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FINANCIAL ECONOMICS | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Evaluating the sustainability of agritourism in the wild coast region of South Africa

Privilege Cheteni^{1*} and Ikechukwu Umejesi¹

Abstract: In recent decades, agritourism has been proposed by various agencies as a strategy for the sustainable development of rural areas and the diversification of the rural economy. The study aimed to examine and identify the role of agritourism in entrepreneurship and sustainability. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from 15 business owners and 68 residents from local households on the Wild Coast. Consequently, various facets of agritourism for sustainable rural development were investigated using a qualitative research method. The findings revealed that agritourism in the study area can be enhanced by integrating it with farm entrepreneurship. Furthermore, because many disenfranchised families

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Additional information is available at the end of the article

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

In recent decades, agritourism has been proposed as a strategy for the long-term growth of rural areas and the economic diversification of rural areas by a number of different organisations. This research set out to better understand how agritourism contributes to business success and environmental preservation. The data for this study came from semi-structured interviews with 15 Wild Coast business owners and 68 local households. Therefore, a qualitative study was conducted to examine the many facets of agritourism for long-term rural growth. The results indicated that combining agritourism with farm entrepreneurship would be beneficial to the sector. For many underprivileged families, agritourism provides a route out of poverty that complements their existing activities, such as handcrafting, subsistence farming, fishing, and so on.

already engage in crafts, subsistence farming, fishing, and other activities, agritourism has the potential to lift many of them out of poverty.

Subjects: Sociology; Sociology & Social Policy; Development Economics

Keywords: agritourism; ecosystem; rural development; entrepreneurship; environment

1. Introduction

A viable option for rural socioeconomic development and revitalization is agritourism (Iorio & Corsale, 2010). In areas with few development opportunities, this is true. Rural tourism has significantly increased over the past 20 years, enhancing economically and socially distressed rural areas. Farm incomes are declining globally as a result of low commodity prices, rising input costs, environmental pressures, climate change, and globalisation. The local economy has become more diverse thanks to farmers' search for new sources of income. This is a result of the declining income from agriculture.

Previous approaches to poverty, employment, and sustainability have not been as effective in rural development as was anticipated (Yang, 2012). Rural tourism can increase output, employment, income distribution, and the preservation of the countryside's natural beauty and cultural heritage (Mahmoudi et al., 2019). The sustainability of these places could be enhanced by fusing local resources and distinctive products with tourism and revitalising the neighbourhood economy (Adamov et al., 2020).

In order to support rural development and benefit agriculture, agricultural tourism combines a working farm with conventional commercial tourism (Weaver & Fennell, 1997). Agritourism is crucial for revitalising rural communities through sustainable development, according to Ammirato et al. (2020). For Fortune Business Insights (2020), agritourism will expand quickly on a global scale. The market is predicted to grow to USD 117.37 billion by 2027 from USD 69.24 billion in 2020 (Fortune Business Insights, 2020).

It is crucial to link agritourism to social, economic, and environmental sustainability because all three have an impact on how residents and visitors perceive the region (Muresan et al., 2016). Farms could profit from the creativity and variety of agritourism, which would offer visitors leisure activities as well as benefits to locals, visitors, and farmers on both a financial and non-financial level (Tinsley & Lynch, 2001). If it does, it may have an impact on bio, natural, and organic activities that improve health and lead to sustainability (Ammirato et al., 2020; Bramwell, 1994; Turnock, 1999). Agritourism is linked to other local activities (Calina et al., 2017). The economic, social, and cultural well-being of rural residents is intertwined with the tourism industry. It is possible to support novel strategies for achieving regional sustainable development that has ramifications for the economy, agriculture, and the environment. By combining agriculture (including food, livestock, fish, and their products, processing, consumption, etc.) with tourism, local communities can boost their economies (Mahaliyanaarachchi, 2017). New demands of tourists for a variety of tourism products and services lay the groundwork for business development, especially small and medium-sized business development and entrepreneurial development in the tourism industry generally and agricultural tourism specifically. As a result, entrepreneurial initiatives in rural and agricultural tourism have grown in importance and are now the primary driver of the sector (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005).

Rural entrepreneurship has the potential to increase employment opportunities, diversify local services, and give residents comprehensive support (Swanson & DeVereaux, 2017). Meeting the social and environmental needs of both the present and future generations is a key component of environmental entrepreneurship (Weaver & Fennell, 1997). Agritourism is crucial because it depends on new business ventures (Sonnino, 2004). Additionally, it raises the value of the areas where it operates and aids in the preservation of rural culture and independence.

Research on agritourism is abundant in the developed world, especially in Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand (Das & Rainey, 2010). By contrast, developing countries like those in Africa have received less attention despite having a larger rural population (Henderson, 2009). This research looks at how agritourism has affected people in the Wild Coast area of South Africa's Eastern Cape Province, as well as the difficulties those people have faced when trying to increase their incomes through tourism.

Although they have many tourist attractions, rural and remote areas in developing nations like South Africa face particular difficulties and restrictions on their standard of living. A potential remedy for these issues and a way for more people to participate in local development is emerging as agricultural tourism. In recent decades, unemployment has increased while many rural economic activities and agricultural income levels in South Africa have experienced sharp declines. Rural areas can escape economic decline and isolation by promoting cultural diversity and rural and agricultural growth through well-planned tourism development.

While preserving the environment, agricultural biodiversity, and cultural traditions, agritourism creates jobs and generates income. Agritourism may slow urbanisation and encourage rural habitation. It is one of the tactics with the best potential for accelerating the long-term growth of the Eastern Cape. These concerns were addressed by this study by answering the following research questions:

- (1) How does agritourism facilitate growth and entrepreneurship in rural areas?
- (2) Does the expansion of agritourism in rural areas contribute to preserving the environment?

2. Agritourism defined

The terms agritourism, farm tourism, and rural tourism are used interchangeably in the tourism literature to refer to visits to farms and other rural attractions (Yang & Qiu, 2012; Zhang et al., 2009). Agritourism is defined as “the intersection of agriculture and tourism that draws tourists to rural areas and farm settings for leisure, education, and direct involvement in agricultural activities” (Das & Rainey, 2010; Yang & Qiu, 2012). This type of tourism assists farmers in maintaining agricultural viability and diversifying rural economies while also providing farm-based tourist experiences for visitors interested in traditional rural hospitality, nature access, outdoor activities, and cultural experiences (Veeck et al., 2006). Although there are a variety of agritourism activities available at the urban-rural interface, this type of vacation is typically associated with rural settings (Henderson, 2009). Agritourism planning and development differ from one country to the next (Choo & Jamal, 2009). Government and the cooperative movement are frequently the primary sources of investment in developing regions, as opposed to the private sector, which is typically the only source of investment in developed countries.

The concept of “agritourism,” also known as “rural tourism,” is gaining popularity as people in cities recognise the economic and social benefits of attracting visitors to rural areas (Iorio & Corsale, 2010). Economic growth and diversification, additional income in the farming and service sectors, increased social contacts for isolated rural areas, and a contribution to environmental and cultural heritage conservation are just a few of the many ways tourism benefits rural areas throughout Europe, North America, and elsewhere (Daugstad, 2008; McGehee, 2007). As a result of rural tourism, many family businesses in rural areas have benefited from increased farm gross income, cash flow generation, and employment opportunities for family and community members (Barbieri & Mshenga, 2008; Nilsson, 2002). Agritourism not only allows rural communities to diversify their economies, but also provides visitors with a taste of the countryside, clean air, and wide-open spaces (Yang et al., 2010). Rural areas frequently experience economic decline, but this type of tourism can help them recover (Fleischer & Pizam, 1997; Sharpley & Sharpley, 2002).

Agritourism, or the creation of new economic opportunities through farm tourism, is one of the strategies proposed in recent decades to diversify the rural economy and ensure long-term rural development. In the majority of countries, this type of tourism is viewed as a new strategy for long-term socioeconomic development, revitalization, and rebuilding of rural areas (Su, 2011). The success of agritourism as an industry that benefits both human and environmental health may be critical to the sustainability of rural areas (Ciolac et al., 2019). To put it another way, in order to achieve the goal of combining tourism and agriculture, this type of rural tourism should be centred on activities that take place solely in rural areas and should emphasise the development of a tourism product.

Tourism faces several persistent challenges in diversifying and growing rural economies. One of the most significant challenges confronting family businesses is a lack of professionalism (Iorio & Corsale, 2010). Because of the low entry barrier, many people without the necessary education or experience may be enticed to work in the agritourism industry (Getz et al., 2004). Unfortunately, most agritourism operations lack the knowledge and tools required to successfully market themselves. It is possible that the owner cannot afford the initial investment or that it is excessive in comparison to the expected returns. According to Zhang et al., the four major challenges associated with rural tourism development are urbanisation of rural destinations, anti-planning, a lack of financial and human resources, and high commoditization. These difficulties will not occur everywhere or at all times (Iorio & Corsale, 2010). The agritourism industry has room to grow, but further development may necessitate the support of government policies and financial incentives (Sharpley & Sharpley, 2002).

2.1. Principles and fundamental elements of agrotourism

Tourists can participate in farming activities, learn about rural life, and enjoy the richness of a real-world experience through agritourism, which is distinct from other types of tourism. As you can see from the list above, agritourism is based on the following three principles: (Sznajder et al., 2009).

To distinguish itself from other types of tourism, agritourism is built on three pillars: the opportunity to “experience” non-routine training and activities; the opportunity to “visit” rural life; and the opportunity to “purchase” (Karimi, 2015).

The “basic elements of agritourism” include the farms, villages, tourists, and farmers that make up the agritourism market. Improving any one of these four areas has a positive impact on the others because of the relationship between them (Amiri et al., 2019).

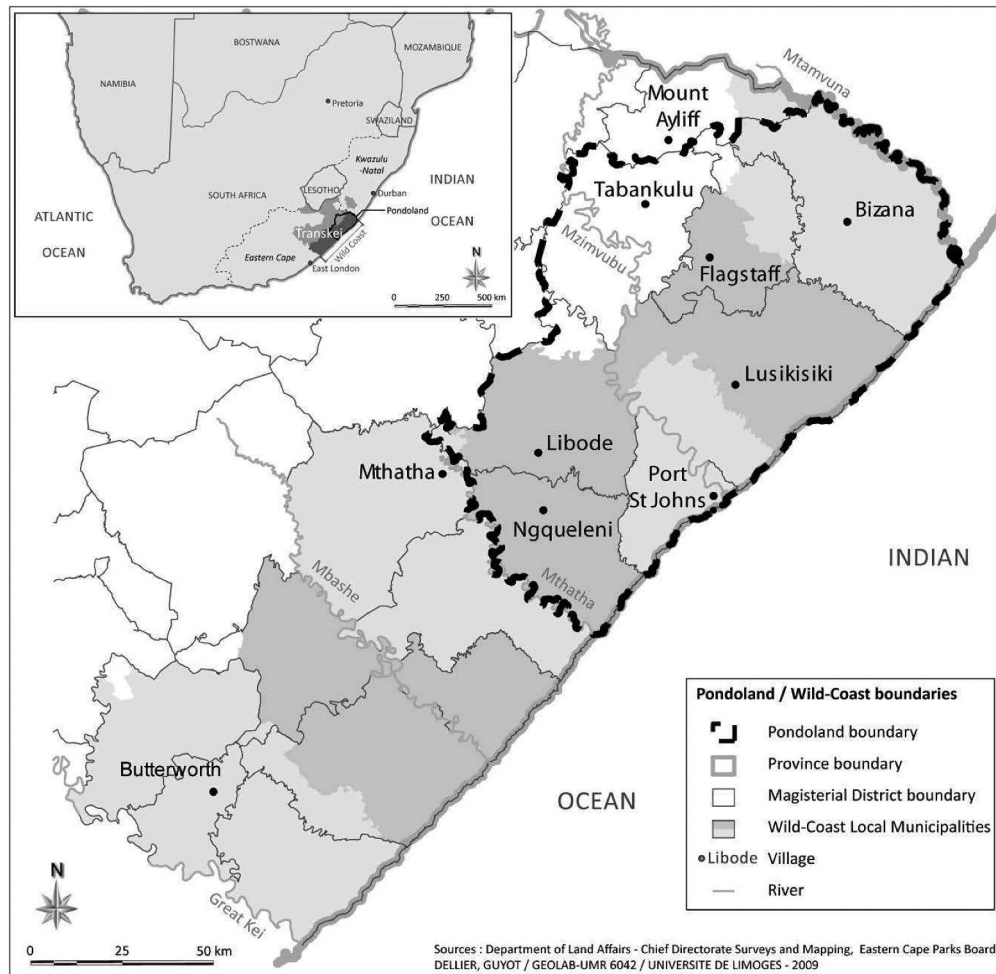
Agritourism activities and events can be divided into three broad categories based on the “three basic principles of tourism”: “visits” to agricultural museums, music, local dance events, etc.; “experience and participation” in crop cultivation, horseback riding, cycling, etc.; and “purchase” of products and handicrafts.

2.2. The role of tourism and agritourism in rural revitalization

In addition to improving the lives of people on a day-to-day basis, the goal of rural development is to improve the region’s long-term social and economic growth. This is accomplished through the effective utilisation of available resources and the equitable distribution of the benefits of development. It should come as no surprise that for rural areas to progress, social norms and, more importantly, individual behaviour need to undergo significant shifts. Even just ten years ago, the concept of “rural development” was much narrower and less nuanced than it is today. It now encompasses a much broader and more complex set of ideas. This plan is concerned not only with the economy of the region but also with the overexploitation of the landscape and natural resources in that area, as well as with the beneficiation and preservation of those resources.

Figure 1. Map of the wild coast region.

Source: Guyot and Dellier (2009)



3. Methods

The “Wild Coast” is the name given to the coastline between the Mtamvuna and Great Kei rivers. Figure 1 shows the study area. There are seven different municipalities that make up the region: Mbizana, Qaukeni, Port St. Johns, Nyandeni, King Sabata Dalindyebo, Mbashe, and Mnquma. Use of the moniker “Wild Coast” is accepted, especially for promotional uses in the tourism industry. It also depicts the rough sea and high waves that wash its coastline. As a result of its extensive biodiversity, this area is of great importance on both a national and international scale. In the Wild Coast, it is estimated by the OR Tambo Integrated Development Project (2018/19) that over 72% of the population is poor, a socioeconomic reality attributed to centuries of racial marginalisation of the region by various racist governments in the pre-1994 era. This fact lends credence to the idea that the Wild Coast is among the poorest regions of the country—local people eke out a living by depending on resources in their immediate environment. It should be pointed out that a good deal of the Wild Coast’s unique plant and animal life has been protected. For instance, part of the Maputaland Pondoland Region (MPR), which is known as an important centre of floristic diversity and endemism in Africa, is located there, adding to the area’s global significance due to the diversity and endemism of its grasslands, marine environment, and mangroves.

3.1. Data collection

The study used semi-structured and open-ended questions to interview the participants who have been directly affected by tourism, especially, agritourism. In-depth interviews, casual conversations, on-site observations, and a review of secondary data were some of the research methods that were used. The researchers visited the study communities on the Wild Coast on different occasions and spent several weeks interacting with ordinary people in order to get a better understanding of their daily lives and narratives on agritourism. The interviews were conducted in the local Pondo language, a sub-dialect of the mainstream Xhosa language. The translation to the English language was done by one of the authors.

Researchers began their inquiry by focusing on the individual's household incomes as well as their perspectives on the most recent social and cultural shifts. The feasibility of operating a tourism business in a village, in addition to its present state, potential growth areas, and existing obstacles, were thoroughly investigated. The length of time spent on each interview varied anywhere from 30 to 60 minutes. We talked to a wide range of people, some of whom were interviewed more than once so that we could get the most out of each interview. The interview protocol was utilised to collect data on the subject matter by asking participants semi-structured questions. These questions prompted participants to recall agritourism-related facts and events from their personal experiences. This necessitates the use of methods such as "courtroom" questioning and "event tracking" interviewing (Ozcan & Eisenhardt, 2009), both of which have been demonstrated to elicit accurate responses from informants.

The third step was to conduct 15 in-depth retrospective interviews with farm business owners who were sampled. Over the course of three months, we met with participants in person for interviews. Some of those who were interviewed enlisted the aid of members of their immediate families. There were as many as 68 in-depth interviews conducted with residents of local households. Non-tourists in the area were interviewed about their perceptions of the area and how they could benefit from participating in agritourism. The participants included both individuals and small groups. The data was analysed qualitatively. Interviews and fieldnotes were transcribed, and emerging patterns were established. For example, we went through each transcript in order to identify common themes that surfaced as a result of the different perspectives and experiences that the participants had in relation to agriculture and tourism. It was decided that the legal documents and promotional materials pertaining to agritourism needed to be investigated.

The locations of the villages were selected on the basis of the following criteria: A farm needs to fulfil the following requirements in order to be considered an agritourism site: a) It needs to have historical or culturally significant buildings on the property; b) It needs to offer services, and c) It needs to be in keeping with its surroundings.

In the final step of this process, we conducted a cross-interview analysis (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007) to find similarities and differences in the following areas: a) choices and behaviours of farm entrepreneurs; b) changes over time in the relationship between farmers, decision-makers, and tourists; c) effects of this relationship on co-evolutionary dynamics and in terms of sustainable tourism; and d) corresponding contribution to local sustainable tourism; and e) and the corresponding contribution

4. Results

In the study, four factors were identified as contributing to the growth of agritourism in the area studied. Because of this, they demonstrate how important external and internal interactions are in determining tourism dynamics between farms, and rural destinations in order to secure the future of agritourism. Because it is a distinct feature of rural life, we refer to this as the experience of rural life. Quotes from interviews with farmers at the selected farms were used to illustrate these factors and their effects on this phenomenon, which has been observed in two phases that are sequential and intertwined (the emergence and growth of agritourism).

4.1. An opportunity for agritourism

When farmers see an opportunity in agritourism, they quickly ask for the help of friends and family members by requesting their time, energy, and expertise, according to the interviews. In a succinct statement, one interviewee summed it up thusly *“In the beginning, I had no idea how to attract visitors, nor did I realise that I had to report the number of visitors to the appropriate administrative authorities.”* *“I had to learn how to organise events and take part in tourism-related activities.”* I was completely unable to convey my thoughts in English. Additionally, the *“overwhelming and time-consuming”* nature of institutional bureaucracy is highlighted as a primary source of the difficulty. According to one of the participants interviewed, applying for funding was difficult because *“I did not understand what was to be done.”* It was a sentiment echoed by a second interviewee. Farmers, on the other hand, could usually rely on the help of local organisations. One of the farmers interviewed put his experience thus: *“Couldn’t have done this without their help ... However, we had to apply for a bank loan regardless, and we didn’t receive the money until two years after the renovation was finished”*.

In addition, the findings reveal a widespread lack of planning on the part of the municipality for the development of tourism. Since the beginning of agritourism, farmers have sought to establish cooperative relationships with local institutions in order to share a common vision for the administration of local resources and the needs of farms and their rural communities. In this effort, efforts were made to establish a cooperative vision for the administration of local resources and the needs of farms and rural communities. . Many farmers who were interviewed about their attendance at municipal council meetings said they went to advocate for the expansion of tourism-related services.

4.2. Social interaction

From what we can tell, farmers are well aware of the significance of managing the development of agritourism in a manner that places a premium on social cohesion, equitable distribution of resources, and respect for environmental limits. This is something that they are well aware of. In order to shape agritourism into the pre-existing farm activity as well as the local social and natural environment, all of the people who were interviewed adhered to the regulations that have been issued at the local and regional levels. These regulations aim to strike a balance between the well-being of humans, the advancement of economic growth, and the preservation of ecological systems. As a direct consequence of this, farmers have begun adopting peasant-based practices and behaviours to shift production and consumption patterns in the direction of environmental sustainability.

Four of the people who were interviewed reflected on how farmers have fostered interactions with tourists by respecting certain behaviours that are congruent with the fundamental principles that underlie peasant culture. One of the interviewees stated as follows: *“As I’ve grown up, I’ve learned that the only time I can legitimately dispose of something is when it’s beyond repair or reuse.”* *Our policy has always been to request that guests limit their use of both water and electricity.* *“This demonstrates a sharing of cultural norms (Ubuntu), as well as best practices, which can encourage farmers and visitors to behave conscientiously, taking into account the requirements of the local community as well as the limitations imposed by the local resource system.”* Ubuntu is a concept that originated in Africa and is defined as a way of life that prioritises the well-being of others while minimising negative effects on both individuals and their environments. On occasion, out-of-town tourists from other countries may be shown the way of life in rural areas through guided tours led by local guides.

4.3. Developing agritourism

All of the farms that were examined showed a consistent increase over time in the total number of customers as well as the overall quality of those customers. This demonstrates how local policy-makers are giving the phenomenon more consideration as it develops, which is a positive development. In every region that was investigated, previously unavailable public services (like taxi and

bus connections, for example) have been established, and the accessibility of the local villages has improved. The majority of the time, old roads in rural areas have been converted into paths that can be used for walking and biking. In addition, policymakers have simplified the procedures that must be followed in order to launch an agritourism business without sacrificing either the product's quality or the consumer's safety. In the first place, they have promulgated regulations with the primary objective of curbing the proliferation of standard facilities and the construction of new buildings, as well as fostering the development of regional assets.

As a direct result of this, farmers have, over time, modified their facilities and implemented prescribed hygiene practices in the preparation of food in order to ensure the well-being of their customers. There is now a wider range of outdoor-related services, including workshops on farming methods and organic gardening, as well as bike and walking tours based on traditional recipes and relaxation in the countryside. The farmer stated that 'we were successful in achieving this goal by coordinating our efforts with those of other local companies (e.g., tourist guides).' There has been an increase in the mutual understanding between farmers, policymakers, and other local businesses about the benefits of agritourism in improving the attractiveness of villages. On top of that, it has assisted in the consolidation of the local custom of hospitality, which has, in turn, increased the number of tourists.

The responses that farmers give to new regulations are frequently varied. One farmer stated that it is almost impossible to have that many people on a farm during the week. Similarly, the farmer's wife claimed that the COVID regulation limiting the number of visitors they can accept each day is "harmful to agritourism activities." *'Our busiest times are on the weekends, but we can only accept so many reservations before we have to start turning people away.'* As a result of these rules, several businesses in the region have been shut down. COVID-19 infections were a primary target, but their impact was far-reaching. *'The rules were damaging to tourism because the lockdown was done quickly with no backup plans,'* said one interviewee.

4.4. Rural lifestyle experience

Farmer-to-farmer relations have been bolstered by an increasing number of tourists seeking an authentic rural experience. Everyone who was involved has benefited from this situation because it has inspired them to adopt behaviours that are considerate of the community's norms and the natural environment. These findings illustrate how, over the course of time, farmers have collaborated with their fellow farmers and with policymakers to select new facets of life in rural areas. In addition, over time, municipal governments have begun to offer services such as tourist information and public transportation, both of which are beneficial to the community where they are located and to the tourism industry.

Organic farming is becoming more popular among tourists as a result of public incentives and the rising demand for locally grown, fresh organic produce from local farmers. In addition, the benefits of agritourism have gradually been recognised by local communities. Some craft shops have been reopened, and traditional festivals have been resurrected, as evidenced by their participation in new economic activities (such as tours, car rentals, and restaurants).

4.5. Indigenous knowledge application

Agricultural knowledge has been re-evaluated on farms as a result of the mobilisation of all family members, including women traditionally relegated to housework, children and the elderly, who represent rural culture. In today's world, many farmers are using social networking sites like Facebook to showcase the unique aspects of their agritourism operations and appeal to the growing number of visitors who are looking for authentic rural experiences. After receiving positive feedback from customers, one farmer noted that this helped boost his business: *'My grandmother can be seen making homemade dumplings on our Facebook page ... 'The video our guests made praising this traditional dish has inspired more people to visit our restaurant and give it a try.'* To become certified as an agritourism operator, one farmer's son took advantage of a local association offering a free course on how to do just that. Farms, local institutions, and associations have all become more connected in recent years, making this possible. In all the cases

studied, agritourism networks and associations have been encouraged by regional policymakers, thereby increasing the destination's allure by promoting the unique features of their agritourism offerings.

4.6. Social responsibility

As a result of the growth of mutually beneficial relationships between farmers, local people, and visitors, agritourism can benefit all parties involved. Farmers now have new sources of income thanks to a growing trend in agritourism, which aims to make farmland more appealing to tourists. In order to better serve guests, a family pooled its resources, exchanged information, and developed new skills. A farmer noted thus: *"Neither of my sons was interested in working the land like my father and I were."* They have chosen to remain in the area due to the employment opportunities available in agriculture. As a result, local service economies have grown and rural traditions have been revived in recent years.

Other than that, there has been a shift toward organic farming due to the positive feedback from tourists about the high quality of the food they ate while visiting, as well as the efforts of local institutions like waste management and education. These changes have improved the reputation of farms and the surrounding area, as well as promote more environmentally friendly production practices. All parties have benefitted from the sharing of environmental and organisational knowledge through constant communication.

4.7. Discussion and implications

This article provides an interpretive framework for understanding the interconnected and dynamic nature of farms and their rural destinations over time, as well as the regional ecosystems underpinning sustainable agritourism and its key determinants.

The study's results lend credence to the idea that familiarity with rural ways of life, a systematic approach, and a commitment to social responsibility are the driving forces behind the emergence and expansion of sustainable agritourism. Therefore, the findings demonstrate the systemic influence of farmers' strategic intentionality, which links external (environmental) and internal (farm-specific) factors and is influenced and affected by both). In the destinations under review, strategic intent stimulates decisions and actions across multiple scales, including the two-way dialogue between farmers and municipal officials (Paniccia & Leoni, 2019). Therefore, it establishes optimal conditions for the sustainable development of agritourism.

Second, the results highlight a wider socio-ecological system (Hodgson, 2013). In order to effectively respond to and manage the ever-changing conditions, the results demonstrate the importance of integrating this setting with socioeconomic resources (including the capabilities of farmers and policy-makers). There is a growing need to satisfy the desires of tourists looking for authentic country experiences. In particular, the sampled farms and rural destinations offering agritourism have become increasingly distinct thanks to the dynamic combination (Cafferata, 2016) of regional systems' identities and entrepreneurial skills (Saifi & Drake, 2008;). All of this have helped foster the growth of sustainable agritourism niches in villages, boosting both their long-term viability and competitiveness.

Third, the findings back up Bramwell et al. (2017)'s claims that the social complexity of agricultural-tourism dynamics, responsible human behaviours in the use of natural resources, and a sustenance economy all play a role in shaping the dynamic of interactions within a rural destination and with the larger society. Thanks to these factors, it is now possible for rural areas and businesses to better understand each other and the value they create through environmentally responsible practices. Our research revealed that the establishment and growth of sustainable agritourism, as well as the maintenance of this economy over a period of time, are the result (rather than the beginning) of a development process involving systemic influence within and outside farms and rural destinations (Montefrio & Sin, 2019).

Lastly, the profitability of rural enterprises that were doing agritourism was a problem on the wild coast. Given that many of the enterprises were forced to close down due to a lack of funding, While the study was focused on sustainability, it was noted that many of the enterprises, especially the craft, had

survived the two-year lock that had been imposed since 2020. Roman and Grudzień (2021) found similar results in rural areas in Poland when they investigated the profitability of rural enterprises in tourism. While the study areas differ in many aspects, their findings provide a glimpse of what many agritourism businesses face. On the wild coast, many businesses failed due to COVID-19.

5. Conclusion

Agritourism is of the utmost significance when discussing sustainability and various other interdependent phenomena and essential processes driven by entrepreneurs. The results add to the existing literature by zeroing in on four primary determinants that, through co-evolutionary processes that are mutually beneficial within a rural destination and with society at large, can create and develop sustainable agritourism. Responsible tourism in rural areas reduces the bad effects of mass tourism because it takes into account how fragile the environment is and what the local people need.

In conclusion, more theoretical and empirical research, as well as an interdisciplinary approach, is needed to thoroughly investigate the problem of the factors that determine successful agritourism adventures. We also think that using statistical methods to combine the results of quantitative and qualitative studies could shed light on parts of the discussion about agritourism in the region that were not known before.

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Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Data Availability Statement (DAS)

Data sharing is protected by the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (POPIA) where permission needs to be sought from the subjects. As a result data cannot be shared.

Ethics approval and consent to participate

The study was approved by the UREC, University of Fort Hare

Authors' contributions

Dr Cheteni is the first author, while Prof Umejisi is the second author/corresponding author.

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