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Role of Agritourism in Promoting Sustainable Farming Practices in Odogbolu Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract
Agri-tourism, a sub-sector of tourism has been closely linked to local community development and also supporting and sustaining the economy of rural farmers. Despite the numerous roles, this subject matter still remains at its infancy stage in Nigeria. This study assessed the role of agritourism in promoting sustainable farming practices in Odogbolu Local Government Area (L.G.A.), Nigeria. Data was collected from 100 registered farmers through the use of a structured questionnaire using snowball sampling technique. Analysis was carried out using descriptive (mean and standard deviation) statistics and result was presented using tables. The result revealed that majority (85%) of the farmers, both male and female were involved in different agritourism activities such as on site marketing (83%), agri-tourism trails (78%), harvest festivals (71%), farm tours (67%), farm to table experience (61%), and so on. Also, farmers perceived these activities as an important way of sustaining agricultural production through promoting crop diversification and biodiversity conservation (3.03±0.95), supporting local and traditional agricultural practices (3.02±0.70), educating visitors about sustainable agriculture practices (2.97±0.87), enhancing the resilience of agricultural communities (2.95±0.79), and provision of financial incentives for implementing sustainable practices (2.92±0.89). However, farmers identified some barriers hindering the sustenance of these activities in which poor marketing and promotion (3.03±0.95), was identified as a major constraint. Therefore, farmers should collaborate with the tourism industry (tour operators/travel agents) in order to engage in strategic marketing and promotion of their agricultural products to encourage visitors' engagement in farm tourism.

Keywords: Agritourism relevance, Farm tourism, Farmers, Eco-friendly farming, Agricultural.

1. Introduction

Recently, agritourism is increasingly becoming a popular activity among stakeholders in the tourism industry. It is a special interest form of tourism which has captivated the attention of policymakers, researchers, local governments and several other people in the industry (Kim et al., 2019). According to Arroyo et al., (2013) and Tew and Barbieri (2012), Agritourism is defined as travelling to agricultural environments, such as farms or gardens, for leisure, recreation or educational purposes. It involves using the resources present in the countryside and providing a new consumption model for the rural community (Mastronardi et al., 2015). Agritourism involves activities such as watching or participating in farm works, purchasing agricultural products directly from farmers, spending a night or two at farms and learning about farming and their products.

According to Barbieri (2020), agritourism has been recognized as a sustainable form of rural tourism. It enables farmers to maximize their given space, thus availing them the opportunity to earn extra income (Lucha et al.,2016), improve their living standards and facilitate direct farmer-to-consumer marketing (Kline et al., 2016, Joyner et al., 2018). Other benefits of agritourism include job opportunities, economic exchange between rural and urban areas, multiplication of gains especially for small-scale direct investments, increased diversity of economic activities and increased awareness about economic potentials. For instance, the additional revenue generated through agritourism enables farmers to renovate and modernize the infrastructures of their farms and keep them running (Mahaliyanaarachchi, 2017). Lastly, one of the roles of agritourism is establishing a tourism destination for tourists and providing learning opportunities and healthy enjoyment for visitors. Thus, agritourism is used as a marketing tool such that visitors change their purchase habits after experiencing farming and leisure activities (Kim et al., 2019). For example, they may buy more local agricultural products that are safer and healthier.

Furthermore, agritourism is tightly linked to local community development and provides opportunities for creating sustainability in rural areas and economically supporting rural regions (Adamov et al., 2020). It helps

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to improve the natural environment, enrich native cultures and improve quality of life for farmers and consumers alike (Calza et al., 2018; Choo and Petrick, 2014). In addition, it has many social advantages which include living in a stress-free environment, enjoying a healthy life, preserving rural lifestyles and local traditions, educating consumers as well as promoting traditional values and hospitality practices among different ethnic groups (Shaken et al., 2020; Tew and Barbieri, 2012).

Despite the numerous roles of agritourism to farmers globally, this subject matter still remains at its infancy stage in Nigeria. A good number of farmers in Nigeria are yet to integrate tourism into their farming enterprise. Although, few studies have been conducted by scholars in some states in Nigeria, there is still limited study on this topic in Ogun State. For instance, Akintade et al., (2026) executed research on Awareness of Agro-tourism and livelihood of the communities' opportunities and perceived impacts in Ekiti, Ondo and Osun States, respectively. In their study, a good number of the farmers are aware of agro-tourism and have recognized it as a development aid in these three states. However, more efforts should be geared towards making it sustainable and its contribution to the quality of life of the host communities. Similarly, Ale (2025), conducted a research on the assessment of the involvement of farmers in agro-tourism activities in Ondo State. In her study, farmers are aware of agritourism activities but showed limited participation in it due to infrastructural deficiencies, policy-related challenges, inadequate funding, and insufficient enlightenment. Lastly, Nnabuike-Eneh, (2021) conducted a study on farmers' awareness, perception and willingness to participate in agritourism in Abia State. In her study, farmers' awareness about agritourism is low. Moreover, they perceived agritourism as a means to enhance farm revenue and create employment opportunities for the teaming population in the state. As such, farmers are willing and ready to consider the establishment of agritourism in the state provided all necessary support is provided. Therefore, this study will take a different approach as it aimed at assessing the benefits, challenges and roles of agritourism in contributing to sustainable farming practices in Odogbolu Local Government Area (LGA) of Ogun State, Nigeria.

2. Methodology

2.1 Study design

A Quantitative study was conducted among farmers in Odogbolu Local Government Area (LGA) of Ogun State between January to February, 2024 to assess the role of agritourism in promoting sustainable farming practices. Odogbolu LGA is one of the twenty LGAs located on the east bank of the Oluwa River, about 30 kilometers east of Ijebu-ode, Ogun State, southwestern Nigeria. Its headquarters is situated in Odogbolu on $6^0$50N $3^0$46E. It has a total land mass of approximately 541km^2. The economy is primarily focused on the production of agricultural products such as cassava, yam, maize, vegetables, and kola nuts.

2.2 Method of Data Collection

Data was collected from one hundred (100) registered farmers through the use of a structured questionnaire using snowball sampling technique to identify farmers and trace them to their various locations. The questionnaire was divided into four Sections: A, B, C, and D. Section A assessed questions on the demographic profile of respondents. Section B identified the different types of agritourism activities practiced among farmers in Odogbolu L.G.A. Section C addressed questions on the benefits and challenges of agritourism to farmers while section D assessed the role of agritourism in promoting sustainable farming practices at Odogbolu L.G.A. using a 4-point Likert rating; 4 = Strongly Agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree and 1 = Strongly Disagree.

2.3 Data Analysis and Result presentation

Data collected were subjected to descriptive (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation) statistics using SPSS version 21. Result were presented using tables.

3. Results

3.1 Demographic characteristics of Farmers in Odogbolu Local government

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of farmers. The result showed that more than half (56%) of the respondents were male while 44% were female. In addition, 46% possessed tertiary education while 41% and 13% had secondary and primary education, respectively. Also, 61% were full-time farmers while 78% had between 1-10 years' experience in farming. Lastly, 85% of the farmers have participated in agro-tourism.

3.2 Different Agritourism activities practiced by Farmers in Odogbolu Local government

The table below showed the different agro-tourism activities farmers have engaged in, in the last few years. The result revealed that 83% of the respondents have been more involved in onsite market where they display and sell locally made products to visitors. Similarly, 78%, 71%, 67%, 61%, 54% and 53% have been involved in agro-tourism trails, harvest festivals, farm tours, farm to table experience, environmental education programmes and farm workshops respectively. While 44%, 42% and 35% were involved in other activities like culinary experience, outdoor activities and farm stays respectively.

3.3 Benefits of Agritourism activities to Farmers in Odogbolu Local government

The benefits of the aforementioned agritourism activities to farmers is reported on table 3. The result showed that farmers benefited greatly from the different agritourism activities identified above with a grand mean score of 2.96 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50. First and foremost, enhancement of rural development was ranked the highest mean value of 3.12±0.79 followed by promotion of local agriculture, preservation of cultural heritage, additional source of

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of Farmers in Odogbolu Local government

S/N	Variables	Frequency (n = 100)	Percentage (%)
1.	**Gender**		
	Male	56	56
	Female	44	44
2.	**Educational qualification**		
	Primary	13	13
	Secondary	41	41
	Tertiary	46	46
3.	**Occupation**		
	Part-time Farmer	39	39
	Full time farmer	61	61
4.	**Number of years involved in farming**		
	Less than 1 year	3	3
	1-5 years	45	45
	6-10 years	33	33
	11 years and above	19	19
5.	**Have you participated in Agritourism before?**		
	Yes	85	85
	No	15	15

Source: Field work, 2024

Table 2: Agritourism activities practiced by Farmers in Odogbolu Local government

S/N	**Agritourism activities**	**Frequency (n = 100)**	**Percentage (100%)**	**Rank**
1.	Farm tours where farmers are allowed to learn about agricultural practices, crop cultivation and livestock rearing.	67	67	4th
2.	Farm stays such as accommodation options on the farm.	35	35	10th
3.	Farm workshops such as sustainable farming practices, etc.	53	53	7th
4.	Farm to table experiences such as dining experience that showcase locally grown produce.	61	61	5th
5.	Outdoor activities such as fishing, hiking, etc.	42	42	8th
6.	Harvest festivals such as seasonal events like pumpkin picking, apple picking, etc.	71	71	3rd
7.	Farmers' markets such as onsite market where farmers showcase and sell locally made products to visitors.	83	83	1st
8.	Agro-tourism trails showcasing different farms and agricultural practices in the area.	78	78	2nd
9.	Culinary experiences such as cooking classes, wine tastings, etc.	44	44	9th
10.	Environmental education programmes.	54	54	6th

Source: Field work, 2024

Key:

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

income, and diversification of farm revenue with mean values of 3.03±0.96, 2.93±0.73, 2.92±0.93 and 2.79±1.16 respectively. This implied that on the average farmers agreed to the benefits that accompanied and associated with agritourism activities in the area.

3.4 Challenges of Agritourism activities on Farmers in Odogbolu Local government (n=100)

Farmers identified some limitations faced during agritourism activities in which poor marketing and promotion had the highest mean score of 3.03±0.95 followed by regulatory and licensing requirements (3.02±0.70), seasonal fluctuations in tourism demand (2.97±0.87), infrastructural limitations (2.95±0.79), and lastly, balancing farm work with tourism demands (2.92±0.89). This showed that farmers agreed to all the challenges encountered in the study area with a grand mean score of 2.98, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50.

3.5 Role of Agritourism in promoting sustainable farming practices in Odogbolu Local government

The role of agritourism in promoting sustainable farming practices is reported in table 5. The result showed that farmers perceived agritourism as an important way of sustaining agricultural production in that area with a grand mean score of 2.93 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50. Farmers agreed to the following statements about agritourism: promotion of crop diversification and biodiversity conservation

Table 3: Benefits of Agritourism activities on Farmers in Odogbolu Local government (n=100)

S/N	Variables	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision	Rank
1.	Additional source of income	30.70	39.30	21.30	8.7	2.92	0.93	Accepted	4th
2.	Diversification of farm revenue	38.00	24.00	17.30	20.7	2.79	1.16	Accepted	5th
3.	Promotion of local agriculture	34.70	46.00	6.70	12.7	3.03	0.96	Accepted	2nd
4.	Preservation of cultural heritage	19.30	58.70	18.00	4.00	2.93	0.73	Accepted	3rd
5.	Enhancement of rural development	33.30	51.30	10.0	5.30	3.12	0.79	Accepted	1st
	Grand mean					**2.96**			

Source: Field work, 2024 Criterion mean = 2.50

Table 4: Challenges of Agritourism activities on Farmers in Odogbolu Local government (n=100)

S/N	Variables	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision	Rank
1.	Seasonal fluctuations in tourism	30.70	40.70	23.30	5.3	2.97	0.87	Accepted	3rd
2.	Infrastructural limitations (e.g. poor roads, utilities, etc.)	25.30	48.70	22.00	4.00	2.95	0.79	Accepted	4th
3.	Regulatory and licensing requirements	22.00	61.30	13.30	3.30	3.02	0.70	Accepted	2nd
4.	Poor marketing and promotion	36.00	42.70	10.00	11.30	3.03	0.95	Accepted	1st
5.	Balancing farm work with tourism demands	28.70	40.70	24.0	6.70	2.92	0.89	Accepted	5th
	Grand mean					**2.98**			

Source: Field work, 2024 Criterion mean = 2.50

Key:

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

Table 5: Role of Agritourism in promoting sustainable farming practices in Odogbolu Local government (n=100)

S/N	Variables	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision	Rank
1.	Supports local and traditional agricultural practices	22.00	61.30	13.30	3.30	3.02	0.70	Accepted	2nd
2.	Promotes crop diversification and biodiversity conservation	36.00	42.70	10.00	11.30	3.03	0.95	Accepted	1st
3.	Educates visitors about sustainable agriculture practices	30.70	40.70	23.30	5.30	2.97	0.87	Accepted	3rd
4.	Provision of financial incentives for implementing sustainable practices	28.70	40.70	24.00	6.70	2.92	0.89	Accepted	5th
5.	Agritourism enhances the resilience of agricultural communities	25.30	48.70	22.00	4.00	2.95	0.79	Accepted	4th
	Grand mean					**2.98**			

Source: Field work, 2024 Criterion mean = 2.50

Key:

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

(3.03±0.95), followed by support for local and traditional agricultural practices, educates visitors about sustainable agriculture practices, enhances the resilience of agricultural communities, and provision of financial incentives for implementing sustainable practices with a mean score of 3.02±0.70, 2.97±0.87, 2.95±0.79 and 2.92±0.89 respectively.

4. Discussion of Findings

The demographic composition of the respondents suggests that both male and female farmers are involved in agritourism activities with a high representation of the male counterpart than the female. This supports the findings of Akintade et al. (2026), who opined that male mostly occupies the main pillar

of the agritourism industry. More so, a nearly equal average of the sampled farmers were literate at tertiary level and have between 1-10years experience in farming. This supports the research of Akintade et al. (2026), Ale (2025) and Agustin and cucio (2023) who reported similar outcomes in their study. This implied that farmers with a high level of literacy and long years of farming experience have a better understanding of market trends, risk management, and the financial benefits of adopting non-traditional farm ventures. Thus, they diversify their income through participation in other activities such as agritourism. Additionally, a good proportion of the farmers have participated in agritourism activities ranging from onsite marketing where they display and sell locally produced or made products to visitors to agro-tourism trails, harvest festivals, farm tours, farm to table experience, environmental education programmes, farm workshops, culinary experience, farm stays amongst others. This supports the findings of Khairabadi et al. (2020) and Tew and Barbieri (2012) that farmers offer and engage in different agritourism activities ranging from tours and wineries to wildlife observations and festivals.

Furthermore, the result showed that farmers benefitted greatly from agritourism activities in several ways. These include development of the rural area, promotion of local agriculture, preservation of cultural heritage, additional source of income, and diversification of farm revenue. This corroborates the findings of Nnabuike-Eneh (2021) and Krishna et al. (2019), who noted that farmers in Abia state, Nigeria and Maharashtra and Goa in India perceived agritourism to be an important establishment in rural areas due to the various social benefits derivable from it. Nevertheless, the result revealed some significant challenges faced by farmers in the study area. The most significant barriers identified was poor marketing and promotion, regulatory and licensing requirements. Others include seasonal fluctuations in tourism demand, infrastructural limitations as well as balancing farm work with tourism demands. This agrees with Mangwiro (2025) and Ale (2025) that poor marketing, promotion, infrastructural facilities and government policies are key determinants to the success of agritourism activities in rural areas and visitors' readiness to participate.

Lastly, the findings suggest that farmers perceived agri-tourism as an important force or agent in promoting sustainable farming practices in the area. Farmers agreed to the fact that agritourism promotes crop diversification and biodiversity conservation, followed by support for local and traditional agricultural practices. Also, farmers agreed to the statement that agri-tourism educates visitors about sustainable agriculture practices, enhances the resilience of agricultural communities, and provision of financial incentives for implementing sustainable practices. This finding is consistent with Grillini et al. (2025), who examined the relationship between agritourism and farm sustainability in the Tyrol-Trentino mountain region and found out that agritourism activities can contribute to long-term sustainability of indigenous agricultural practices and maintain biological diversity.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study revealed that farmers in Odogbolu LGA benefitted highly from the existence of agritourism and perceived it as an eco-friendly way of sustaining organic farming in the area. However, farmers pointed out some barriers, which include poor marketing and promotion, regulatory and licensing requirements, and infrastructural limitations amongst others, which hindered their participation in the activity. Therefore, this calls for urgent attention by all stakeholders involved in the agritourism industry. Farmers should collaborate with the tourism industry (tour operators/travel agents) in order to engage in strategic marketing and promotion of their agricultural products to encourage visitors' engagement in farm tourism. Also, government should reduce regulatory burdens and provide clear information on licensing procedures to spur farmers' interest into agritourism activities. Lastly, both farmers and government should invest in the improvement of infrastructural facilities (such as road, electricity, accommodation, recreational facilities on the farm as well as others) on the farm to strengthen the participation of visitors and others farmers in agritourism.

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