protection programs and gain insights into sustainable farming practices.

Appropriate legislation and regulations must be implemented to ensure the success of agritourism. The government should establish regulations promoting environmental sustainability, infrastructure development, safety requirements, and land usage. Well-defined laws can create an enabling environment for agritourism businesses to thrive while safeguarding natural and cultural resources. It is crucial to consider local contexts, involve stakeholders, and conduct ongoing evaluations to address any potential concerns and maximize benefits for all parties involved in the implementation of agritourism policies in Zimbabwe. Collaboration between government agencies, regional groups, businesses, and tourism organizations is essential for the growth and marketing of agritourism. Policies that encourage public-private partnerships, and community involvement, and facilitate market connections can enhance the feasibility and sustainability of agritourism initiatives overall.

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