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Quality Experience in Agritourism Destinations

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Abstract

Ecotourism has become a key economic sector in our country. It is known as the "smokeless industry" or "the goose that lays golden eggs". Rural tourism development in Hanoi is also based on three main pillars, which are the economy, ecological environment, and social environment, while also linking the development of the potential and advantages of craft village agriculture to bringing income and benefits to parties involved in tourism development activities, contributing to improving the material and spiritual lives of rural residents, and building a new rural area of solidarity and rich cultural identity regionalization (Nguyen, 2023) ^[10]. The main objective of this study was to identify, evaluate, and measure the attributes of the quality experience in agritourism destinations in Hanoi, Vietnam.

The study was based on a field survey using a semi-structured questionnaire with a sample of 1,000 customers. But only 886 filled-out 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 ten (10) attributes of the quality experience in agritourism destinations in Hanoi, Vietnam, that have great effects on customers. Based on the findings, some recommendations are given for tourist firms, agritourism destinations, and the Department of Tourism Hanoi to improve the quality of the experience in agritourism destinations in Hanoi city.

Keywords: Quality Experience, Agritourism Destinations, Tourist, Business Administration, Hanoi

JEL codes: C52, L81, L83, M31

1. Introduction

Currently, environmental pollution is becoming increasingly serious, negatively affecting human health, so the trend of returning to nature is being chosen by many tourists. Besides, in today's busy lives, people always tend to find peaceful places away from dust and smoke on weekends or holidays. Agricultural tourism is a priority choice for tourists because it brings them new experiences that they have never had before. This type is not only attractive but also gives people additional income from tourism activities.

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Ecotourism is one of the fastest-growing tourism markets in the world (Jamzory & Lawonk, 2017) ^[7]. It is a special type of tourism closely related to environmentally and culturally sensitive areas and is considered to contribute to environmental conservation as well as ecological sustainability (Reimer & Walter, 2013 two thousand and thirteen) ^[13]. Ecotourism accounts for about 5% to 10% of the global tourism market and is becoming one of the fastest-growing sectors in the tourism industry, with an annual growth rate of 5% worldwide, almost three times faster than general travel (Hultman *et al.*, 2015) ^[5]. Nowadays, most researchers have been focusing on the supply side of the ecotourism system; however, exploration of tourism experiences from the tourists' perception side is still lacking. Recently, Jamzory & Lawonk (2017) ^[7] have examined aspects of perceived value in the context of ecotourism in an expanded manner, approaching perceived value as a multi-dimensional concept.

Vietnam has thousands of traditional agricultural villages. If there is a close connection between tourism and agriculture, it will be possible to provide agricultural tourism products imbued with a rich and diverse Vietnamese cultural identity. Accordingly, the national goals of the new rural construction program and the program to preserve traditional cultural values have been implemented with positive results. Therefore, promoting the development of agricultural tourism is one of the activities that needs attention.

Therefore, researching the quality experience in agritourism destinations according to this approach in the context of an agritourism experiment in Hanoi, Vietnam, especially for a specific agritourism program, is very necessary.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Agricultural Tourism

The term agritourism is used to describe the activities of tourists visiting a farm or agricultural facility, admiring the farm landscape, and participating in the agricultural process for recreational or recreational purposes (Veeck *et al.*, 2006) [15].

Wood (1991) [16] defines ecotourism as travel to relatively untouched areas for the purpose of learning about environmental and cultural history without altering the integrity of the ecosystems, while at the same time creating economic opportunities to support nature conservation and benefit local people.

According to Reimer & Walter (2013) [13], ecotourism is distinguished from other types of nature tourism by its high level of education about the ecological environment through skilled tour guides. Ecotourism creates a relationship between people and wild nature, along with a sense of education to turn tourists themselves into leaders in environmental protection. Ecotourism emphasizes characteristics such as sustainability (ecological, socio-cultural, and economic), benefit distribution and ethics, responsibility, and awareness during the tourist experience and learning process about natural areas.

Thus, ecotourism is carried out in pristine or relatively pristine natural environments associated with indigenous culture; capable of actively supporting the conservation of natural, cultural, and social characteristics; third, highly environmentally educational and environmentally responsible; and finally, ecotourism must involve and benefit local residents.

Perceived value is a concept that is widely discussed in academic research and empirical studies that examine variables that influence future product and service use and purchase decisions of customers (Jamal *et al.*, 2011) [6]. Besides, perceived value is also considered a reliable concept to predict tourist behaviors (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015) [1] and provides practical implications for the marketing of tourist attractions (Kim & Park, 2017) [8]. Pandža Bajcs (2015) [12] argued that the concept of perceived value provides a good theoretical foundation to evaluate an ecotour from the tourist's perspective. Because emphasizing the perceived value of tourists for eco-tourism will create a good foundation to attract tourists who are more responsible to the environment as well as create opportunities for those who care about sharing values when experiencing ecotourism (Kim & Park, 2017) [8].

In Vietnam, research by Ngo (2019) [11] examined aspects of perceived value in a cause-and-effect relationship with the overall perceived value of garden ecotourism. Research by Trinh and Phan (2020) [14] evaluates tourist satisfaction by analyzing tourists' expectations and perceived value for each specific service in the type of agricultural tourism. From the

review of these studies, it shows that, approaching perceived value as a multi-directional concept and seeing it in relation to the results of the experience process, the quality experience in agritourism destinations has not been studied experimentally in Vietnam.

2.2 Quality Experience in Agritourism Destinations

The quality experience is the customer's conclusion according to their needs after using the service. According to Leo and colleagues (2021) [9], it has been proven that tourists' satisfaction and destination loyalty are mainly driven by the quality of their experience. Leo and colleagues (2021) [9] experience quality scale includes 10 observed variables, including the following contents: Escape from routine; rest, relaxation, physical fitness, study, and benefits received from the service process.

Table 1: Attributes of the the quality experience in agritourism destinations

Code	Description
Ex_Qu1	Agricultural tourism helps me change bad daily habits.
Ex_Qu2	Agricultural tourism helps me temporarily forget about daily activities.
Ex_Qu3	Agricultural tourism helps me feel relaxed.
Ex_Qu4	Agritourism helps me feel safe.
Ex_Qu5	I get to participate in interesting activities while doing agricultural tourism.
Ex_Qu6	In general, agritourism helps me have unique experiences.
Ex_Qu7	In general, I was served by friendly staff when on agritourism.
Ex_Qu8	In general, tourist destinations have good service quality.
Ex_Qu9	Agricultural tourism helps me gain new knowledge.
Ex_Qu10	Agritourism helps increase my knowledge.

3. Methodology

3.1 Collect Data

The study inherits the results of previous studies, economic and social documents, and documents related to agricultural tourism, eco-tourism, natural resources, etc., of agencies and organizations in Hanoi, Vietnam.

The research team interviewed 25 people, including 5 officials of the cultural and sports information management board at agricultural tourism destinations in Hanoi, 3 officials of the district chamber of commerce and tourism, and 2 officials of the Department of Culture, Sports, and Tourism of Hanoi City, as well as 3 experts in eco-tourism and marketing. The 12 subjects were tourists who went to agricultural tourism destinations in Hanoi. The research results mainly serve the following goals: to learn about the level of knowledge of tourists and to explore the attributes of a quality experience in agritourism destinations.

After distributing the ballots, the author received a total of 901 ballots; however, many ballots were invalid due to missing information or unreliable answers. We cleaned the data, and the final result was 886 votes that were included in the descriptive statistical analysis of the sample to check the suitability and representativeness of the sample (Table 1).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the study sample

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Family ingredient			
No children between the ages of 5 and 10 years old	376	42.4	42.4
Have children between the ages of 5 and 10 years old.	510	57.6	100.0
Academic level			
Respondents haven't graduated from high school.	174	19.6	19.6
Respondents graduated from high school.	228	25.7	45.4
Respondents graduated from college or university.	301	34.0	79.3
Respondents graduated postgradually.	183	20.7	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 376 respondents who have no children between the ages of 5 and 10 years old, accounting for 42.4%, and 510 respondents who have children between the ages of 5 and 10 years old, a rate of 57.6%. Among the survey subjects, 174 respondents haven't graduated from high school, accounting for 19.6%; 228 respondents graduated from high school, accounting for 25.7%; 301 respondents graduated from college or university, accounting for 34.0%; and 183 respondents graduated postgradually, accounting for 20.7%.

3.2 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 family ingredient, academic level, etc. attributes.

The sample size should be 5–10 times the number of observed variables used in the study (Hair *et al.*, 2014) [3]. The number of observed variables in this study is 10. Thus, the sample size is 5 times the number of observed variables (50 observations), and the sample size is 10 times the number of observed variables (100 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.

3.3 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

4.1 Cronbach's Alpha

According to Hair *et al.* (2014) [3], 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 0.8. Thus, the scales are all statistically significant (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Hoang & Chu, 2008) [3, 5].

The quality of the experience at agritourism destinations in Hanoi has been measured by Cronbach's alpha. The results of testing Cronbach's alpha for 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) [2, 5].

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

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	
	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
0.901	10	
Ex_Qu1	.710	.887
Ex_Qu2	.678	.890
Ex_Qu3	.715	.887
Ex_Qu4	.687	.889
Ex_Qu5	.510	.900
Ex_Qu6	.666	.890
Ex_Qu7	.635	.892
Ex_Qu8	.698	.888
Ex_Qu9	.706	.888
Ex_Qu10	.507	.900

5. Discussion and Implications

Since expanding its administrative boundaries on August 1, 2008, Hanoi Capital has had many more tourist destinations in rural areas, attracting a large number of domestic and foreign tourists to visit, experience, and contribute to transforming Hanoi's countryside towards civilization and modernity.

Hanoi is the political, cultural, economic, defense, and security center of the country, with a rich system of natural tourism resources and many diverse terrain types. In addition, there is an ecological landscape system such as Ba Vi National Park, Huong Son scenic area, Vien Nam mountain landscape, etc., and some agricultural spaces such as specialized crop belts in Thanh Hoa districts. Tri, Gia Lam, Dong Anh, Hoai Duc, etc., the ornamental flower and plant planting belt in Dong Anh district, Me Linh, etc., has a long tradition, producing both agricultural products for urban use and natural and human landscapes for tourism development. Thanks to the expansion of its administrative boundaries, Hanoi has more rural tourism destinations. To date, the city has recognized 7 tourist destinations in suburban areas associated with agricultural, rural, craft village, and ecological tourism, including: Duong Xa commune tourist destination; Phu Dong tourist destination (Gia Lam district); Thuy Ung horn comb craft village tourist destination; Van Diem high-class carpentry village tourist destination (Thuong Tin district); Dai Ang tourist destination; Yen My tourist destination (Thanh Tri district); and a tourist destination in Long Ho village, Kim Son commune (Son Tay town). In addition, districts and towns also form many other rural tourism destinations, such as Huong Son scenic area (My Duc district), Duong Lam ancient village (Son Tay town), tourism models combining agriculture (White Goat Farm), country farm (Ba Vi

district), and many famous craft villages that attract tourists. In addition, Hanoi city has 11 ecological agricultural farms operating according to educational and experiential tourism models and 4 agricultural cooperatives exploiting the country farm model, including Long Viet agricultural park (Soc Son district), country farm (Ba Vi district), Van An school farm (Thanh Tri district), and Phuc Tho Hoa Bay ecological garden (Phuc Tho district).

According to Nguyen (2023), fully aware of that potential and advantage, the City People's Committee soon issued and implemented the Plan for Economic Development of Agricultural and Rural Tourism associated with Rural Construction New in the City in the period 2022–2025. Recently, departments, branches, and localities have had programs and activities integrating the content of economic development of agricultural and rural tourism associated with agricultural construction of new villages and, at the same time, have a plan to develop rural tourism associated with building new rural areas until 2026 and the following years. Thus, developing rural tourism, building agricultural tourism destinations, eco-tourism, and community tourism are core components of building new rural areas in Hanoi city. Accordingly, Hanoi identifies the subjects of rural tourism development as rural residents, including farmers who cultivate on land with land use rights or rent additional land, owners of craft village households, and small and medium-sized business owners in rural areas under the management of local authorities. Priority is given to ensuring harmony of interests in rural tourism development, first of all the interests of local residents participating in rural tourism activities.

Rural tourism development in Hanoi is also based on three main pillars, which are the economy, ecological environment, and social environment, while also linking the development of the potential and advantages of craft village agriculture to bringing income and benefits to parties involved in tourism development activities, contributing to improving the material and spiritual lives of rural residents, and building a new rural area of solidarity and rich cultural identity regionalization (Nguyen, 2023)^[10].

The Hanoi City Electronic Information Portal reported that a representative of the Hanoi Department of Tourism said that Hanoi has a diverse natural and cultural ecosystem and a geographical location connecting with provinces and cities in the country. Therefore, Hanoi has the potential and advantages to develop agricultural and rural tourism, promoting the development of new rural areas. Agricultural and rural tourism models here bring new experiences to tourists, but this type also has some limitations, such as ecotourism areas and low-quality services. Infrastructure and facilities at many agricultural and rural ecotourism sites have not been fully invested. Agricultural and rural tourism destinations in Hanoi have difficulty connecting with travel firms to perfect and build products as well as attract tourists. And to overcome the above limitations, the city must have specific criteria to develop agricultural and rural tourism in the direction of green and sustainable growth. The city needs to set infrastructure criteria to ensure convenient transportation, good infrastructure services, and capable human resources to serve tourists.

Agricultural and ecotourism destinations should strengthen propaganda and promotion on media such as electronic newspapers, websites, zalo, Facebook, leaflets, posters, television, and radio.

Agricultural and ecotourism destinations should call for investment from large businesses and socialize investment in tourism by bidding, competing, or renting forest environments on the basis of the Environmental Law. Schools, Planning Law, Forestry Law, and Tourism Law.

Agricultural and ecotourism destinations should be synchronized from the master planning stage of traffic, information, transportation, and accompanying services such as places to eat, sleep, rest, and entertain, combining fun, experience, etc., into a closed chain based on approaching a humanistic ecosystem that is green, clean, civilized, modern, environmentally friendly, and preserves biodiversity.

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