



## Analyzing the Factors Influencing Consumer Willingness on Agri-tourism: An Evidence from Hungary

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### ABSTRACT

The decline in the agricultural and allied forms of rural employment in different countries is creating a need to diversify the farm businesses. Agri-tourism is one of the alternative form of businesses designed to expand farm income by fuller employment of available farm resources. The study examines the willingness of consumers towards agri-tourism and the factors which encourage them to choose agri-tourism in terms of their expectations with focus on Hungarian citizens. The data were collected by using simple random sampling method in Hungary. It was found out that along with agri-tourism activity, people also expect the farm to provide education about agriculture. The expectations of the respondents include accommodation facility on the farm itself may be a farm house, preferred walking around the farm instead of using vehicles or bicycles. Majority of the people preferred village food, completely barring fast. Other findings of the study include that the people want to learn about rural culture, want to purchase different agricultural products from the agri-tourism farm, want to enjoy different recreational activities like horse riding, cart racing, camel riding, etc. and want to impart practical skills relating to agriculture. Agri-tourism could be one of the best opportunities for improving the economy of Hungary, farmers would also generate additional income and will going help in attracting youth towards agriculture in Hungary.

**Key words:** Agri-tourism, Agriculture, Rural employment, Village, Income

Tourism is considered one of the most prominent sector across Europe. According to a report published in 2014 by European Parliament, 10% of the enterprises in the European non-financial business economy belonged to the tourism industries and also there was nearly percent contribution to the overall European GDP from the travel and tourism sector and the sector has generated 11.9 million jobs across Europe (European parliament fact sheets on tourism). Among many other kinds of tourism sectors in Europe, agri-tourism is being encouraged and supported by many governments of European Union (Che 2007). Early dawn of agri-tourism was not the same as what it is now in

Europe, previously the term agri-tourism was not widely used, instead, rural tourism was widely practiced in which visitors with a taste in country side were served by this rural tourism industry and not surprisingly the visitors were encouraged to make a stay at farm houses and so has developed the trend of farm tourism which later due to high encouragement by the governments for farm diversification would be called as agri-tourism (Lane *et al.* 2013). According to Lane *et al.* (2013), after 1960-70s after official encouragement by governments for farm diversification, the usage of agri-tourism has started to get its fame and has become more commonly used term. The shift of consumer interest towards a peaceful country side is catching high demands across the world. This shift of interest has rose the opportunities in the field of country side tourism and so the need of research in the field of agri-tourism which is a sub-sector of rural tourism (Lane *et al.* 2013). Agri-tourism is comparatively a very new and an innovative phenomenon which ensures tourists a unique destination which not only is

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intended to pleasure seeking but also provide with understanding of culture, traditions and education of agriculture which are otherwise not usually sought by the urban citizens. According to Salvic and Schmitz (2013), due to the decrease in the income of farmers generated through agriculture as a result of continuous reforms in the European Union's Common Agriculture Policy, people involved in farming or farming allied income dependents have to relay on additional income sources and agri-tourism could be one among the major income sources for such people.

In this line this paper is intended to give an understanding of willingness of consumers towards agri-tourism and to understand which factors encourages them to choose agri-tourism in terms of their expectations with focus on Hungarian citizens. The growing interest towards visiting farms and agricultural lands is been observed across Europe and the trend of agriculture tourism and willingness to consumers towards it is analyzed in this article.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

In an attempt to address the consumer's interests towards agri-tourism, this study has surveyed 30 independent people through structures questions to have an in-depth interview regarding the trend of agri-tourism. Initially the respondents were asked about their socio-economic demographics followed by various questions including preferences, expectations, awareness and willingness of themselves towards agri-tourism. The interviews were conducted at the University of Debrecen, Hungary. Students, teachers and researchers participated in the interviews.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The socio-economic characteristics of the respondents is represented in (Table 1).

Table 1 Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Particulars	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Education level	12 <sup>th</sup>	3	10.00
	Graduation	16	53.33
	Post-graduation	11	36.67
Marital status	Single	21	70.00
	Married	9	30.00
Family size	1-2 members	17	56.67
	3-4 members	11	36.67
	5 members	2	6.67
Family background	Rural	17	56.67
	Urban	13	43.33
Occupation	Student	18	60.00
	Teacher	5	16.67
	Employee	7	23.33

Majority of the respondents completed graduation (53.33%) followed by post-graduation (36.67%) and 12<sup>th</sup> standard (10.00%). With respect to the marital status, 70.00 percent of the respondents were single and 30.00 percent were married. In case of family size, majority of the respondents had only 1 to 2 members (56.67%) in the family

followed by 3 to 4 members (36.67%) and 5 members (6.67%). Majority (56.67%) of the respondents belonged to rural background and 43.33 percent had an urban family background. With respect to the occupation, majority of the respondents in the study were students (60.00) followed by employees 23.33%) and teachers (16.67%). These results are in accordance to Bernardo *et al.* (2004).

Table 2 Respondents information about tourism

Particulars	Type	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents going to tours during vacation	Yes	28	93.33
	No	2	6.67
Season for Vacation	Summer	25	83.33
	Autumn	4	13.33
	Spring	1	3.33
Company during Vacation	Alone	0	0.00
	Family	19	63.33
	Friends	11	36.67
Awareness of the term Agri-tourism	Yes	25	83.33
	No	5	16.67

Data in (Table 2) represents the information about the respondents about tourism. A large majority (93.33%) of the respondents were going to tours during vacation and only 6.67 percent responded that they were not preferring to go to tours during vacation. Summer was the most preferred (83.33%) season for going to vacation followed by autumn (13.33%) and spring seasons (3.33%). Majority (63.33%) of the respondents preferred to spend their vacation time along with their family members followed by friends (36.67%). With respect to the awareness of the term agri-tourism, 83.33 percent of the respondents opined that they were aware about it and only 16.67 percent responded that they were not aware about it.

Table 3 Willingness of respondents for visiting an agri-tourism farm

Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	23	76.67
No	7	23.33
Total	30	100.00

Data depicted in (Table 3) represents the willingness of respondents to visit an agri-tourism farm. 76.67 percent of the respondents opined that they were willing to visit an agri-tourism farm, whereas 23.33% were not willing to visit.

Table 4 Duration of stay in an Agri-tourism farm

Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
One day	1	3.33
Two days	7	23.33
Three days	13	43.33
Four days	8	26.67
Five days	1	3.33
Total	30	100.00

The respondents expected duration of stay in an agri-tourism farm is depicted in (Table 4). Majority of the

respondents preferred to stay for 3 days (43.33%) followed by 4 days (26.67%) and 2 days (23.33%). Whereas, each of 3.33 percent of the individuals preferred to stay for only one day. These results are in accordance to Binali and Patil (2018).

**Table 5 General expectations of respondents while searching a tourist destination**

Particulars	Yes	No
Calm and peaceful environment	70.00	30.00
Pollution free environment	43.33	56.67
Clean and hygiene conditions	53.33	46.67
Scenery	63.33	36.67
Tourist safety	33.33	66.67

The general expectations of respondents while searching a tourist destination is shown in (Table 5). Calm and peaceful environment (70.00%) followed by scenery (63.33%), clean and hygiene environment (53.33%), pollution free environment (43.33%) and tourist safety (33.33%) were the general expectations of the respondents from a tourist destination (Che *et al.* 2005, Mace 2005).

Data depicted in (Table 6) represents the awareness of agri-tourism farms in Hungary. Majority (80.00%) of the respondents opined that they were not much aware about the

agri-tourism farms in Hungary and only 20.00 percent of the respondents were aware about the agri-tourism farms in Hungary (Spychala *et al.* 2017).

**Table 6 Awareness about agri-tourism farms in Hungary**

Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	6	20.00
No	24	80.00
Total	30	100.00

**Table 7 Expectations from Agri-tourism farm**

Particulars	Yes	No
Just an Agri-tourism farm	3.33	96.67
Agri-tourism farm with various agricultural resources	53.33	46.67
Agri-tourism farm that organizes agricultural education tour	60.00	40.00
Opportunity to interact with rural people	40.00	60.00

Expectations from Agri-tourism farm is depicted in (Table 7). About 60.00 percent of the respondents opined that they expect agri-tourism farm that organizes agricultural education tour followed by the farm with various agricultural resources (53.33%) and a farm which provides opportunity to interact with rural people (40.00%).

**Table 8 Willingness of the respondents according to the facilities available at agri-tourism farm**

Particulars	Yes	No
Requirement of accommodation facility right on the farm	80.00	20.00
Type of Accommodation facility required on the farm		
i. Cottage	36.00	64.00
ii. Farm House	84.00	16.00
iii. Resort hotels	32.00	68.00
iv. Camping tents	28.00	72.00
Agri-tourism farm be associated with nearby hotels	60.00	40.00
Type of transportation preferred to tour around the farm		
i. Walking tours	80.00	20.00
ii. Bicycle tours	63.33	36.67
iii. Vehicle Trips	26.67	73.33
Medical facility on the farm	63.33	36.67

Willingness of the respondents according to the facilities available at agri-tourism farm is shown in (Table 8). Nearly 80.00 percent of the respondents opined that they need an accommodation facility right on the farm. Farm house was the most (84.00%) sought type of accommodation on the farm followed by cottage (36.00%), resort hotels (32.00%) and camping tents (28.00%). However, 60.00 percent of the respondents opined that the agri-tourism farm can be associated with nearby hotels. With respect to the type of transportation preferred to tour around the farm, walking tours (80.00%) was most preferred followed by bicycle tours (63.33%) and vehicle trips (26.67%). Nearly, 63.33 percent of the respondents opined that they need a medical facility on the farm.

Willingness of the respondents to participate in agricultural activities is represented in (Table 9). The respondents opined that they are interested to participate in different agricultural activities in the agri-tourism farm viz. milking the cow/buffalo (48.15%), feeding the animal (66.7%), goat and sheep rearing (25.93%), beekeeping (25.93%), sericulture (11.11%), terrace gardening (59.26%), bonsai training (40.74%), poultry (25.93%), fishing (29.63%), organic farming (55.56%), azolla cultivation (11.11%), crop harvesting (44.44%), gardening (62.96%), operating agricultural machineries (55.56%) and pickle making (29.63%). These results are in accordance with the findings of Bagi and Reeder (2012), Slavic and Schmitz (2013).

Table 9 Willingness of the respondents to participate in agricultural activities

Particulars	Yes	No
Milking the cow/buffalo	48.15	51.85
Feeding the animals	66.67	33.33
Goat and Sheep rearing	25.93	74.07
Beekeeping	25.93	74.07
Rabbit rearing	44.44	55.56
Sericulture	11.11	88.89
Terrace gardening	59.26	40.74
Bonsai training	40.74	59.26
Poultry	25.93	74.07
Fishing	29.63	70.37
Organic farming	55.56	44.44
Vermicomposting	0.00	100.00
Azolla cultivation	11.11	88.89
Harvesting of crops	44.44	55.56
Gardening	62.96	37.04
Operating agriculture machineries	55.56	44.44
Pickle making	29.63	70.37

Table 10 Willingness of respondents for visiting an agri-tourism farm

Particulars	Yes	No
Village food	86.21	13.79
Traditional snacks	58.62	41.38
Fast Foods	0.00	100.00

Data in (Table 10) represents willingness of the respondents towards food offerings at agri-tourism farm. Village food was the most preferred food by 86.21 percent of the respondents. Whereas, 58.62 percent of the respondents opined that they prefer traditional snacks. While, fast foods were not at all preferred by the respondents at an agri-tourism farm (Nickerson *et al.* 2001).

Table 11 Willingness of respondents towards various activities at agri-tourism farm

Particulars	Types	Yes	No
Willingness of respondents to learn about rural culture	a. Folk dance	40.00	60.00
	b. Folk music	50.00	50.00
	c. Traditional dress	40.00	60.00
	d. Traditional food	70.00	30.00
	e. Rural games	43.33	56.67
Willingness of the respondents to purchase agricultural products from the Agri-tourism farm	a. Vegetables	50.00	50.00
	b. Fruits	63.33	36.67
	c. Dairy products like cheese	63.33	36.67
	d. Honey	56.67	43.33
	e. Meat and Poultry products	60.00	40.00
	f. Medicinal herbs	53.33	46.67
	g. Handicrafts	43.33	56.67
	h. Organic products	43.33	56.67
Willingness of respondents towards various recreational activities	Horse riding	56.67	43.33
	Cart racing	26.67	73.33
	Operating agricultural machineries	40.00	60.00
	Historical places visit	73.33	26.67
	Camel riding	16.67	83.33
Willingness of the respondents towards imparting practical skills relating to agriculture	Imparting practical skills relating to agriculture	90.00	10.00
	Interest to know about organic terrace gardening	76.67	23.33

Willingness of respondents towards various activities at agri-tourism farm is represented in (Table 11). With respect to willingness of the respondents to learn rural culture, it was found that 40.00 percent, 50.00 percent, 40.00 percent,

70.00 percent and 43.33 percent of the respondents were interested in folk dance, folk music, traditional dress, traditional food and rural games respectively (Saxena *et al.* 2001). In case of willingness of the respondents to purchase

agricultural products from the agri-tourism farm, 50.00 percent, 63.33 percent, 63.33 percent, 56.67 percent, 60.00 percent, 53.33 percent, 43.33 percent and 43.33 percent of the respondents were willing to purchase vegetables, fruits, dairy products like cheese, honey, meat and poultry products, medicinal herbs, handicrafts and organic products respectively from the agri-tourism farm (Bhatta *et al.* 2019).

With respect to the recreational activities, horse riding, cart racing, operating agricultural machineries, historical places visit and camel riding were interesting activities opined by 56.67 percent, 26.67 percent, 40.00 percent, 73.33 percent and 16.67 percent of the respondents. In case of willingness of the respondents towards imparting practical skills relating to agriculture, 90.00 percent of the respondents opined that imparting practical relating to agriculture and 76.67 percent opined that interest to know about organic terrace gardening in agri-tourism farm. Hungary has always been an agricultural country and the country is rich in cultural landscape with small villages and rural hospitality (Kulcsar 2015, McGehee and Kim 2004).

The findings of the study reveal that a majority of the respondents are willing to visit agri-tourism farms at least for a period of three days. But majority of the respondents were not aware of the agri-tourism farms in Hungary. It was

found out that along with agri-tourism activity, people also expect the farm to provide education about agriculture. The expectations of the respondents include accommodation facility on the farm itself may be a farm house, preferred walking around the farm instead of using vehicles or bicycles. Feeding the animals, milking a cow/buffalo, organic farming, operating agricultural machineries, terrace gardening, bonsai training, rabbit training were some of the expectations of respondents in which they would like to participate. Majority of the people preferred village food, completely barring fast. Other findings of the study include that the people want to learn about rural culture, want to purchase different agricultural products from the agri-tourism farm, want to enjoy different recreational activities like horse riding, cart racing, camel riding, etc. and want to impart practical skills relating to agriculture. Agri-tourism could be one of the best opportunity for improving the economy of Hungary, farmers would also generate additional income and will going help in attracting youth towards agriculture in Hungary. It could be possible that after visiting an agri-tourism farm, people may develop a business idea relating to agriculture like dairy farming, fisheries, poultry, goat farming, floriculture, etc. and can generate employment opportunities in rural areas.

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