



Received: 03-04-2023  
Accepted: 13-05-2023

## International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies

ISSN: 2583-049X

### Study of Customer Loyalty to Agritourism Destinations

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#### Abstract

Agritourism presents a chance for businesses engaged in growing meats responsibly to improve marketing, inform consumers, and foster brand loyalty. The main objective of this study was to identify, evaluate, and to measure the attributes of the customer loyalty to agritourism destinations in Hanoi city, Vietnam. The study was based on a field survey using a semi-structured questionnaire on a sample of 1,000 customers. But, only 886 filled questionnaires were

satisfactory and therefore included in the analysis. By using several statistical analytical tools, i.e., descriptive statistics, and Cronbach's Alpha analysis the study has identified and measured three (3) attributes of the customer loyalty to agritourism destinations in Hanoi city, Vietnam that have great effects on customers. Based on the findings, some recommendations are given for tourist firms to improve the customer loyalty.

**Keywords:** Tourist Destination Loyalty, Agriculture, Tourist, Business Administration

**JEL Codes:** C52, L81, L83, M31

#### 1. Introduction

Tourism plays an increasingly important role and has become a spearhead economic sector in many countries, including Vietnam. Vietnam is considered a country with strong growth, especially in tourism.

Currently, environmental pollution is becoming more and more serious, affecting human health, so the trend of returning to nature is being chosen by many tourists. Besides, in the current busy world, people always tend to find a peaceful place away from the dust on weekends or holidays. Agricultural tourism is being preferred by tourists because it brings new experiences that they have never had before. This type of tourism is not only attractive but also gives people an extra income from tourism activities.

Agritourism has been growing all around the world for a very long time. Since the 1980s of the previous century, agricultural tourism has helped to change the landscape by bringing in cash for the farming community. In Vietnam, where 70% of the population resides in rural and mountainous areas, agricultural land makes up around 80% of the country's total area. Vietnam is a nation that is noted for its agriculture on the global economic map. As a result, the majority of tourism-related goods in Vietnam also contain agricultural components.

Agritourism presents a chance for businesses engaged in growing meats responsibly to improve marketing, inform consumers, and foster brand loyalty.

Vietnam is home to thousands of traditional agricultural villages; if tourism and agriculture are closely related, it will be feasible to offer agricultural tourist goods that are infused with the highly rich and varied Vietnamese cultural character. The national goals of the new rural construction program and the program to preserve traditional cultural values have therefore been successfully implemented. Therefore, one of the things that needs to be prioritized is encouraging the development of agricultural tourism.

Businesses in the tourism sector strive to gain a competitive edge by concentrating not just on bringing in new clients, but also on fostering consumer loyalty to the location. This topic has been the subject of growing discussion and study since returning repeat visitors can provide appealing earnings to tourism places (Oppermann, 2000) <sup>[16]</sup>. Intention to return to a destination is directly influenced by the loyalty of visitors (Alegre & Cladera, 2009; Forgas *et al.*, 2012; Yuksel, Yuksel, & Bilim, 2010) <sup>[1, 6, 11]</sup>; it is also the foundation for positive word-of-mouth advertising (Hosany & Witham, 2010) <sup>[10]</sup>.

#### 2. Literature Review

##### *Agricultural Tourism*

According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), agritourism is a type of tourism activity in which visitors

experience activities related to nature-based products, agriculture, lifestyle or rural culture, fishing, and sightseeing (UNWTO, 2008) [19].

Agritourism is understood as visiting an active agricultural farm for recreational, recreational, or educational purposes (Santeramo & Barbieri, 2015) [18]. The term agritourism is used to describe the activities of tourists when visiting a farm or agricultural establishment, admiring the farm landscape, or engaging in agricultural processes for recreational purposes. relaxation (Fleischer & Tchetchik, 2005; Ilbery, Bowler, Clark, Crockett, & Shaw, 1998; Veeck *et al.*, 2006) [5, 12, 20].

Agritourism has long been utilized to inform visitors and forge an emotional bond between them and farms (Rich *et al.*, 2011) [17].

In our opinion, agritourism is a type of experiential tourism that is planned and developed with an emphasis on agricultural producing operations on farms. provide clients that require local entertainment or education. Visitors can come here and engage in direct participation in agricultural activities like planting, harvesting, and agricultural processing.

**Customer Loyalty to a Tourist Destination**

The concept of loyalty is agreed upon by most scholars, with the view that tourists return to buy a product or service and refer others to buy that product or service. The concept and level of loyalty are two of the important metrics used to measure the success of a marketing strategy.

Destination loyalty was defined by Oppermann (2000) [16] as the desire to visit a certain location repeatedly and to recommend it to others.

Intention to repurchase a brand is a very powerful predictor of future purchasing behavior, according to Jones and Sasser (1995) [13].

The desire to visit a place again in the future can serve as an implicit expression of loyalty (Jones & Sasser, 1995) [13].

It is crucial that the experiences and products provided meet visitors' expectations in order to increase consumer loyalty among agritourism firms (Lui *et al.*, 2012) [15].

Increased customer loyalty can also result from emphasizing positive relationship marketing, which entails interactions between agritourism employees and visitors as well as intergroup interactions (Choo & Petrick 2012) [3].

Tourist loyalty to an agritourism destination is described by Leo *et al.* (2021) [14] as the psychological manifestation of tourists' feelings about a tourist destination, expressed through their preference for the location. with the location, their want to return, and their purpose to promote that attraction.

**Table 1:** Attributes of the customer loyalty to agritourism destinations

Customer loyalty to agritourism destinations	Loy1	I enjoy Hanoi's agritourism destinations in general.	Leo <i>et al.</i> (2021) [14]
	Loy2	I intend to visit Hanoi's agritourism locations once again.	
	Loy3	I'll suggest agritourism vacation spots to others.	

**3. Methodology**

**Qualitative Research**

We spoke with the following individuals in-depth: There were 11 subjects total, including 3 tourism industry

specialists from Hanoi's agritourism destinations, 2 marketing research experts, and tourists who had visited these locations. The findings of the study primarily serve the following objectives: to understand the level of tourist awareness and to investigate the characteristics of reviewed destination loyalty.

**Quantitative Research**

**Research Samples**

Tourists who had been to a Hanoi destination for agricultural tourism made up the study sample. where the sample consists of all levels of gender, age, etc. attributes.

The sample size should be 5–10 times the number of observed variables used in the study (Hair *et al.*, 2014) [8]. The number of observed variables in this study is 3. Thus, the sample size is 5 times the number of observed variables (15 observations), and the sample size is 10 times the number of observed variables (30 observations). Therefore, in order to satisfy the above requirement and improve reliability, the sample used in this study is composed of 1000 tourists who have visited an agricultural tourism destination in Hanoi.

**Data Collection**

The sample that was gathered was a convenience sample, and the questionnaire was employed in two formats: a paper copy that was given out to visitors at Hanoi's agritourism attractions.

The author gathered a total of 901 votes after distributing the questionnaires, but many of those votes were invalid because of missing data or incorrect responses. To evaluate the sample's fit and representativeness, the author cleaned the data and incorporated the final results of the remaining 886 votes in the sample descriptive statistical analysis (table 1).

**Table 2:** Descriptive statistics of the study sample

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	392	44.2	44.2
Female	494	55.8	100.0
<b>Age</b>			
25 years old or smaller	96	10.8	10.8
From 25 to under 35 years old	443	50.0	60.8
From 35 to under 45 years old	305	34.4	95.3
45 years old or higher	42	4.7	100.0
Total	886	100.0	

Table 2 shows that, out of the total number of respondents of 886 tourists who have visited agricultural tourism destinations in Hanoi, there are 392 male respondents, accounting for 44.2%, and 494 female respondents, accounting for 494 people. rate 55.8%. This is consistent with the author's expectations, with market realities, and also with previous studies on loyalty to agritourism destinations. Also, among the survey subjects, subjects with an age range of young, middle-aged, and old, aged 25 and under, accounted for 10.8%. Thus, the research sample has a low proportion of young people; the number of people between the ages of 25 and 35 accounts for 50%, accounting for the largest proportion in the research sample, which is appropriate because of the characteristics of the population. travel services. The age group over 45 years old has the

lowest rate, accounting for 4.7%.

**Processing and Cleaning Data**

We entered the data straight into the SPSS 23 program after gathering the survey questions. The author then went on to erase the unfinished survey questionnaires from the SPSS 23 software once all the survey questionnaires had been fully entered. valid, such as: don't fill out all the information; provide more than one response for observable variables; only one option is necessary; all the questionnaires are saved in the SPSS 23 program after being cleaned to prepare them for analysis.

**Data Analysis**

The data is processed with the help of SPSS 23 software. The tests are carried out, including reliability testing through Cronbach's alpha analysis.

**4. Research Results**

**Cronbach's Alpha**

According to Hair *et al.* (2014), the scale with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient greater than 0.7 is the scale with good reliability, and 0.8 and above is the scale with very good reliability. The results of Table 3 show that the scales have quite good reliability when the Cronbach's alpha coefficients are all greater than 0.79. Thus, the scales are all statistically significant (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Hoang & Chu, 2008) <sup>[8, 9]</sup>.

Customer loyalty to agritourism destinations in Hanoi city has been measured by the Cronbach's Alpha. Results of testing Cronbach's alpha of attributes are presented in Table 3 below. The results also show that attributes of the dependent variables have Cronbach's Alpha coefficients that are greater than 0.6, smaller than Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the general variable, and the correlation coefficients of all attributes are greater than 0.3. So, all the attributes of the dependent variables are statistically significant (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Hoang & Chu, 2008) <sup>[7, 9]</sup>.

**Table 3:** Results of Cronbach's Alpha Testing of Attributes

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	
0.881	3	
	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Loy1	.735	.862
Loy2	.811	.795
Loy3	.765	.837

**5. Discussion and Implications**

**The Context of Agricultural Tourism**

Agritourism is a significant industry in industrialized nations all over the world, from Europe and America to Asia. For instance, in the UK, visitors who visit the countryside can sip wine and eat meals created from regional ingredients. Additionally, visitors can help the farm's cattle get fed and gather food (Amy, 2022) <sup>[2]</sup>. Tourists can take part in activities like milking cows and caring for calves at Liberty Hill Farm in Vermont; gathering eggs, feeding pigs, or planting trees in Willow-Witt, Oregon; foraging, gardening workshops; and even horseback riding and archery in Hidden Villa, California; all of these activities are available in the US (Cohn, 2018) <sup>[4]</sup>.

Some popular activities in agricultural tourism can be mentioned as:

Recreational pursuits: Agritourism is a business concept that caters to tourists' experiences in the agricultural industry with the goal of entertainment, giving guests the chance to directly observe locals at work. Farmers are able to take care of themselves, produce food, and collect seasonal fruits, vegetables, and tubers.

Resort services, sightseeing: eating and sleeping, harvest festival, hunting, observing nature.

Agricultural education: workshop (Santeramo & Barbieri, 2015) <sup>[18]</sup>; hands-on activities (feeding, milking, rice transplanting, slapping, growing vegetables, mushrooms, and harvesting vegetables and fruits).

**The role of agritourism:**

Agri-tourism is not a new industry in the globe, but it has advanced significantly with the advancement of technology (Santeramo & Barbieri, 2015) <sup>[18]</sup>. In recent years, both travelers and tourism industry professionals have begun to pay more attention to the trend of green tourism. Travelers are increasingly seeking out unique experiences and making contributions to conservation efforts; as a result, eco-friendly travel options, sustainable tourism models, and ventures like the agritourism sector will all have significant growth potential. Farmers will have more revenue options thanks to the diversification of business ventures outside of their primary source of income, agricultural produce.

Agritourism has developed into a promising industry in recent years and offers numerous advantages to numerous nations (Wu *et al.*, 2022) <sup>[21]</sup>.

According to Santeramo and Barbieri (2015) <sup>[18]</sup>, agritourism has emerged as a popular method of economic diversification.

Insuring socioeconomic growth and interacting with local communities have both benefited from agritourism (Wu *et al.*, 2022) <sup>[21]</sup>.

**Current types of agricultural tourism in Vietnam:**

Vietnam has enough conditions to develop agricultural tourism. According to data for 2020, Vietnam has agricultural land accounting for about 80% of the total area, and 70% of the population lives in rural and mountainous areas. On the world economic map, Vietnam is known as an agricultural country. In addition, the government issued Decision 1658/QĐ-TTg dated October 1, 2021, approving the National Strategy on Green Growth for the 2021–2030 period, with a vision to 2050. Thus, the potential and conditions for agricultural tourism development in Vietnam are very large. However, agri-tourism is a new field, so if it is to develop, it is necessary to have a competitive advantage over other tourism services that have existed and have had a long development process, such as tourism: the sea, culture, resorts, etc.

Vietnam is an agricultural nation, thus all of its regions include traditional artisan villages and various forms of traditional agriculture. This is an example of how agriculture and tourism can coexist. This is seen as a significant first step in advancing studies on agricultural tourism in Vietnam. The paradigm of agriculture and tourism coexisting typically comes in a variety of forms, such as growing vegetables, slapping water, fishing, catching crabs and eels, etc. In the agricultural tourism model, you are both the traveler and the tourist. Try new things and push yourself.

Customers opting for a rustic setting near to nature are the target market for the farm model coupled with eco-tourism. Visitors are looking for a tranquil, natural setting to experience planting, fertilizing, and harvesting.

Model of eco-tourism combined with a garden: This form is best suited for big, cool locations where many fruit trees, including avocado, durian, longan, rambutan, and grapes, are commonly grown. Gardening and ecotourism together not only have significant economic benefits, but they also have positive local tourism consequences. Visitors can choose and enjoy themselves while at the garden, as well as delight themselves while strolling and purchasing them as gifts at a very reasonable price.

### Implications

Tourists frequently consult channels with information they are interested in before their trips, whether it comes from friends, family, or other sources. According to research findings, travelers who have access to reference information sources prior to their trip will have a stronger capacity for decision-making while selecting their agricultural destination than the others. The communication department of the agro-tourism area should therefore spread the word about the agro-tourism area to many tourists through word-of-mouth channels, especially from visitors who have already visited and who will introduce the destination to their relatives, friends, and colleagues through electronic channels like Facebook social networking.

If an agritourism destination has difficult travel barriers or few recreational activities, the decision to go there will decrease. Therefore, the management board of an agritourism destination should pay attention to the parts related to the agro-tourism activities of the destination to design products to suit the characteristics of the destination. At the same time, the products must also be diversified to attract more tourists to the agricultural tourism destination.

The management board should focus on environmental cleanliness, the physical landscape of the agricultural tourism destination, as well as the benefits of green space, in order to draw tourists to the agricultural tourism destination. fresh atmosphere. There should be more public restrooms in tourist areas, and they should be strategically placed, always clean, well-ventilated, and routinely cleaned.

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