

A Critical Review of Success Factors for Sustainable Agritourism Development

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Abstract

Sustainable agritourism development is at the apex of contemporary discussions on sustainable tourism development as evidenced by enormous studies being done on this tourism concept. This review paper discussed the contributions of one hundred and five (105) research articles that were published in several tourism journals. The main objective of this paper was to establish the current state of literature on Success Factors (SFs) for sustainable agritourism development, identify research gaps, suggest areas of future study and draw lessons that are of importance to the development of agritourism in Zimbabwe. Statistical analysis was employed in order to establish the distribution of the sampled research articles over time, by continent, distribution by research method, distribution by research approach and distribution by research themes. The results of this study revealed that research on agritourism development is biased towards the developed countries, most of the research used qualitative research with focus more on the supply side and little has been done to establish the requirements and CSFs for the development of this tourism concept. The findings of this study provide a baseline upon which future studies in agritourism, could be build.

Keywords: Sustainable agritourism, success factors, destination, agriculture, tourism

Introduction

Agriculture and tourism are two major industries of most economies contributing enormously towards employment and economic development of nations (Zacal, Virador & Canedo, 2019; Moraru, Ungureanu, Bdescu & Donasa, 2016). The synergy between the two industries has resulted in unique enterprises that are developed on a working farm combined with a commercial tourism element (Karampela & Kizos, 2018). This synergy dates back to the early 19th century in developed countries such as Europe, United States of America and the United Kingdom. During that era people would travel to participate in planting and harvesting festivals. The art of visiting agricultural farms continued to gain popularity in the later part of the 19th century with wealthy Europeans and easterners on hunting trips and day trips paying

for accommodation at farmhouses (Chase, Stewart, Schilling, Smith & Walk, 2018). This was referred to as tourism on farms and it was based on a leap of faith rather than on sound market research which later transformed into farm tourism.

This long-standing tradition of travelling to agricultural farms for these reasons is worth mentioning because it provides the basis upon which farm tourism is built. Since then the relationship between agriculture and tourism has continued to strengthen up to today, and has given birth to a new tourism concept known as agritourism (Chase et al., 2018). The concept has been developing throughout the century with rapid growth being witnessed in the 1980s in most European countries, USA and UK. These countries today boast of a vibrant agritourism sector (Chatterjee & Prasad, 2019; Genovese, Culasso & Giacosa, 2017; MacKay, Nelson & Perkins, 2019). Literature shows that agritourism is the fastest growing tourism segments in these regions (Bajgier-Kowalska, Tracz & Uliszak, 2017). The relationships between agriculture and tourism is vital for the diversification of farm activities that tourism brings about at the farm and in turn agricultural attractions broaden the product base in the tourism industry (Yamagishi, Gantalao & Ocampo, 2021). Several researches for example, Malkanthi and Routry (2011); Niorn (2010); Lago (2017), have attested that agritourism creates a win-win situation for both the agricultural and tourism sectors

Agricultural attractions have continued to gain popularity mainly in the developed countries (Chatterjee & Prasad, 2019). Tremendous growth of agritourism market has started to be witnessed in the developing countries and this growth is likely to continue in the future (Paresishvili, Kvaratskhelia & Mirzaeva, 2017). The growth in popularity of these farm attractions has been fuelled up by the need to increase the product base of destinations (Leo, Brien, Astor, Najib, Novianti, Rafdinal & Suhartanto, 2021; Chikuta & Makacha, 2016). Most destination have, since time immemorial, relied on traditional attractions as their main tourist attractions (Thomas, Moore & Edwards, 2018). Overreliance on these traditional attractions has led to these being labelled tired products which can no longer motivate tourists to visit the destinations (Chikuta & Makacha, 2016). Moreover, the growing demand in farm tourism by the new tourist has also contributed to the immense growth in agritourism (Leo et al., 2021; Chikuta & Makacha, 2016) The growth of this tourism concept is also reflected in the extensive research that have been done on agritourism. In view of this the researchers conducted this review of literature in order to to establish the current state of literature on Success Factors for agritourism growth, identify research gaps, suggest areas of future study and draw lessons that are of importance to the development of agritourism in Zimbabwe.

Brief literature review on success factors for agritourism

Success Factors (SFs) are the key aspects or areas that must be managed in order to achieve organisational objectives (Marais, Du Plessis & Saayman, 2017). Different industries have different SFs that apply to them. Comen (1996) highlighted that SFs for agritourism development are the areas that farmers must concentrate on improving in order to make their farm-based tourism ventures successful. In the services sector, knowledge of the SFs has constituted a competitive advantage for the leading companies. For this reason, the search for techniques by which the SFs can be identified has been the topic of many studies. These characteristics, conditions or SFs, have a direct and significant impact on the effectiveness, efficiency, and viability of an organization's program (Marais et al., 2017). Activities associated with SFs must be performed at the highest possible level of excellence to achieve the overall objectives. This will ultimately lead to the ability to achieve higher success levels and, as a result, time saving, cost savings, quality, and efficiency in their systems. Management must identify the areas that they consider important to achieve the ultimate tourist experience

and direct the operational activities to accomplish the organization's goals (Marais et al, 2017; Finney & Corbett, 2007; Chaiphan, 2016; Comen, 2017).

There is little literature on Success Factors specifically for agritourism development. The few research that have been done focused mainly on SFs for the tourism industry as a whole and there is need for an investigation on SFs for various sectors including agritourism (Marais et al., 2017). Few studies have been done specifically to identify success factors for agritourism development, for example, Veeck, Che and Veeck (2014) and Chatterjee and Prasad (2019). However, many studies on agritourism mention the success factors for this new type tourism although their main objectives were not to identify such. A summary of the studies that were reviewed and the main theme studied are shown in the table below.

Table 1: A summary of the publications that were used in this analysis and the main themes studied

Author	Main theme studied
Kim, Lee Ki, Lee, Jeong and Moon (2019)	Economic Effects of agritourism on consumers
Bwana, Olima, Andika, Agong and Hayombe (2015)	Socio- impacts
Thessen (2007)	Measuring economic impacts
Tulla, Vera, Valldeperas and Guirado (2019)	Socio-economic benefits
Rogerson and Rogerson (2014)	Economic benefits
Leh, Mohd Noor, Marzukhi and Mohamed Musthafa (2017)	Social impacts
Ainley and Smale (2009)	Benefits of agritourism
Naidoo and Sharpley (2015)	Perceptions on benefits of agritourism
Liang, Hsiao, Chen and Lin (2020)	Effects of agritourism on tourists
Chen, Dax and Zhang (2019)	Effects of agritourism
Zoto, Qirici and Polena (2013)	Benefits and sustainable development
Kunasekaran, Fuza and Hassan, Nor (2018)	Factors influencing perceptions of locals
Karampela, Kizos and Spilanis (2016)	Impact of agritourism
Choenkwan, Promkhambut, Hayao and Rambo (2016)	Benefits of agritourism
Flanigan, Blackstock and Hunter (2015)	Public and private benefits of agritourism
Moraru et al (2016)	Challenges and motivations
Yamagishi, Gantalao and Ocampo (2021)	Challenges and insights
Adamov et al (2020)	Challenges and sustainability
Chase and Ramaswamy (2007)	Challenges and successes
Canovi (2019)	Resistance to agritourism development
Prasanshakumari (2016)	Possibility for agritourism
Priyanka and Kumah (2016)	Potential for agritourism
Malkanthi and Routry (2011)	Potential for agritourism
Awan and Saeed (2016)	Prospects for agritourism
Olya and Alipour (2014)	Potential for agritourism
Chikuta and Makacha (2016)	Potential for agritourism
Talekar and Potdar (2012)	Potential for agritourism development
Shrestha, Dangol, Pandey and Bhattarai (2011)	Prospects of agritourism
Chiodo, Fantini, Dickes, Arogundade, Camie, Assing, Stewart and Salvatore (2019)	Motivations for developing agritourism
Shah, Gibson, Shar and Pratt (2020)	Motivations for tourists
Sotomayor, Barbieri, Wilhelm, Francisco and Smith (2014)	Motivations for developing agritourism
Bhatta, Itagaki and Ohe (2019)	Willingness to start agritourism
Leo et al (2021)	Motivations for tourists
Cristina, Iamandi and Munteanu (2017)	Incentives for developing agritourism
Tugade (2020)	Motivations, benefits and challenges
Barbieri (2019)	Review paper
Rauniyar et al (2020)	Review paper
Mahaliyanaarachchi (2016)	Review paper
Santeramo and Barbieri (2016)	Demand for agritourism
Lago (2017)	Demand and supply for agritourism
Shembekar (2017)	Consumer awareness
Barbieri et al (2015)	Branding assessment for recreational farms
Liang, Nie, Chen and Chen (2020)	Co-branding and farm tourism
Joyner, Kline, Oliver and Kariko (2017)	Tourists' responses to images
Dubois, Cawley and Schmitz (2017)	Agritourism marketing

Viglia and Abrate (2017)	Determinants of agritourism prices
Petroman, Varga, Constantin, Petroman, Momir, Turc and Merce (2016)	Agritourism as an educational tool
Fagioli, Diotallevi and Ciani (2014)	Agritourism and sustainability
Boncinelli, Bartolini and Casini (2018)	Labour allocation and farm diversification
Sutherland, Madureira, Dirimanova, Bogusz and Kania (2017)	Knowledge networks
Forbord, Schermer and Griebmair (2012)	Institutionalization in farm tourism
Arroyo, Barbieri, Sotomayor and Knowlberg (2019)	Women empowerment
Karampela, Kavroudakis and Kizos (2017)	Agritourism networks
Montefrio and Sin (2019)	Elite government of agritourism
Kubickova and Campbell (2020)	Role of government in agritourism
Karampela, Papapanos and Kizos (2019)	Agritourism and cooperation
Ciolac, Adamov, Iancu, Popescu, Lile, Rujescu and Marin (2019)	Sustainable development and health
Mackay, Nelson and Perkins (2018)	Interpretive walks and agritourism
Yildirim and Kilinc (2018)	Farm tourism experiences
Cioca, Giurea, Precazzini, Regazzi, Achim, Schiavon and Rada (2018)	Agritourism and ranking
Olya and Alipour (2014)	Entrepreneurial tourism project
Doh, Park and Kim (2017)	Managerial behavior in agritourism
Karampela, Kizos and Spilanis (2016)	Agritourism and local development
Van Sandt, Low and Thilmany (2018)	Patterns for agritourism
Streifeneder (2016)	Policies and typologies for defining agritourism
Phillip, Hunter and Blackstock (2010)	A typology for defining agritourism
Wojcieszak, Anna and Zawadka (2020)	Agritourism during Covid 19 era
Melstrom and Murphy (2017)	Landscapes and agritourism
Poczta-wajda and Poczta (2016)	Role of natural conditions in agritourism
Brandano, Osti and Pulina (2018)	Conceptual framework for demand and supply
Chase et al (2018)	Conceptual framework for industry analysis
Liu, Yen, Tsai and Lo (2017)	A conceptual framework for agritourism
Sawe, Kieti and Wishitemi (2018)	A conceptual model for heritage and agritourism
Broccardo, Culasso and Truant (2017)	Agritourism model and sustainability
Gunarta and Hanggara (2018)	Agritourism business model
Genovese, Culasso and Giacosa (2017)	Business model for sustainability
Addinsall, Weiler, Scherrer and Glencross (2017)	Inclusive model for agritourism
Comen (2017)	Critical Success Factors for agritourism
Veeck, Che and Veeck (2014)	Success factors for agritourism
Chatterjee and Prasad (2019)	Success stories and sustainability
Hung, Ding and Lin (2016)	Determinants of agritourism performance
Addinsall, Weiler, Scherrer and Glencross (2016)	Food security and conservation
Thomas, Moore and Edwards (2018)	Food security and agritourism
Fischer (2019)	Food security and income effects
Veeck, Che and Veeck (2016)	Economic contribution of agritourism
Lucha, Ferreira, Walker and Grover (2016)	Profitability of agritourism
Khaokhrueamuang (2014)	Sufficiency economy and sustainability
Naidoo and Pearce (2016)	The economic debate
(Sadowski and Wojcieszak, 2019)	Differentiation of agritourism activities
Khairabadi et al (2020)	Evaluation of agritourism activities
Roman and Golnik (2019)	Current state and conditions for agritourism
Zacal, Virador and Canedo (2019)	State of agritourism
Bajgier-Kowalska, Tracz and Uliszak (2017)	State of agritourism
Lupi, Giacio, Mastronardi, Giannelli and Scardera (2017)	Exploring features of agritourism
Hall and Bachelor (2019)	Agritourism activities and zoning
Ciolac, Iancu, Brad, Popescu, Marin and Adamov (2020)	Agritourism activity and sustainability
Palmi and Lezzi (2020)	Authenticity, innovation and sustainability
Morris, Henley and Dowell (2017)	Entrepreneurship and technology adaptation
Eshan and Mensar (2020)	Agritourism niche market
Arru, Furesi, Madau and Paulina (2019)	Technical efficiency in agritourism
Stotten, Maurer, Herrman and Schermer (2019)	Agritourism accommodation
Fanelli and Romagnoli, 2020	Farm house facilities
(MacKay, Nelson and Perkins (2019)	Adaptive reuse of farm buildings
Sidali, Spitaler and Schamel (2019)	Agritourism accommodation

Methodology

A review of literature from articles published in the field of agritourism was conducted. One hundred and five (105) online publications in the field of agritourism development were analysed. These were downloaded from four databases which are Francis and Taylor, Elsevier, Emerald hill and Scopus. The researcher focused mainly on studies done on agritourism development. The publications that were published between 2007 and 2021 were chosen for analysis. This means recent trends in agritourism development for the past 15 years have been captured in this study. The analysis of the research articles was performed by statistical analysis. Statistical analysis involves counting the number of research articles appearing under each research parameter. The research parameters that were used for this analysis include publications in terms of the continents in which the studies were done, the research approach adopted, the research methods used, the main theme studied, the years in which the studies were conducted, and the success factors for agritourism addressed in the articles. The researcher analysed the publications using these categories in order to identify research topics and research gaps that require further investigations.

Findings

The results of this study are presented in the form of bar graphs and pie charts. The results show the distribution of the publications analysed in terms the years of publication, the continents in which the studies were conducted, the research method and approach adopted, the main theme studied and the success factors studied.

Analysis of publications according to year published

The publications used in this analysis were published between 2007 and 2021 as indicated in figure 1. There was an increase in the number of research done in agritourism from 2016, 2017 and 2019. Figure 1 indicates that the highest number of publications in the sample were published in 2019, the most recent having been published in 2021.

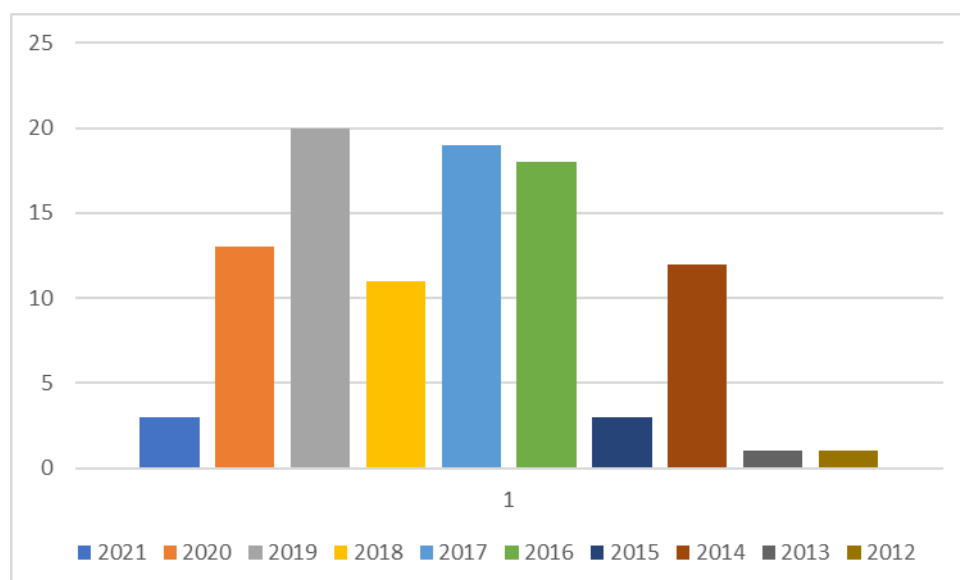


Figure 1. Distribution of publication over time

Analysis of publications according to continents in which studies were done

The sampled publications were analysed in order to identify the regions in which the studies were conducted. This enabled the researchers to have an overview of where most of the studies

on agritourism development were conducted. The results indicated that most of the studies in the publications analysed were conducted in Asia (44 publications), followed by USA (27 publications), Europe (16 publications), Australia (10 publications) and 8 of the studies were done in Africa as shown in Figure 2.

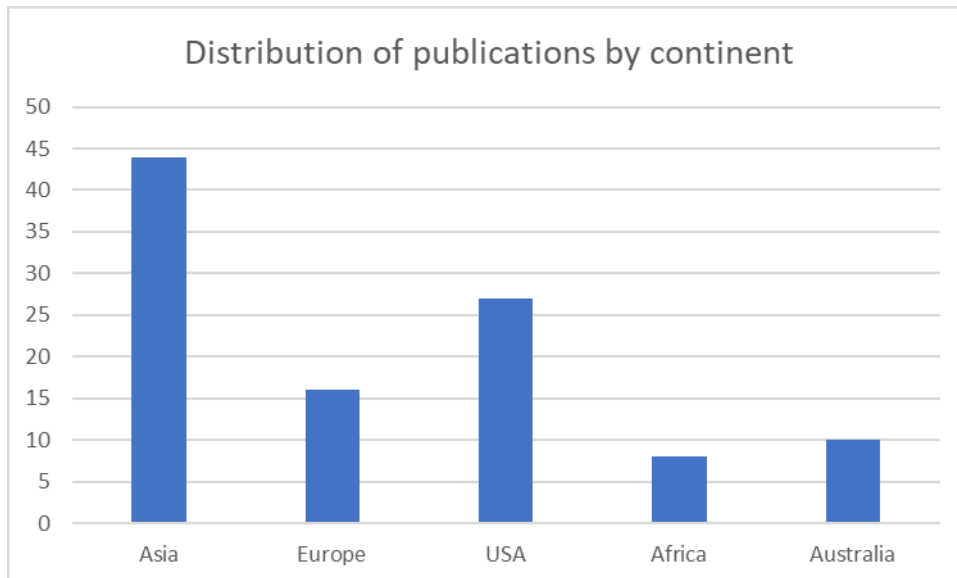


Figure 2. Distribution of publications by continent

Analysis of publications according to research methods used

The researcher also analysed the sampled publications in order to identify the research methods used to conduct the studies. The results indicated that most of the studies done in agritourism development use qualitative methods which is represented by 55% of the sampled publications. The main data collection method used in the sampled publications was interviews. Only 33% of the publications used quantitative research methods such as questionnaires and 12% used both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Analysis of publications according to research approach used

Analysis of the sampled publications indicated that most of the studies done in agritourism development used the supply side approach where they were focusing more on the characteristics of the farmer, the farm and its surroundings. The results showed that 63% of the studies used the supply side approach. Only 20% of the studies focused on the demand side which involved analysis of the agritourists in terms of their preferences, motivations and demographic characteristics. 17% of the publications used both demand and supply approach.

Analysis of publications by main themes that were studied

An analysis of the publications revealed that twenty (20) of the publications that were sampled were unrelated. They could not fall in any of the major themes that were identified as shown in figure 3. This indicates research gaps because no other similar studies were found in the sampled publication. The main themes that were extensively studied on are shown in Figure 3.

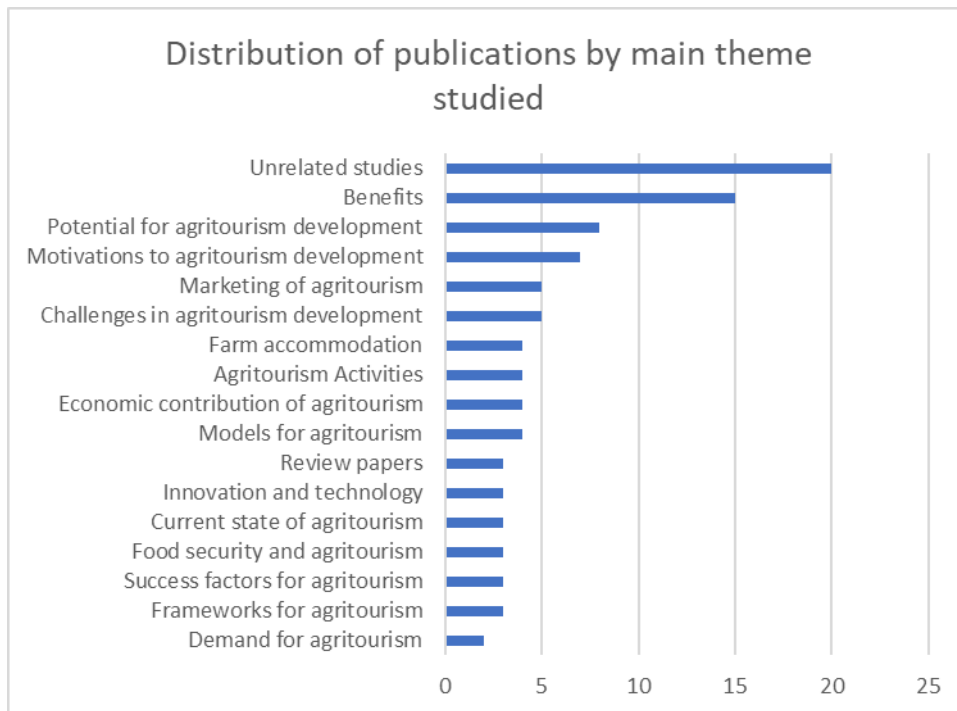


Figure 3: Distribution of publications by main theme studied

Analysis of success factors for agritourism development

The researcher conducted an analysis of the success factors statistically. This involved counting the number of times a factor was mentioned in each of the publications that were sampled. The results of this analysis are shown in Figure 4. Nineteen (19) factors were identified. Some of the related factors were grouped to give one factor, for example, attractions, activities and amenities were grouped into one factor and were referred to as agritourism products in the study. These factors relating to agritourism products appeared most frequently in the sampled articles. Activities related to conservation and preservation of the environment by both the farmers and the tourists were grouped into conservation of biodiversity. Conservation of biodiversity by farmers included farming methods adopted by farmer which are friendly to the environment such as organic farming as well as other measures taken by farmers to improve the quality of the environment and to conserve agro-biodiversity. Conservation activities by tourists which were grouped into conservation of biodiversity factor included their behaviour and other activities that they do during their visit that result in conservation of natural resources.

All the skills requirements of the farmer such as planning, accounting, management, marketing, communication, and hospitality skills were grouped into the skills and competence factor. Factors related to family involvement included the involvement of family members in providing hospitality services such as welcoming guests and preparing meals using farm produced ingredients. Government support factor included government policies that enable agritourism development, and start-up funding. Education and training encompassed all the efforts either by private sector or by government to provide awareness among farmers on the benefits of agritourism and how farmers can set up their agritourism businesses. Whilst collaboration and partnerships and factors relating to private-public partnerships in the form of marketing the agritourism products as well as partnering and collaboration among farmers themselves appeared under collaboration and partnerships. Community participation involved all the aspects to do with the community from providing labour and providing attractions in terms of their art and culture.

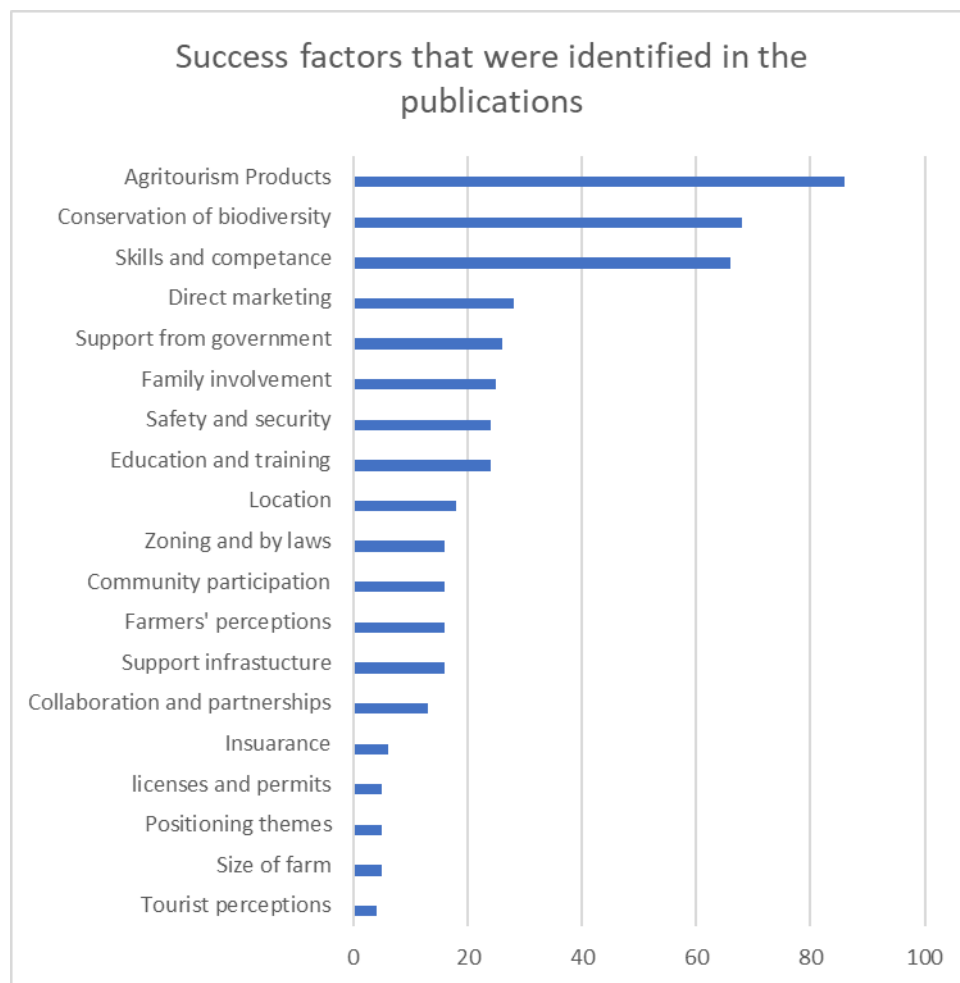


Figure 4. Distribution of success factors using statistical analysis

Discussion and implications

Results of this research show that there are many studies that have been done on agritourism development in recent years with the largest number being in 2019 (Figure 1). This can be a result of the trends in tourism which show a shift of consumer tastes from conventional tourism to farm based holidays. Moreover, agritourism has gained popularity in the recent years due to its socio-economic benefits, thus researchers are motivated to investigate the factors that enable successful development of the industry.

Analysis of publications by country indicates that most of the studies on success factors for agritourism development have been done in Asia followed by USA and the least number being in Africa. This indicates that the agritourism has not been a subject of extensive study in Africa. The number of articles from the sample of studies that were done in Africa does not seem to reflect the attention agritourism has received in recent years and the extent of benefits associated with it. Consequently, results on success factors in this study may not be relevant in Africa given the differences in both the micro and macro environments of Africa and the other continents. Moreover, this may imply that if studies are conducted with an African context focus, the results that will be obtained may be different from the results of this study. This indicates a huge gap in literature in success factors for agritourism development in the African context.

Moreover, the results also indicate that most studies in agritourism development focused more on the use of qualitative methods of research and very few adopted the

quantitative approach or both. This is also another gap in methodological contribution. From the 105 publications analysed only a few articles employed factor analysis and regression analysis models in their analysis of success factors for agritourism. This indicates that studies in agritourism development are more biased to qualitative methods of research. The approaches adopted in the respective publication calls for another discussion. The success factors in this analysis were identified using the supply side approach. This implies that farmers and their surroundings contributed largely to the identification of these factors. The demand side approach which involves analysing the characteristics of the tourists in terms of their demographic profile, motivations and preferences was employed in fewer studies. Thus, the results of this study are more inclined to the farmer than the tourists. If studies are conducted by employing the demand side approach or both different results may be attained.

The results from the analysis of success factors for agritourism development indicate that there is a wide range of these factors and these had to be categorised by grouping those that were related to each other, for example, agritourism products factor included related aspects such as the attractions, activities and amenities. The other broad factors that were derived from grouping related factors are skills and competence, collaboration and partnerships as well as support from government. This implies that if the factors are to be analysed as individual factors without putting them in broader categories, a different outcome may be attained.

The fact that the SFs of each organisation are unique although they are drawn from the broad success factors of the organisation cannot be overlooked. This implies that the SFs identified in this study are not hard and fast rules but may vary depending on the business environment, its characteristics, the main purpose of existence and its strategies. An agritourism business can do well even if one of these factors is not available. Agritourism researchers need to identify unique SFs of agritourism in their different countries using empirical studies. The SFs available in the literature including results from this study are only guidelines which were derived from research that have been done in a developing word context and might not apply to developing countries given the differences in the macroeconomic environment of the two worlds.

Conclusions and recommendations

The aim of this study was to review the literature on the SFs for sustainable agritourism. Based on the results of this study, it is clear that agritourism has specific SFs that must be considered both at macro and micro levels for successful development of this new tourism concept. From the literature review it can be concluded that the range and quality of agritourism products, skills and competence of farmer, conservation of biodiversity, family involvement, direct marketing, support from government, safety and security, education and training, collaboration and partnerships and location, to mention only a few are SFs for agritourism development. Therefore, agritourism businesses are recommended to ensure product quality and authenticity, enhance their skills and competence and ensure activities done by both the farmer and tourist contribute to preservation of the natural environment and were possible reverse its degradation.

Another interesting conclusion that can be derived from the results of this study is that it is not only farmer or farm related factors that were identified as SFs but also other external factors such as government support as well as collaboration and partnerships are among the identified SFs. This indicates that government and other tourism players have a huge role to play in agritourism development. In view of this, government is recommended to play its part in agritourism development by funding agritourism project and putting in place policies and regulations that favour agritourism. Other tourism players are such as hotels and tour operators are recommended to enter into public-private partnerships with farmers. This will go a long way in providing the farmers access to markets as well as education and training from their

partners. Moreover, collaboration and partnerships enable the farmers to lower risk of failure as external advice and links will be available to guide them in their planning and development processes. It can also be concluded that these SFs identified in this study are not hard and fast rules but are guidelines and agritourism entrepreneurs are recommended to analyse them and identify those that are relevant to their environment. All the same, developing economies in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular, can confidently use the results of this study as guidelines upon which they can build future research on the development of agritourism.

From the literature that was reviewed a number of gaps were identified which enabled the identification of a number of future lines of research. The first gap that was identified was that very few studies on agritourism development have been done in Africa. Therefore, more research is needed in that region. The researchers also noted that most of the studies being done in agritourism development are being done using qualitative methods. There is need to also use quantitative methods especially factor analysis and regression models in the analysis of SFs for agritourism development. Few of the sampled research articles focused mainly on the success factors of agritourism development. Most of the research articles were not focused on identifying SFs for agritourism but they however mentioned these in their discussion. This reveals that more research that focuses mainly on SFs identification are required. Most importantly, the identification of Critical Success Factors (CSF) for sustainable agritourism development is not adequately addressed in the sampled publications. Therefore, researchers need to focus on investigating the CSFs that make agritourism tick.

Moreover, most research in the sampled publication focused mainly on the supply side, that is, the characteristics of the farmer, the farm and its surroundings in the identification of SFs. Few studies focused on the demand side, that is, the characteristics of the tourists in terms of their demographic profiles, motivations and preferences. Therefore, more research is needed in that respect. From the literature that was analysed the role that government and all the factors in the macro environment play in agritourism development was not adequately addressed. More studies are also required in order to adequately reveal the role of all the players in the macro environment and identify the ones that are key to the success of agritourism. In addition, the studies that were sampled do not address adequately the concept of sustainable development in relation to agritourism. Literature available frequently mentions agritourism as a sustainable diversification strategy. However, not much has been written on how sustainability and agritourism can be integrated into sustainable agritourism. Therefore more studies are required in that respect. Relationship between agritourism success and farm size needs to be explored further. The literature available on the relationship between the two is scant and more studies are required in that area. Economic contribution of farm tourism is not well addressed in the available literature. Many studies (figure 3) were done that confirmed the ability of agritourism to bring economic benefits to local communities. However, there is no literature on the magnitude of the economic benefits, an area that require further research.

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