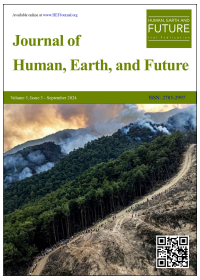
Available online at www.HEFJournal.org

ISSN: 2785-2997

Journal of
Human, Earth, and Future

Vol. 5, No. 3, September, 2024



Agritourism: The Role of Farm-to-Table in Promoting Local Cuisine and Return Visits

Ninh Nguyen [1*], Le Thi Tran [1], Anh Nu Nguyet Nguyen [2, 3]

[1] *Faculty of Commerce and Tourism, Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City, HCM, 71408, VietNam.*

[2] *Faculty of Sociology, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Ho Chi Minh City 71006, Vietnam.*

[3] *Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City 71006, Vietnam.*

Received 31 May 2024; Revised 03 August 2024; Accepted 09 August 2024; Published 01 September 2024

Abstract

This exploration probes into the captivating effect of agritourism, anchored in farm-to-table traditions, on the enrichment of local culinary adventures and the allure for patrons to return, employing Self-Determination Theory to scrutinize visitor interactions. The primary goal is to investigate the intricate dance between perceived autonomy, competence, and connectedness, and how they shape perceived authenticity and the tendency for return visits, highlighting the pivotal influence of perceived cost. Information was gathered via a survey involving 354 individuals, and the connections were explored through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Results reveal that the perception of competence exerts the most significant positive influence on the sense of authenticity and the likelihood of return visits. Nonetheless, the dynamic interaction between perceived financial burden and authenticity revealed a negative correlation with subsequent visits, indicating that increased expenditures may diminish the advantageous effects of genuine experiences. This research emphasizes the importance of aligning authentic experiences with economic viability in the realm of agritourism. Ventures, offering valuable perspectives for operators to elevate visitor engagement, thereby fostering satisfaction and loyalty. The implications of these findings extend into the realm of enhancing the design of agritourism experiences.

Keywords: Agritourism; Farm-to-Table; Local Cuisine; Return Visits; Travel.

1. Introduction

Agritourism, a growing segment within the broader tourism industry, allows travelers to engage in agricultural activities while experiencing the authenticity of rural life [1]. This form of tourism has gained increasing popularity as it aligns with the global shift towards sustainable practices and a desire for more meaningful travel experiences [2]. Moreover, farm-to-table events have evolved into a potent tool for showcasing regional food, improving tourist happiness, and encouraging return visits within agritourism [3]. These experiences enable tourists to engage directly with the source of their food, learn about the agricultural processes involved, and recognize the cultural relevance of local culinary traditions. Notably, farm-to-table agritourism is especially important now, with a rising consumer interest in sustainable food systems, local products, and authentic cultural experiences by Musa & Chin [4]. In addition, visitors are no longer content with passive tourism; they seek immersive, educational, and culturally rich experiences that resonate with their values and interests [5]. Farm-to-table agritourism meets this demand by offering a

* Corresponding author: nguyenvanninh@iuh.edu.vn

http://dx.doi.org/10. 28991/HEF-2024-05-03-013

unique gastronomy, education, and cultural immersion blend, emphasizing fresh, locally sourced ingredients and traditional culinary practices [6]. As a result, these encounters deepen the visitor's emotional connection to the place and enhance their knowledge of the local culture, therefore affecting their desire to return for future visits.

Despite the growing body of research on agritourism, previous studies have primarily focused on visitor satisfaction and authenticity, but gaps remain in understanding the psychological factors that drive visitor satisfaction and loyalty. While previous studies have examined the role of authenticity in agritourism [7], fewer have applied psychological frameworks to explain the underlying motivations of visitors. Specifically, limited research has investigated the impact of visitors' perceived autonomy, competence, and relatedness on their likelihood of returning to agritourism destinations. Furthermore, the moderating effect of perceived cost on the relationship between authenticity and return visits has not been thoroughly explored. This gap underscores the need for a deeper exploration of the psychological factors influencing visitor behavior in farm-to-table experiences [8].

To address this gap, the present study uses the well-established psychological framework developed by Deci in the 1970s, Self-Determination Theory, to better grasp the elements influencing return visits in the framework of farm-to-table agritourism. Self-Determination Theory offers useful insights on visitor motivation and behavior. According to this hypothesis, tourists are more likely to enjoy their encounter. Visitors could end up happier, more authentically fulfilled, and more inclined to return visits [9]. These behavioral goals, closely linked to the satisfaction of psychological needs, are distinct yet interconnected. Furthermore, fulfilling these needs significantly enhances visitors' internal motivation and overall satisfaction with their experiences [10]. Farm-to-table agritourism presents a unique setting in which these requirements might take many forms. For example, autonomy reflects the visitor's ability to make independent choices and tailor their experiences to personal preferences [11]. In contrast, competence involves the satisfaction derived from successfully engaging in and understanding the activities offered, such as learning about sustainable farming practices or participating in local culinary traditions [12]. Meanwhile, relatedness is the sense of connection visitors feel with the local community, culture, and environment, which can enhance their overall experience and satisfaction [13].

Furthermore, the current research considers the perceived authenticity of the farm-to-table experience to be an important mediating variable that ties the satisfaction of these psychological demands to the likelihood of returning visits [14]. Authenticity plays a key role in shaping visitor behavior by enhancing the emotional and cultural connection to the destination [7]. When visitors feel their autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs are met and they perceive the farm-to-table experience as authentic, they are more likely to return. However, the intricate relationship between these psychological factors and visitor return behavior remains underexplored, thus necessitating further investigation. Additionally, this study examines the role of perceived cost as a moderating variable, recognizing that even highly authentic experiences may not result in repeat visits if visitors perceive the costs as too high [15]. By examining the interplay between perceived authenticity and perceived cost, this study seeks to fill a gap in the literature by assessing how pricing influences visitor loyalty in agritourism.

Ultimately, by focusing on the intersection of agriculture, local cuisine, and visitor motivation, the study seeks to understand how farm-to-table experiences can be leveraged to promote sustainable tourism practices and enhance visitor loyalty [16]. The findings will provide practical implications for agritourism operators, helping them balance authenticity and affordability to encourage repeat visits while promoting sustainable tourism development [17].

2. Literature Review

In order to comprehend the elements that motivate individuals to repeatedly visit agritourism sites, namely through farm-to-table experiences, it is crucial to examine how these experiences fulfill basic psychological requirements. The Self-Determination Theory offers a significant framework for examining the factors that influence human motivation and behavior [18]. It highlights the significance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in defining these aspects. This research aims to utilize Self-Determination Theory in the context of agritourism to establish a set of standardized measurements for various concepts. The objective is to examine the impact of these ideas on visitors' perceptions of authenticity during their experiences [13]. Furthermore, the study examines how perceived cost moderates the relationship between perceived authenticity and the likelihood of returning visitors, offering a nuanced understanding of what encourages repeat visits in farm-to-table agritourism settings [19]. This approach not only deepens our understanding of visitor behavior but also provides practical insights for enhancing visitor experiences and promoting local cuisine through authentic, cost-effective agritourism offerings. These hypotheses are designed to provide a structured analysis of how the farm-to-table experience in agritourism can effectively promote local cuisine and encourage repeat visits, ultimately contributing to the sustainable growth of rural tourism [20].

2.1. Autonomy toward Farm-to-Table Agritourism

The concept of autonomy in the context of farm-to-table agritourism concerns the capability of visitors to exercise independent judgment and personalize their engagements according to their specific preferences and interests. This notion of autonomy is intrinsically connected to the perception of authenticity, as visitors endowed with the liberty to

choose activities, culinary offerings, and interactions that resonate with their personal inclinations are more predisposed to regard their experiences as authentic and culturally valid [21]. Research in tourism studies suggests that when visitors are afforded the opportunity to exercise autonomy, they cultivate a more profound connection to the cultural dimensions of the destination, thereby augmenting their perception of authenticity [21]. In the realm of farm-to-table agritourism, this may encompass the selection of specific regional dishes to sample, involvement in agricultural practices, or direct engagement with local producers [4]. This perception of authenticity, in turn, engenders heightened visitor satisfaction, resulting in an increased likelihood of planning return visits to further engage with these genuine, self-directed experiences [22].

H1: *Autonomy positively influences perceived authenticity in farm-to-table agritourism.*

2.2. Competence toward Farm-to-Table Agritourism

Competence in farm-to-table agritourism encompasses the visitor's proficiency in actively participating in and comprehending the various activities and cultural practices intrinsic to the experience [23]. This perception of competence is vital for augmenting perceived authenticity, as visitors who perceive themselves as informed and adept during their engagements are more predisposed to regard the experience as genuine and reflective of local traditions [24]. The literature on experience tourism suggests that if the visitors actively participate in such activities as farming, cooking, or acquiring information on food production, not only is their appreciation of and respect for the cultural context developed to higher levels, but they perceive their experience as being more genuine [21]. This competency-based view of authenticity has a very important role to play in influencing the repeat visitation behavior since people who seem to have gained a sense of competency in some form or another experience are going to be more inclined to revisit the destination to obtain more of that competency or to revisit the place for having had what they consider to be an authentic experience [25]. Hence, competence leads to improvement of the perceived value and authenticity of the tourist experience, hence the likelihood of repeat patronage.

H2. *Competence positively influences perceived authenticity in farm-to-table agritourism.*

2.3. Relatedness toward Farm-to-Table Agritourism

Relatedness in this case of farm-to-table agritourism means the degree to which visitors have social and emotional bonds with the local people, culture, and scenery in the course of their experience [13]. This sense of relatedness is quite central to the improvement of perceived authenticity as people who feel connected to the people and the culture of the visited destination will be likely to perceive their experiences as authentic [22]. A closer look at prior related works in tourism and cultural authenticity shows that whenever a tourist engages with farmers in the community or participates in communal meals or when they eat jointly culturally relevant meals from the area, they tend to have a pleasing bond with the cultural identity of the destination [26]. This bond creates the understanding of ‘realness’, where the experience is perceived as being far from a mere commercial interaction; it becomes a conversation with the courage of the place [1].

Furthermore, how related they feel with a place has a dramatic impact on the returns. For this reason, by assessing connection, visitors are likely to have an enjoyable satisfaction with the destination that will make them visit the destination again [27]. This research indicates that readers do this as a way of nurturing these relationships to their existing experiences or intensifying them by revisiting places that offered them those genuine experiences that touched their inner core. Consequently, the relevance in the on-farm experience positively affirms the authenticity of the farm-to-table concept and remains a vital catalyst in repeating customer patronage and volume, which is a way of supporting the growth and stability of the agritourism enterprises [20].

H3. *Relatedness positively influences perceived authenticity in farm-to-table agritourism.*

2.4. The Mediating Role of Perceived Authenticity in Tourist Experience

Perceived authenticity plays a crucial mediating role in the relationship between the tourist experience and return visits within the context of cultural-heritage tourism [7]. Perceived authenticity pertains to the extent to which travelers ascertain that their encounters are authentic, embodying the authentic culture, customs, and practices endemic to the locale in question [28]. The research on tourism experiences suggests that authenticity is a significant factor in shaping tourist satisfaction and loyalty [13]. When individuals evaluate an experience as genuine, they are predisposed to establish a profound emotional bond with the locale, resulting in elevated degrees of contentment and an enhanced propensity to revisit.

In farm-to-table agritourism, authenticity is closely tied to the direct interaction with local food production, traditional culinary practices, and engagement with the local community [4]. These elements contribute to a sense of authenticity that enhances the overall tourist experience. Studies indicate that tourists who perceive their experiences as authentic are more likely to have memorable and meaningful visits, which increases their likelihood of returning to the destination [22].

The mediating function of perceived authenticity indicates that the presence of initial factors such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness, although beneficial, significantly enhances their positive influence on return visits when the experience is regarded as authentic [29]. Consequently, perceived authenticity not only augments the tourist experience but also serves as a crucial catalyst for fostering repeat visits, thereby rendering it a vital consideration for agritourism operators who aspire to cultivate visitor loyalty.

H4. *Perceived authenticity positively influences return visits in farm-to-table agritourism.*

2.5. The Moderating Role of Perceived Cost in the Relationship between Perceived Authenticity and Return Visitors

Perceived cost also plays a moderation role together with perceived risk and perceived price in the relationship between experience and service quality and behavioral intentions of medical tourists in Malaysia [15]. This paper has found that perceived costs have a moderate effect on the relationship between perceived authenticities and return visits in farm-to-table agritourism. Perceived cost captures the cost that a visitor expects to incur for accommodation, meals, and activities and the cost of traveling [30]. Even though the role of perceived authenticity in travelers' satisfaction and consequent tendency to revisit the destination may be moderated by the perceived costs related to the activity [31].

According to recent research, even when an experience is thought to be very real, if visitors believe the pricing is prohibitively expensive, they may be less likely to return [32]. High perceived expenses can be a barrier, especially if tourists think they can have a more authentic experience elsewhere at a lesser price [19]. This cost consciousness is especially crucial in agritourism, where tourists may assess the worth of various experiences based on both authenticity and price [33].

Conversely, when the perceived cost is deemed reasonable or offers good value for money, the positive effect of perceived authenticity on return visits is likely to be stronger [34]. Visitors who feel they have received a genuine, culturally rich experience at a fair price are more likely to be satisfied and motivated to return [5]. Thus, perceived cost moderates the relationship between authenticity and return visits by either enhancing or diminishing the perceived value of the experience, making it a crucial factor in understanding visitor loyalty in farm-to-table agritourism.

H5. *Perceived cost moderates the relationship between perceived authenticity and return visits in farm-to-table agritourism.*

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Measurement Structures

This research aims to explore the factors influencing return visitors in farm-to-table agritourism, particularly how key psychological needs influence perceived authenticity and return visits. Drawing on recent publications in tourism and Self-Determination Theory, the study designs measurement content that captures autonomy, competence, and relatedness as critical determinants of visitor experience (see Figure 1). Each of these variables is measured using Likert scale items that capture visitors' ability to make independent choices, reflecting their sense of autonomy [21, 4, 22]. The scale also assesses their engagement in culturally immersive activities, indicating their level of competence [21, 23-25]. Additionally, it evaluates the emotional connections visitors form with the local community, which corresponds to their sense of relatedness [13, 22, 26, 27]. Perceived authenticity is assessed to understand how genuine visitors perceive their experiences [4, 13, 22, 28], while perceived cost is evaluated as a moderating variable to examine its influence on the relationship between authenticity and return intentions [5, 19, 30, 32]. Finally, return visitors is measured by gauging the likelihood of visitors returning to the destination, considering their overall satisfaction and the perceived value for money [5, 19, 22, 32]. This structured measurement approach offers a comprehensive analysis of the drivers of visitors in farm-to-table agritourism.

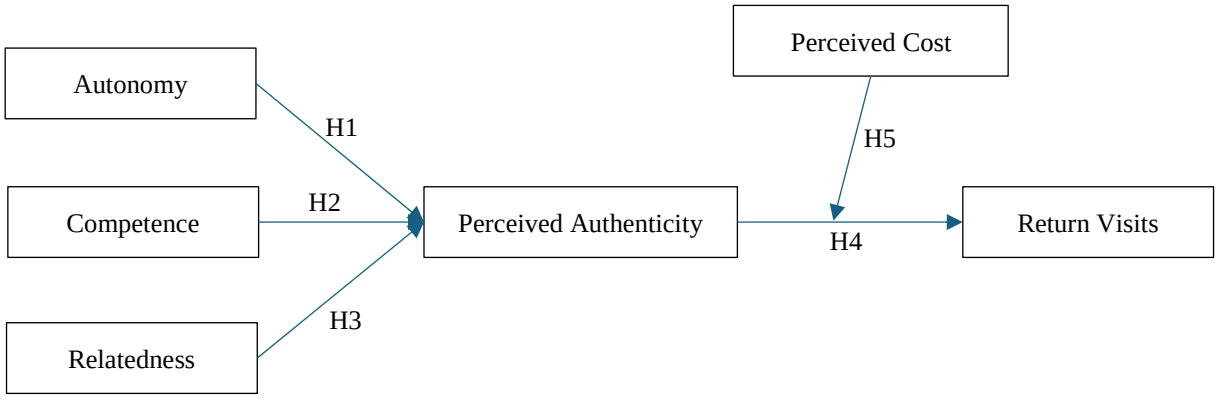


Figure 1. Measurement structure according to Self-Determination Theory

3.2. Data Collection

In this study, the sample size is determined based on the 10-fold rule recommended by Hair et al. [35], which suggests a minimum sample size to ensure robust statistical analysis. To reduce the potential for sample bias, the study initially aimed to collect data from a higher number of respondents, targeting 400 samples. Ultimately, 354 valid responses were obtained, providing a sufficient dataset for analysis. The content for measuring the concepts of autonomy, competence, relatedness, perceived authenticity, perceived cost, and return visits was designed using Google Forms [36]. A controlled sharing link was created and distributed to visitors at specific agritourism sites. These sites included fruit farm sightseeing areas, the Mekong aquaculture region, and the rice fields.

The data collection process employed non-probability convenience sampling. Researchers approached tourists at these locations and first asked for their consent to participate in the study. After briefly introducing the purpose of the research and explaining that no personal information would be collected, the researchers provided more detailed information about the measurement concepts [37]. Once visitors agreed to participate, they were given the Google Form link, allowing them to complete the survey at their convenience. Data collection took place over six months, from January to June 2024, ensuring a comprehensive sample representative of the tourist population at these agritourism sites. This method ensured that the data collected was both relevant and reflective of the experiences of farm-to-table agritourism visitors in the region.

3.3. Analytical Techniques

In the present investigation, the analysis of data was performed through the integration of reliability assessments and structural equation modelling methodologies to guarantee the accuracy and strength of the outcomes derived. Initially, the Cronbach's alpha test was applied to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales used for the concepts of autonomy, competence, relatedness, perceived authenticity, perceived cost, and return visits. A high Cronbach's alpha value indicated that the items within each construct were reliably measuring the same underlying concept [38]. Following the reliability assessment, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to validate the measurement model. CFA helped confirm whether the data fit the proposed theoretical model by examining the relationships between observed variables and their underlying latent constructs [39].

Finally, the partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) algorithm was employed to test the hypothesized relationships between the constructs [40]. PLS-SEM is particularly useful in exploratory research and complex models with multiple variables. The analysis used 5000 bootstrap samples by default to assess the significance of the path coefficients, ensuring the stability and reliability of the results. This comprehensive approach to data analysis allowed the researchers to draw meaningful conclusions about the factors influencing visitor behavior in farm-to-table agritourism.

To provide a clearer understanding of the steps involved in this study, Figure 2 presents a flowchart of the research methodology, visually representing the key stages from defining the study's purpose and identifying research objects to data collection, analysis, and interpretation of results.

4. Results

4.1. Sample Characteristics

From Table 1 the results describe summary of the demographic characteristics of the participants, encompassing variables such as gender, age, and education level. The sample consists primarily of males (57.1%), with females representing 42.9%. This gender distribution allows for a balanced representation of both male and female perspectives. Furthermore, the majority of participants (47.7%) were aged between 29 and 39 years old, followed by the 18-28 age group (25.7%). The number of participants decreased in older age brackets, with 16.4% aged 40-49 and 10.2% aged 50 or older. Additionally, most respondents have a college or university education (61.0%), with smaller groups having technical education (15.5%) or postgraduate degrees (13.3%). A minor percentage (10.2%) did not specify their education. This educational diversity indicates a well-educated sample, which may influence their engagement with agritourism activities.

In general, the data presents a sample slightly skewed towards males and young to middle-aged adults, with a solid educational background, providing a strong foundation for analysing visitor behavior in farm-to-table agritourism.

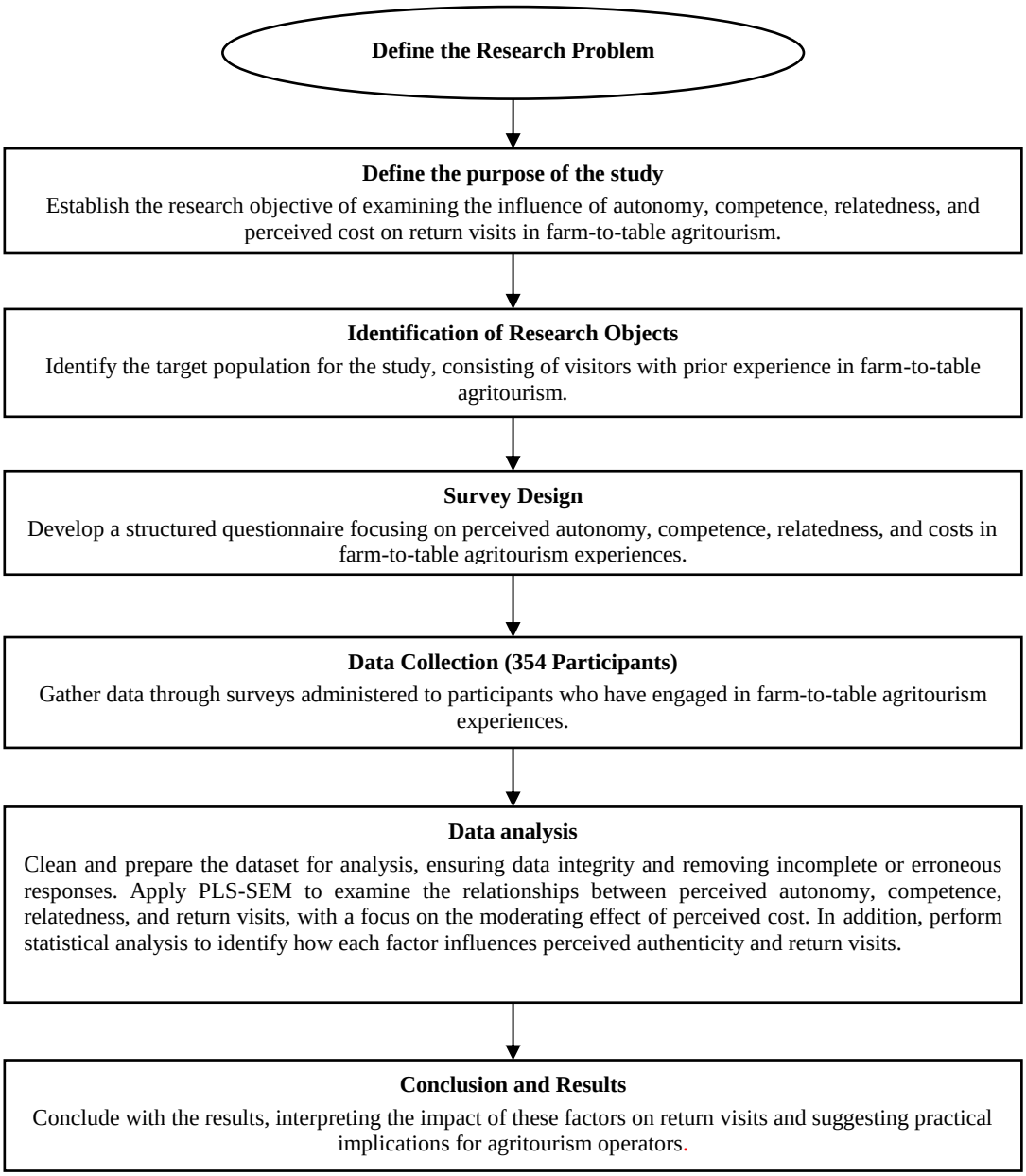


Figure 2. Flowchart of the research methodology

Table 1. Descriptive statistical results

Characteristics	Items	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	152	42.9
	Male	202	57.1
Age Group	18 - 28	91	25.7
	29 - 39	169	47.7
	40 - 49	58	16.4
	Up 50	36	10.2
Education	Postgraduate	47	13.3
	College/University	216	61.0
	Technical Education	55	15.5
	Unspecified	36	10.2

4.2. Inspection of Measurement Structures

The results presented in Table 2 confirm the reliability and validity of the measurement scales across all constructs. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all constructs exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.7, indicating excellent internal consistency [41]. Specifically, the values ranged from 0.812 to 0.911. Furthermore, factor loadings for all items surpassed the acceptable limit of 0.7, with most falling between 0.750 and 0.897, demonstrating strong construct validity. For instance, the factor loadings for Autonomy ranged from 0.864 to 0.887, indicating that the items effectively captured the construct's essence. Finally, VIF values for all items remained below 3, suggesting no multicollinearity issues. These values ranged from 1.563 to 2.929, well within the acceptable limit [42].

Table 2. The results reliability assessment

Items	Contents	Cronbach's alpha	Factor loading	VIF
AU	**Autonomy toward farm-to-table agritourism**	0.898		
AU1	Visitors personalize their farm-to-table encounters by their individual preferences and interests.		0.875	2.648
AU2	Visitors select activities and foods that resonate with their personal tastes		0.887	2.795
AU3	Visitors engage directly with local producers to enhance their cultural connection		0.864	2.337
AU4	Visitors are pleased with the genuineness of their self-directed experiences		0.874	2.507
CO	**Competence toward farm-to-table agritourism**	0.897		
CO1	Visitors effectively engage in farm-to-table activities and cultural practices		0.874	2.547
CO2	Visitors feel knowledgeable and capable during their interactions in the farm-to-table experience		0.859	2.286
CO3	Visitors gain a deeper appreciation for the cultural context through participation in farming and cooking activities		0.878	2.540
CO4	Visitors are more inclined to revisit the destination to deepen their knowledge or relive the authentic experience		0.883	2.525
RE	**Relatedness toward farm-to-table agritourism**	0.812		
RE1	Visitors establish emotional and social connections with the local community		0.838	1.831
RE2	Visitors feel a strong bond with the destination's cultural identity through interactions with local farmers		0.824	1.739
RE3	Visitors perceive their experience as genuine and meaningful due to their connection with local traditions		0.782	1.619
RE4	Visitors are motivated to return to the destination to relive authentic and emotionally resonant experiences		0.750	1.563
PA	**Perceived authenticity**	0.904		
PA1	Visitors believe their experiences genuinely reflect the local culture and traditions		0.890	2.788
PA2	Visitors form a deep emotional connection with the destination when they perceive the experience as authentic		0.889	2.725
PA3	Visitors view their interactions with local food production and culinary practices as authentic		0.874	2.471
PA4	Visitors are more likely to return to the destination if they perceive the experience as authentic		0.873	2.478
PC	**Perceived cost**	0.911		
PC1	Visitors assess the overall expense of the farm-to-table experience, including accommodation, food, and activities		0.890	2.679
PC2	Visitors may be less likely to return if they perceive the cost of the experience as prohibitively expensive		0.889	2.721
PC3	Visitors are more satisfied and motivated to return if they believe the experience offers good value for money		0.874	2.782
PC4	Visitors consider the cost when evaluating the authenticity and worth of the farm-to-table experience		0.873	2.929
RV	**Return visitors**	0.906		
RV1	Visitors are likely to return to the destination after having a culturally rich and authentic experience		0.897	2.899
RV2	Visitors plan to revisit the destination if they feel the experience offered good value for the money spent		0.867	2.327
RV3	Visitors are inclined to return to the destination if the cost of the experience was perceived as reasonable		0.877	2.887
RV4	Visitors intend to return to the destination to relive the authentic and meaningful experiences they had		0.888	2.881

4.3. Differentiation And Convergence Testing

From Table 3 results the Fornell & Larcker (1981) convergent validity evaluation results. These include composite reliability and average variance extracted. All constructions had CR values over 0.7, indicating strong internal consistency. Specifically, the CR for the construct of relatedness toward farm-to-table agritourism ranged from 0.876 to 0.938. Furthermore, The AVE values for all constructs are above the recommended threshold of 0.5, which indicates that a significant portion of the variance in the items is explained by the construct [43]. AVE values range from 0.639 for Relatedness to 0.790 for perceived cost. These values confirm that the constructs have good convergent validity, meaning that the items within each construct are highly correlated and represent the underlying concept effectively. The assessment of discriminant validity involved utilizing the square root of each construct's Average

Variance Extracted (AVE) in relation to its correlations with other constructs [44]. The square root of AVE for Autonomy (0.875) was notably distinct when compared to its correlations with other variables. Similar trends were identified for constructs such as recurring visitors, perceived cost, perceived authenticity, and competence.

Table 3. Convergent validity by Fornell & Larcker (1981)

	CR	AVE	AU	CO	PA	PC	RE	RV
AU	0.929	0.766	0.875					
CO	0.928	0.763	0.220	0.874				
PA	0.933	0.777	0.435	0.495	0.881			
PC	0.938	0.790	0.205	0.164	0.218	0.889		
RE	0.876	0.639	0.357	0.199	0.457	0.134	0.799	
RV	0.934	0.779	0.285	0.298	0.489	0.468	0.350	0.883

Note: Autonomy toward farm-to-table agritourism (AU), Competence toward farm-to-table agritourism (CO), Relatedness toward farm-to-table agritourism (RE), Perceived authenticity (PA), Perceived cost (PC), Return visitors (RV), Composite reliability (CR), Average variance extracted (AVE)

4.4. Testing Hypotheses

Table 4 presents the direct connection analysis result within the measurement framework and checks the hypotheses of this study according to the sample mean, initial sample coefficient, standard deviation, t-statistic, and p-value.

Table 4. Direct relationship in the measurement structure

Hypothesis	Relationships	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
H1	AU → PA	0.246	0.247	0.048	5.166	0.000
H2	CO → PA	0.383	0.383	0.049	7.845	0.000
H3	RE → PA	0.293	0.294	0.048	6.122	0.000
H4	PA → RV	0.308	0.308	0.055	5.589	0.000
H5	PC × PA → RV	-0.260	-0.260	0.040	6.566	0.000

Note: Autonomy toward farm-to-table agritourism (AU), Competence toward farm-to-table agritourism (CO), Relatedness toward farm-to-table agritourism (RE), Perceived authenticity (PA), Perceived cost (PC), Return visitors (RV).

Perceived authenticity and autonomy have a standard estimated coefficient of 0.246 (p-value = 0.000). This reveals a noteworthy and excellent correlation. Travelers on autonomous farm-to-table agritourism will enjoy a more real encounter [21]. The positive link between autonomy and perceived authenticity suggests that tourists are more likely to find agritourism authentic and meaningful when they have control over their activities and decisions. Li et al. (2024) agrees, adding that tourists who can tailor their own experiences have a more real experience with local cultures. This study shows that agritourism operators should offer customized experiences that let tourists connect with the farm-to-table process in real ways.

Moreover, considering the correlation coefficient of authenticity and perceived competency, 0.383 (p-value = 0.000) shows a favourable link. This indicates that when visitors feel perceived and capable, their authenticity will improve and the relationship will be far stronger [13]. The positive estimated coefficient of 0.383 suggests that visitors are more likely to perceive a genuine experience when they feel competent and capable in their activities. This shows that tourists who actively participate in and feel skilful in farm-to-table activities like cooking with local products or learning about farming processes are more likely to feel authentic and connected to the local culture. The higher correlation between perceived ability and authenticity suggests that the more skilful and informed visitors are, the deeper their attachment to the event. Competence enhances appreciation for local culture, making the experience more "real" and authentic [13]. Providing guests with chances to learn and develop skills can improve their competency and the perceived authenticity of the agritourism experience.

Positive relationship was established between perceived relatedness, and authenticity; $r = 0.293$; $p = < 0.001$ This shows that people who build social and emotional connection during an event are have a greater tendency of perceiving the experience as authentic [2]. Perceived authenticity, on the other hand, also had a positive association with return visits ($r = 0.308$, $p < 0.001$)' meaning that authenticity leads to return visitors. It is that the interaction between perceived cost and authenticity had a negative effect on return visits ($r = -0.260$, $p < 0.001$). From this, it can be inferred that the positive relationship between authenticity and return visitors may be buffered by cost. This finding elucidates all pertinent aspects. A significant positive association is apparent when examining authenticity alongside perceived interconnectedness ($r = 0.293$; $p < 0.001$). A sense of connection to the local community often encourages

individuals to partake in meaningful experiences. Breiby et al. (2020) [2] underscore the importance of emotional and social interactions in the quest for authenticity. Similarly, a positive correlation appears between perceived sincerity and return visits ($r = 0.308$; $p < 0.001$). Visitors return for authentic local experiences. This shows authenticity keeps tourists coming back. More authentic agritourism experiences increase return rates. Highlights, a negative correlation exists between perceived cost and authenticity on return visits ($r = -0.260$; $p < 0.001$). This suggests that genuineness encourages return visits, while higher perceived expenditures may diminish this. Thus, high fees may repel travelers even if they enjoy the experience. Even in actual experiences, increasing perceived cost decreases recurrent visits. For repeat visitors, authenticity must be combined with cost to maintain loyalty.

Furthermore, the relationships in this measurement structure are presented in more detail, the indirect relationships in Table 5.

Table 5. Indirect relationship

Indirect relationship	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
CO → PA → RV	0.118	0.118	0.028	4.223	0.000
AU → PA → RV	0.076	0.076	0.020	3.819	0.000
RE → PA → RV	0.090	0.090	0.022	4.121	0.000

Note: Autonomy toward farm-to-table agritourism (AU), Competence toward farm-to-table agritourism (CO), Relatedness toward farm-to-table agritourism (RE), Perceived authenticity (PA), Perceived cost (PC), Return visitors (RV).

From the results of the analysis of the study, the results of the analysis framework on the return visitors of tourists and the role of the regulator of price perception on the intention of tourists are synthesized and visualized in Figure 3.

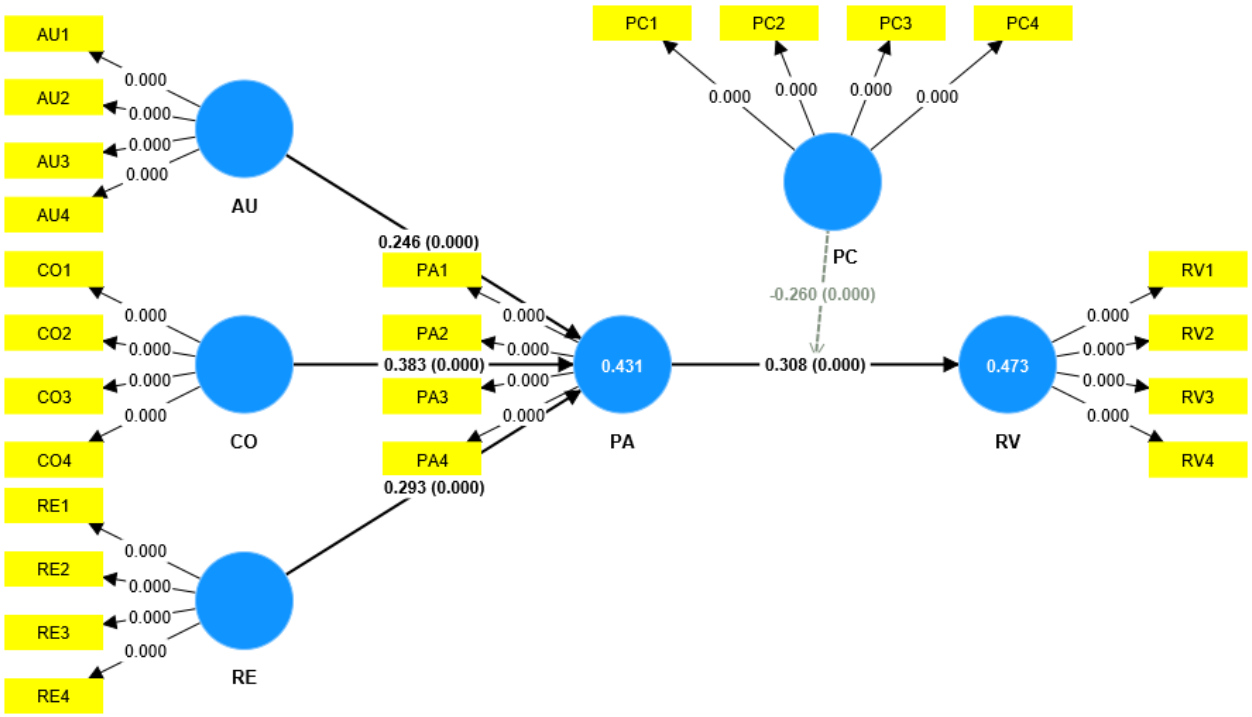


Figure 3. Visualize the results of personal cognitive analysis to return to farm-to-table agritourism

5. Discussion

The study highlights the relationships between perceived competence, autonomy, and relatedness, and their influence on perceived authenticity and return visits in farm-to-table agritourism. Additionally, the moderating role of perceived cost in these relationships is explored. By comparing these results with previous research, a comprehensive understanding of how these factors shape visitor behavior is provided, offering insights into the future direction of agritourism practices.

To fully comprehend these findings, broader discussions within the experience tourism industry should encompass a variety of contextual factors. The research evaluating the role of farm-to-table activities in agritourism towards sustainable development based on three agritourism farms in Brunei offers a valuable comparative perspective [4]. Furthermore, this study aligns with broader research on agricultural tourism, such as Muskat et al.'s (2019) German study, which emphasizes the importance of authenticity for diverse visitors. A notable positive correlation has been identified between perceived autonomy and authenticity ($r = 0.246$, $p = 0.000$), supporting the conclusions of Muskat

et al. [19] and Li et al. (2024) that greater visitor control and self-directed engagement lead to improved happiness and emotional bonds. The autonomy experienced by visitors in farm-to-table settings markedly elevates their sense of authenticity and encourages them to return for subsequent visits [21]. On the other hand, skilled individuals were more likely to evaluate farm-to-table experiences as authentic and want to return (correlation coefficient = 0.383, $p < 0.001$). Zatori et al. (2018) found that brilliant people seek more genuine experiences. Farm-to-table seminars and educational programs may improve visitor competence and authenticity, driving return visits [24]. However, perceived cost had a negative influence on return visits as does price sensitivity, with a correlation value of $r = -0.260$, and a significance level of 0.001. Such experiences are important, yet the costs may reduce the number of people visiting the area. Therefore, agritourism enterprises risk losing their customers due to high prices while at the same time needing to offer genuine experiences.

Demographic data further supports these insights, as the study sample was predominantly male (57.1%) with females comprising 42.9%, ensuring a balanced gender perspective. Most participants were aged between 29 and 39 years (47.7%), highlighting the appeal of farm-to-table agritourism too young to middle-aged adults. Additionally, 61.0% of respondents had a college or university education, suggesting that well-educated individuals are drawn to these culturally enriching experiences, which likely influences their satisfaction and return intentions [7]. The study demonstrates that perceptions of autonomy, competence, and relatedness significantly impact the likelihood of revisiting the destination and the perceived genuineness of the experience [22]. This is evidenced by the highest coefficient found in the competence aspect. Whether through culinary involvement, understanding local farming practices, or engaging with cultural traditions, farm-to-table experiences appear more authentic when guests acquire skills and become more aware of their environment [5]. This enhanced sense of capability strengthens their attachment to the experience and increases the likelihood of future returns [31]. The significance of perceived competence underscores the importance of interactive and educational agritourism activities [45]. These initiatives provide guests with valuable insights, enhancing the authenticity of their experience and elevating the potential for return visits.

The results highlight that emphasizing regional food and focusing on authenticity often leads to return visits, suggesting that authenticity is a key factor in attracting repeat visitors. However, the study also found that the relationship between perceived authenticity and cost has an inverse relationship with the probability of return ($r = -0.260$, $p < 0.001$). While authenticity is crucial for drawing visitors, back, high costs can diminish its positive impact. If visitors perceive the experience as genuine but expensive, they may hesitate to return due to the financial burden [46]. This finding aligns with studies on price sensitivity and tourism behavior, which show that high service costs can discourage visitors from returning, even if the experience is authentic. Professionals in agritourism must balance authenticity with reasonable pricing to ensure a holistic and sustainable agritourism experience [47]. Bringing guests back to farm-to-table agritourism depends on providing authentic, high-quality experiences at competitive prices.

6. Conclusion

The study also sought to establish how the type of agritourism focused on farms producing food consumed in the establishment encourages the local food and subsequent revisits. The study was able to generate three main conclusions. First, the assessment of demography showed that most of the participants were male (57). While 9% of the participants were married, the majority of them were within 29–39 years of age, with the majority of the participants having college or university education (61.0%). This suggests that educated, young to middle-aged individuals are drawn to farm-to-table agritourism. Secondly, the study found that perceived autonomy, competence, and relatedness all had a significant impact on perceived authenticity and repeat visits, with perceived competence having the most influence. This underlines the significance of visitors' perceived competence while on their experiences because of the consequences that it can bring for the outcome of the experience, its authenticity, as well as the chances of recurring visits. The study also found evidence that high perceived costs moderate the correlation between authenticity and repeated visits; this correlation is weakly negative, ($– 0.260$, $p < 0.001$). Generally, this implies that although there may be a positive association between authenticity and repeat business, this link may be restricted where the costs are high; hence, managers of agritourism attractions need to ensure that their adopted level of authenticity is balanced with cost.

6.1. Implications (Practical, Social, Future Research)

The study's findings offer valuable insights into the dynamics of farm-to-table agritourism and its impact on promoting local cuisine and encouraging repeat visits. From a practical standpoint, the research suggests that farm-to-table agritourism mainly attracts young, educated adults and middle-aged individuals, with a slight male majority. This demographic understanding indicates that agritourism providers should develop educational and culturally immersive experiences centred on local food production, such as hands-on workshops and excursions, to meet the needs of this audience [5]. Additionally, boosting visitors' perceived competence has the most significant influence on perceived authenticity and likelihood of return visits. Therefore, operators should prioritize offering opportunities for visitors to acquire skills and knowledge to enhance their enjoyment and loyalty [48].

From a social perspective, the study highlights the broad appeal of farm-to-table experiences, evident from the balanced gender distribution. This presents an opportunity to encourage social interaction and community engagement through inclusive activities that promote cultural exchange [49]. Additionally, making these authentic experiences accessible to a wider audience by taking into account the financial limitations of different visitor groups can improve inclusivity and social involvement.

For future research, it is crucial to delve into the motivations and preferences of various demographic groups, including older adults and those with different educational backgrounds, to gain a better understanding of the factors influencing return visits [50]. Furthermore, exploring how varying levels of perceived cost and psychological factors such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness impact perceived authenticity and return visits across diverse demographics and cultural contexts could provide deeper insights. Research should also look into strategies to enhance perceived value without compromising authenticity to sustain and expand the farm-to-table agritourism market in diverse economic settings.

7. Declarations

7.1. Author Contributions

Conceptualization, N.N.; methodology, N.N. and L.T.; software, N.N.; validation, N.N. and L.T.; formal analysis, N.N. and L.T.; investigation, N.N. and L.T.; data curation, N.N. and L.T.; writing—original draft preparation, N.N.; writing—review and editing, N.N. and L.T., A.N.; visualization, N.N. and L.T.; project administration, N.N., A.N., and L.T. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

7.2. Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

7.3. Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

7.4. Acknowledgements

We extend our gratitude to the Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City for their support in arranging work plans that allowed us to focus on research improvement. Address: No. 12 Nguyen Van Bao, Ward 4, Go Vap District, Ho Chi Minh City. The University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City. 10-12 Dinh Tien Hoang Street, Ben Nghe Ward, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam.

7.5. Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

7.6. Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

7.7. Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this manuscript. In addition, the ethical issues, including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, and redundancies have been completely observed by the authors.

8. References

[1] Streifeneder, T., Hoffmann, C., & Corradini, P. (2023). The future of agritourism? A review of current trends of touristic commercialisation in rural areas. Annals of Regional Science, 71(1), 93–119. doi:10.1007/s00168-022-01126-w.

[2] Breiby, M. A., Duedahl, E., Øian, H., & Ericsson, B. (2020). Exploring sustainable experiences in tourism. Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism, 20(4), 335–351. doi:10.1080/15022250.2020.1748706.

[3] Schmalz, D. L., Joyner, L., Duffy, L. N., Bricker, K. S., & Blomquist, K. K. (2020). The cycle of food socialization: leisure as resistance. Annals of Leisure Research, 23(4), 510–529. doi:10.1080/11745398.2019.1568891.

[4] Musa, S.F.P.D., & Chin, W. L. (2022). The role of farm-to-table activities in agritourism towards sustainable development. Tourism Review, 77(2), 659–671. doi:10.1108/TR-02-2021-0101.

[5] Ertaş, Ç., & Karakan, H. I. (2024). The future of events in the tourism industry: the case of the "Best of the Best Things to Do 2023" on TripAdvisor. Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes, 16(4), 474–484. doi:10.1108/WHATT-06-2024-0121.

[6] Yu, W., & Spencer, D. M. (2021). Motivations, challenges, and self-transformations of farmers engaged in farm tourism on a tropical island. Journal of Heritage Tourism, 16(2), 164–180. doi:10.1080/1743873X.2020.1776296.

[7] Domínguez-Quintero, A. M., González-Rodríguez, M. R., & Paddison, B. (2020). The mediating role of experience quality on authenticity and satisfaction in the context of cultural-heritage tourism. Current Issues in Tourism, 23(2), 248–260. doi:10.1080/13683500.2018.1502261.

[8] Quella, L., Chase, L., Conner, D., Reynolds, T., Wang, W., & Singh-Knights, D. (2021). Visitors and values: A qualitative analysis of agritourism operator motivations across the US. Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development, 10(3), 287-301. doi:10.5304/jafscd.2021.103.010.

[9] Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. Psychological Inquiry, 11(4), 227–268. doi:10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01.

[10] Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2008). Self-determination theory: A macrotheory of human motivation, development, and health. Canadian Psychology, 49(3), 182–185. doi:10.1037/a0012801.

[11] Scarles, C., Treharne, H., Casey, M., & Abidin, H. Z. (2020). Micro-mobilities in curated spaces: agency, autonomy and dwelling in visitor experiences of augmented reality in arts and heritage. Mobilities, 15(6), 776–791. doi:10.1080/17450101.2020.1816439.

[12] Hasan, M. A., Mimi, M. B., Voumik, L. C., Esquivias, M. A., & Rashid, M. (2023). Investigating the Interplay of ICT and Agricultural Inputs on Sustainable Agricultural Production: An ARDL Approach. Journal of Human, Earth, and Future, 4(4), 375–390. doi:10.28991/HEF-2023-04-04-01.

[13] Çıkı, K. D., & Tanrıverdi, H. (2023). Self-Determination Theory in the Field of Tourism: A Bibliometric Analysis. Tourism, 71(4), 769–781. doi:10.37741/t.71.4.8.

[14] Biraglia, A., Gerrath, M. H. E. E., & Usrey, B. (2018). Examining How Companies' Support of Tourist Attractions Affects Visiting Intentions: The Mediating Role of Perceived Authenticity. Journal of Travel Research, 57(6), 811–823. doi:10.1177/0047287517718352.

[15] Habibi, A., & Rasoolimanesh, S. M. (2021). Experience and Service Quality on Perceived Value and Behavioral Intention: Moderating Effect of Perceived Risk and Fee. Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality and Tourism, 22(6), 711–737. doi:10.1080/1528008X.2020.1837050.

[16] Kim, H., & So, K. K. F. (2022). Two decades of customer experience research in hospitality and tourism: A bibliometric analysis and thematic content analysis. International Journal of Hospitality Management, 100, 103082. doi:10.1016/j.ijhm.2021.103082.

[17] Baipai, R., Chikuta, O., Gandiwa, E., & Mutanga, C. N. (2023). A framework for sustainable agritourism development in Zimbabwe. Cogent Social Sciences, 9(1), 2201025. doi:10.1080/23311886.2023.2201025.

[18] Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior. Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior: Springer, XVI, 372. doi:10.1007/978-1-4899-2271-7.

[19] Muskat, B., Hörtnagl, T., Prayag, G., & Wagner, S. (2019). Perceived quality, authenticity, and price in tourists' dining experiences: Testing competing models of satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Journal of Vacation Marketing, 25(4), 480–498. doi:10.1177/1356766718822675.

[20] Shah, C., Shah, S., & Gibson, D. (2022). Demystifying agritourism development in Fiji: Inclusive growth for smallholders. Tourism and Hospitality Research, 22(2), 131–148. doi:10.1177/14673584211005169.

[21] Li, Y., Guo, Z. qi, Hua, H. yan, & Li, W. (2024). An empirical analysis of cultural differences in overseas tourism: How do they affect self-determination theory (SDT) needs by age? International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 99, 101936. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2024.101936.

[22] Chen, H., & Rahman, I. (2018). Cultural tourism: An analysis of engagement, cultural contact, memorable tourism experience and destination loyalty. Tourism Management Perspectives, 26, 153–163. doi:10.1016/j.tmp.2017.10.006.

[23] Jauhari, V. (2017). Hospitality marketing and consumer behavior: creating memorable experiences. Apple Academic Press, 159–185. doi:10.1201/9781315366227.

[24] Zatori, A., Smith, M. K., & Puczko, L. (2018). Experience-involvement, memorability and authenticity: The service provider's effect on tourist experience. Tourism Management, 67, 111–126. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2017.12.013.

[25] Kumar, V., Kaushal, V., & Kaushik, A. K. (2023). Building relationship orientation among travelers through destination brand authenticity. Journal of Vacation Marketing, 29(3), 331–347. doi:10.1177/13567667221095589.

[26] Brune, S., Knollenberg, W., Stevenson, K. T., Barbieri, C., & Schroeder-Moreno, M. (2021). The Influence of Agritourism Experiences on Consumer Behavior toward Local Food. Journal of Travel Research, 60(6), 1318–1332. doi:10.1177/0047287520938869.

[27] Bhogal, S., Mittal, A., & Tandon, U. (2024). Accessing vicarious nostalgia and memorable tourism experiences in the context of heritage tourism with the moderating influence of social return. International Journal of Tourism Cities, 10(3), 860–880. doi:10.1108/IJTC-09-2023-0195.

[28] Tiberghien, G., Bremner, H., & Milne, S. (2020). Authenticity and disorientation in the tourism experience. Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism, 30, 100283. doi:10.1016/j.jort.2020.100283.

[29] Huang, Y. C., Backman, K. F., Backman, S. J., & Chang, L. L. (2016). Exploring the Implications of Virtual Reality Technology in Tourism Marketing: An Integrated Research Framework. International Journal of Tourism Research, 18(2), 116–128. doi:10.1002/jtr.2038.

[30] Žabkar, V., Brenčič, M. M., & Dmitrović, T. (2010). Modelling perceived quality, visitor satisfaction and behavioural intentions at the destination level. Tourism Management, 31(4), 537–546. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2009.06.005.

[31] Zhao, Y., Zhan, Q., Du, G., & Wei, Y. (2024). The effects of involvement, authenticity, and destination image on tourist satisfaction in the context of Chinese ancient village tourism. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 60, 51–62. doi:10.1016/j.jhtm.2024.06.008.

[32] Williams, A. M., & Baláž, V. (2021). Tourism and Trust: Theoretical Reflections. Journal of Travel Research, 60(8), 1619–1634. doi:10.1177/0047287520961177.

[33] Sidali, K. L., Kastenholz, E., & Bianchi, R. (2015). Food tourism, niche markets and products in rural tourism: Combining the intimacy model and the experience economy as a rural development strategy. Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 23(8-9), 1179-1197. doi:10.1080/09669582.2013.836210.

[34] Konuk, F. A. (2019). The influence of perceived food quality, price fairness, perceived value and satisfaction on customers' revisit and word-of-mouth intentions towards organic food restaurants. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 50, 103–110. doi:10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.05.005.

[35] Hair Jr., J. F., Matthews, L. M., Matthews, R. L., & Sarstedt, M. (2017). PLS-SEM or CB-SEM: updated guidelines on which method to use. International Journal of Multivariate Data Analysis, 1(2), 107. doi:10.1504/ijmda.2017.10008574.

[36] Jaiswal, A. (2024). Google Form. Open Electronic Data Capture Tools for Medical and Biomedical Research and Medical Allied Professionals. Academic Press, 2024, 331–378. doi:10.1016/B978-0-443-15665-6.00008-7.

[37] Regmi, P. R., Waithaka, E., Paudyal, A., Simkhada, P., & Van Teijlingen, E. (2017). Guide to the design and application of online questionnaire surveys. Nepal Journal of Epidemiology, 6(4), 640–644. doi:10.3126/nje.v6i4.17258.

[38] Bonett, D. G., & Wright, T. A. (2015). Interval estimation, hypothesis testing, and sample size planning. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 36(1), 3–15

[39] Asmelash, A. G., & Kumar, S. (2019). Assessing progress of tourism sustainability: Developing and validating sustainability indicators. Tourism Management, 71, 67–83. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2018.09.020.

[40] Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. European Business Review, 31(1), 2–24. doi:10.1108/EBR-11-2018-0203.

[41] Hundleby, J. D. (1968). Reviews: Nunnally, Jum. Psychometric Theory. American Educational Research Journal, 5(3), 431-433.

[42] Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C. M., & Hair, J. F. (2017). Treating unobserved heterogeneity in PLS-SEM: A multi-method approach. Partial Least Squares Path Modeling: Basic Concepts, Methodological Issues and Applications, 197. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-64069-3_9.

[43] Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating Structural Equation Models with Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error. Journal of Marketing Research, 18(1), 39–50. doi:10.1177/002224378101800104.

[44] Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 43(1), 115–135. doi:10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8.

[45] Kumlu, S. T., Samancıoğlu, E., & Uca, S. (2024). The effect of tourists' relationship with nature on global social responsibility awareness within the scope of last chance tourism. Journal of Tourism Leisure and Hospitality, 6(1), 44–58. doi:10.48119/toleho.1375893.

[46] Pandža Bajs, I. (2015). Tourist Perceived Value, Relationship to Satisfaction, and Behavioral Intentions: The Example of the Croatian Tourist Destination Dubrovnik. Journal of Travel Research, 54(1), 122–134. doi:10.1177/0047287513513158.

[47] Oklevik, O., Gössling, S., Hall, C. M., Steen Jacobsen, J. K., Grøtte, I. P., & McCabe, S. (2019). Overtourism, optimisation, and destination performance indicators: a case study of activities in Fjord Norway. Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 27(12), 1804–1824. doi:10.1080/09669582.2018.1533020.

[48] Dileep Kumar, M., Govindarajo, N. S., & Khen, M. H. S. (2020). Effect of service quality on visitor satisfaction, destination image and destination loyalty – practical, theoretical and policy implications to avitourism. International Journal of Culture, Tourism, and Hospitality Research, 14(1), 83–101. doi:10.1108/IJCTHR-04-2019-0066.

[49] O'Brien, E., & Cooney, T. M. (2024). Enhancing inclusive entrepreneurial activity through community engagement led by higher education institutions. Journal of Enterprising Communities. doi:10.1108/JEC-10-2023-0189.

[50] Chen, S., Sotiriadis, M., & Shen, S. (2023). The influencing factors on service experiences in rural tourism: An integrated approach. Tourism Management Perspectives, 47, 101122. doi:10.1016/j.tmp.2023.101122.