

## EVALUATING THE ROLE OF AUTHENTICITY AND SUSTAINABILITY IN SHAPING VISITOR EXPERIENCES IN FARM-TO-TABLE AGRITOURISM

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**Abstract:** This paper investigates how authenticity and sustainability shape tourist experiences in farm-to-table agritourism and their impact on revisit intentions, particularly in the context of emerging rural destinations. Designed in line with the theoretical framework of the experience economy, a survey of 352 respondents was conducted to compile demographic information and evaluate how experiential elements affected perceived authenticity and revisit intentions, as well as to explore underlying motivational factors. Significant correlations were found through statistical analysis using partial least square-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), supported by SmartPLS 4.0.9.2 software to ensure model reliability and validity. The majority of guests were young females, particularly in the 30–39 age range, which suggests a dominant demographic of working-age women whose values and expectations may significantly shape perceptions of authenticity and sustainability in agritourism. These results confirmed robust positive correlations between experiential elements particularly entertainment, aesthetics, education, and escapism and perceived authenticity, which in turn significantly influenced revisit intentions. This sense of authenticity was found to be enhanced by engaging, educational, immersive, and visually appealing activities. Additionally, the perceived environmental impact moderates the relationship between perceived authenticity and both tourist experience and revisit intention. These findings suggest that agritourism operators should design experiences that appeal to young, working-aged women and emphasize sustainability, thereby promoting cultural respect and environmental consciousness. Future research should investigate specific elements of the tourist experience and the long-term effects of perceived authenticity on visitor loyalty.

**Keywords:** agritourism, authenticity, travel, farm-to-table, environmental sustainability, rural tourism, cultural tourism, visitor loyalty

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### INTRODUCTION

A rapidly expanding subset of the tourist industry, "farm-to-table agritourism" connects guests with farmers and their practices while they savour regionally grown food (Peebles, 1995). Many people are interested in this type of tourism because it may bring people closer to the places where their food comes from through immersive and one-of-a-kind experiences (Shah et al., 2020). In recent years, the themes of authenticity and sustainability have played an important role in influencing tourist experiences in agritourism. Travelers seek more than just a vacation; they desire firsthand experiences of authentic farming practices and sustainable businesses. Additionally, they aim to build connections that align with their moral values (Martinus et al., 2024). The increasing trend of farm-to-table agritourism has brought attention to the need for a better understanding of how authenticity and sustainability affect tourist experiences and behaviors, including the likelihood of returning (Yamagishi et al., 2023). In related research, Kamrul Hassan et al. (2023) found that past research on agritourism has mostly focused on evaluating the concept's validity and supportability while neglecting its transactional aspects (Hassan et al., 2023). One of the objectives of this research is to get insight into how these interconnected factors influence the perspectives and intentions of visitors to revisit. Authenticity theory, which focuses on real and spontaneous encounters, provides an appropriate framework for our inquiry. Aligned with this, Zhao et al. (2023) highlight travelers' desire for authentic experiences rooted in local culture and practices. Through traditional farming techniques, locally made products, and direct engagement with farmers, farm-to-table agritourism can demonstrate its authentic nature. Meanwhile, the implementation of sustainable practices like organic farming, waste reduction, and the use of renewable energy sources enhances the authenticity of the tourism experience, meeting the increasing customer demand for environmentally responsible tourism (Buhalis et al., 2023).

This study demonstrates that farm-to-table agritourism can improve visitor experiences by including authenticity and sustainability. The experience economy theory evaluates these encounters based on their aesthetic, instructive, escapist, and entertaining aspects. Additionally, it is hypothesized that tourists would be more satisfied and likely to return to the

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farm if the tourism sector uses sustainable and genuine ways (Baipai et al., 2024). This research aims to help agritourism businesses succeed in the long run by analyzing two important outcome variables: the satisfaction of visitors and their likelihood to return (Yamagishi et al., 2023). The study conducted by Mandić et al., (2023) aims to provide valuable insights for agritourism operators by filling gaps in existing literature and offering empirical evidence on the impact of authenticity and sustainability on visitor experiences (Mandić & McCool, 2023). These findings can influence the creation of initiatives that not only improve the tourist experience but also encourage sustainable practices, therefore supporting growth and long-term sustainability within the agritourism sector.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theory background**

This study seeks to investigate the impact of incorporating authenticity and sustainability on the visitor experience and their likelihood of returning to the farm. It is guided by the experience economy theory (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) and uses standardized measurement concepts for farm tourism. Entertainment will be measured by the enjoyment and engagement levels of farm activities; education by the knowledge and insights gained from sustainable farming practices; escapism by the sense of immersion and escape from daily routines; and esthetics by the aesthetic appeal and ambiance of the farm environment (Chen et al., 2023). The influence of these experiences on visitor happiness can be moderated by their perceived environmental sustainability (Wang et al., 2018), while perceived authenticity (Youn & Kim, 2017) acts as a mediating variable that reflects the sincerity of the farm experiences. This case study looks at how adopting real and sustainable practices in agritourism improves tourist involvement and loyalty thus promoting sustainable development (Martinus et al., 2024). With an eye on exposing the elements motivating visitors to return, the research explores the relationship between these behaviors and visitor experiences.

## **DEVELOPING HYPOTHESES**

### **The relationship between entertainment experience with perceived authenticity**

The activities and interactions that entertain and immerse guests and make their stay enjoyable are their entertainment experience. Agritourism entertainment may include traditional agricultural demonstrations, local cultural events, festivals, and interactive exhibits that engage guests in farm culture and operations (Baipai et al., 2024). As per Pine and Gilmore's idea of the experience economy, entertainment refers to activities that are passively enjoyed and aimed at providing enjoyment to visitors. There is research on entertainment experiences that indicate that genuine and culturally immersive entertainment, such as traditional agricultural exhibits or local cultural performances, might enhance tourists' perceptions by (Montefrio & Sin, 2021). Additionally, research suggests that amusement that is ingrained in local traditions and presented by community members enhances the perceived authenticity of the experience (Pearce & Wu, 2018). This is because visitors place a high value on experiences that accurately represent the region's history and culture. As a result, entertainment activities must adhere to the authentic characteristics of the agritourism setting (Dsouza et al., 2023). Exceptional research has demonstrated that the integration of traditional entertainment forms not only captivates visitors, but also enhances their trust and appreciation of the overall authenticity of the experience (Ponsignon & Derbaix, 2020).

**H1.** Entertainment experiences can positively influence perceived authenticity.

### **The relationship between educational experience with perceived authenticity**

Agritourism mostly depends on educational experiences to change visitors' impressions of authenticity by means of higher knowledge and appreciation of farming methods (Chen et al., 2023). The observed criteria suggest that educational experiences in agritourism include engaging activities such as farm visits, seminars, and hands-on agricultural activity. The objective of these programs is to provide essential information on both sustainable and conventional agriculture systems (Martinus et al., 2024). These activities are derived from the agricultural expertise and firsthand experiences shared by farmers with guests, offering them a fully immersive and realistic view of everyday farm operations, therefore strengthening the overall image of the farm. Epitomizes genuineness for guests.

In addition, educational experiences that are strongly based on local agricultural knowledge and practices have a considerable impact on the perception of authenticity (Sewell et al., 2017). Visitors who directly learn from farmers and actively participate in genuine farming activities get a deeper feeling for the authenticity of the experience (Zhao & Li, 2023). Drawing a connection to prior study, it is clear that the genuineness of the instructional material is of utmost importance. Genuine educational encounters foster a stronger bond between visitors and the farm, since they are seen as authentic and reliable sources of knowledge. Moreover, incorporating genuine educational components into agritourism has the potential to enhance visitor contentment and commitment. Therefore, comprehending the connection between educational encounters and perceived genuineness is crucial for agritourism providers aiming to establish significant and genuine visitor interactions that promote recurring visits and sustained involvement (Zhao et al., 2024).

**H2.** The education experiences positively influence perceived authenticity in farm-to-table agritourism.

### **The relationship between escapism experience with perceived authenticity**

The concept of escapism experience is essential to agritourism, as it enables visitors to fully immerse themselves in a distinct environment, thereby influencing the perception of authenticity (Chen et al., 2023). Economic escapism in the context of the agritourism means activities that enable the visitors to ignore all their normal responsibilities and get involved fully into the farm environment (Wojcieszak-Zbierska, 2021). Activities like helping with the harvest or even just

sleeping on the farm could help establish the idea of a farm as a place of adventure and escape. Furthermore greatly influencing the farm's perceived authenticity are immersive events firmly ingrained in the genuine way of life (Mandić & McCool, 2023). Martinus et al. (2024) claimed that when visitors participate in the carried out activities, their behaviors around the farm and local culture that which represents the techniques the farm uses are more real. Moving further from previous research, the credibility of the escapism experience is a critical component in providing authenticity and novelty in an experience, supporting the visitor experience. Realistic and genuine recreational experience empowers people to establish a bond with the farm so as to experience the actuality of rural life (Zhao & Li, 2023).

In addition, truthfulness of escapism experiences have an effect on increased visitor satisfaction and therefore, positive likelihood to revisit (Yamagishi et al., 2023). Therefore, to support the development of agritourism businesses should understand the relationship between perceived authenticity and escapism experiences. Such insights make it easier for them to deliver compelling and authentic visitors experiences that can result in repeat patronage. The proposed charm of the farm arrived at the fact of including real escape in agritourism while guaranteeing that the contractors must have an extraordinary and memorable experience (Rosalina et al., 2021).

**H3.** The authenticity of farm-to-table agritourism is further enhanced by escapism experiences.

#### **The relationship between aesthetics experience with perceived authenticity**

The element of aesthetics should play a major role in the study of agritourism, as it includes two of the vital sense organs, sight and touch which allows one to be surrounded and captivate the feel of the agricultural activity (Chen et al., 2023). The physical appearance or setting of a farm that embraces esthetics in agritourism refers to the design, layout or arrangement of facilities as well as the surrounding environment in view of offering clients a more natural and aesthetic experience (Carneiro et al., 2015). Forced landscapes, barns and other agricultural buildings and superbly groomed fields give the impression of real farming environment.

Moreover, esthetic experiences that reflect the genuine characteristics of the farm and its surroundings significantly boost perceived authenticity. When the visual elements are true to the local culture and agricultural practices, visitors are more likely to perceive them as authentic (Martinus et al., 2024). Linking this to previous research, it becomes clear that the believability of the aesthetic setting is central in the construction of the visitors' impressions. Genuine esthetic experiences are useful in giving to the visitors something real to which they can relate the farm, something that reestablishes their confidence in the credibility of the farm as a tourist destination (Andéhn & L'Espoir Decosta, 2021).

Furthermore, the integration of authentic esthetic it was stated that the integration of artificial aesthetic elements strongly contribute to mass tourist flow and develop its loyalty. Knowledge of the link between aesthetics and perceived authenticity represents the basis for agritourism managers' desire to provide appealing and sincere atmospheres that foster visitors' return (Zhao et al., 2024). These enhancements in authentic aesthetics guarantee clients have a memorable and a avisually appealing view, hence adding value to the appeal of the farm (Kuo et al., 2024).

**H4.** Aesthetics experience positively influences perceived authenticity in farm-to-table agritourism

#### **The relationship between perceived authenticity with visitor experience and revisit the farm**

Authenticity is core to agritourism as it greatly influence all facets of visitor experience and their willingness to go back to the farm. Perceived authenticity captures the ability of a farm-to-table experience to present a genuinely real, reasonable, and believable, positive experience of farming, locally sourced products and culture (Andéhn & L'Espoir Decosta, 2021). Previous research has also posited that the more a visitor feels that their visitors' experiences are actually real, there is increased satisfaction and engagement. Moreover, perceived authenticity is linked to positive visitor experiences, characterized by deeper emotional connections and meaningful interactions with the farm environment (Chen et al., 2023). This relationship is further moderated by another factor, the perceived environmental sustainability (Nonthapot & Watchalaanun, 2024). Organic production methods, sustainable agriculture and environmental management are concepts that visitors learn about and this gives them the comfort they need (Martinus et al., 2024).

Linking this to previous research, the alignment of authenticity with environmental sustainability not only enhances the visitor experience but also reinforces their intention to revisit (Kuo et al., 2024). Furthermore, this problem shows the need for researching how perceived environmental sustainability affects those who own agritourism operations. That is why it emphasizes such forms' blurriness between genuine agriculture and sustainability as important aspects of developing tourists' brand preferences and returning visitors (Madanaguli et al., 2023). When more and more people yearn for a true and natural touch to their trips, the interaction between perceived authenticity and sustainable development represents a critical feature in the formulation of an appealing strategy for agritourism (Martinus et al., 2024).

**H5.** Farm-to-table agritourism tourists' experiences are positively and significantly impacted by the amount of perceived authenticity.

**H6.** Perceived authenticity positively influences the intention to revisit farm-to-table agritourism.

#### **The moderation effect of perceived environmental**

This is especially important in the context of agritourism because often the perceived environmental impact can actually mediate the effect of the perceived authenticity and visitor experience directly on the intention to visit the particular farm again (Wang et al., 2018). Perceived environmental impact means to what extent the visitors are aware of or value the natural and environment friendly practices followed in the farm. When visitors see, for example, that a farm is focused on minimal environmental impact, on aspects such as organic farming, waste and the conservation of natural

resources, it helps build credibility for the rest of the farm experience (Thongma et al., 2017). Moreover, the perceived positive environmental impact has a positive effect on the visitors' satisfaction based on perceived authenticity of the farm-to-table practices (Buhalis et al., 2023). Linking this to previous research, it has been demonstrated that the perception of a positive environment is substantiated, as visitors who recognize and value sustainability tend to regard their experiences as both authentic and fulfilling. Even more, people will visit the farm since this raises the level of knowledge about the factor that is associated with firmly impressed feelings (Hassan et al., 2024).

Furthermore, understanding the moderating role of perceived environmental impact is thus important for agritourism operators who want to explore means of enhancing the visitors' experience and hence, their repeat visitation to recognise the contingency impact (Zhao et al., 2024). Through meaningful engagement and advocacy of the sustainable image and practices, farms are also able to foster content credibility of the perceived farm products. This not only enhances visitor satisfaction but also visitor loyalty in a farm since the visitor is most likely to visit farms that are environmentally conscious since they are shown a face (Martinus et al., 2024). Such measures guarantee the cohesiveness and effectiveness of the visitor engagement in the long run with practices of the organic farm.

**H7.** Perceived environmental impact moderates the relationship between perceived authenticity and visitor experience.

**H8.** Perceived environmental impact moderates the relationship between perceived authenticity and the intention to revisit.

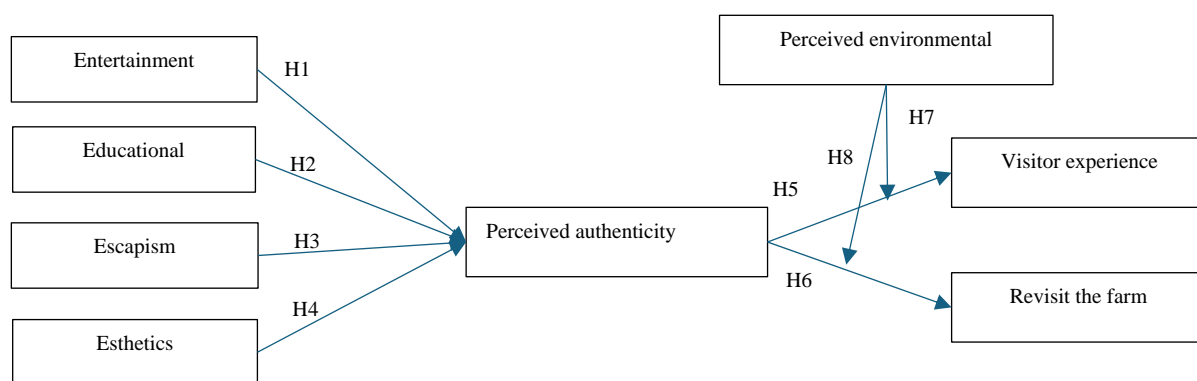


Figure 1. A conceptual framework of the research (Source: Author's systematization, 2024)

## METHODOLOGY

### Questionnaire development

There are some specific factors that has been employed in an endeavor to formulate a research model for measuring the constructs. For perceived authenticity the measures are the real nature of farm related activities, simple and hereditary farming practices, and real and original local products allure and cultural tour. Visitor satisfaction is quantified in view of the experience economy theory such as entertainment, educational, escapism, esthetic dimensions of experience by level of enjoyment, learning, immersion, visual aspects (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

Perceived environmental impact, the moderating variable, is assessed by visitor awareness of sustainable practices such as organic farming, waste reduction, and energy conservation (Chen et al., 2023). Lastly, revisit intention is gauged through visitor plans to return and recommendations to others (Zhao et al., 2024). The question items consisted of a literature review of prior investigations in the same field of the tourism industry. Utilising Likert-scale surveys, observational methods, and feedback forms, these constructs provide a comprehensive understanding of how authenticity and sustainability influence visitor experiences and their intentions to revisit.

### Data collection and sample size

The research was done by deciding on the 10-time rule on how to assess the minimum sample size. In addition, it was used quite often in social research (Wagner & Grimm, 2023). In this guidelines, the sample size require has to be 10 larger than the number count of the measurement model element. This criteria had to be put in place because of the large number of structures and their complexity in order to offer enough statistical power (Hair Jr. et al., 2017). To improve the viability and reduce sample bias, the study set a target of 400 samples for the study. Nonetheless, the actual sample size provided 352 responses, which the research community regards as adequate for analysis, as other comparable studies in the field have produced valid results with similar sample sizes. The data collected to measure the research constructs was carefully crafted with Google Forms, an extensively available and easy-to-use platform. In this template, we were also interested in the perceived authenticity, the visitor experience of the site, the perceived impact of the Site on the environment and finally, the revisit intention also in the following format Likert scale. The Google Forms template was forwarded via a limited viewing link which prevented the invitation to complete the survey to reach people who were not relevant, hence guaranteeing the authenticity of the data that was collected (Regmi et al., 2017).

Data collection in the research occurred in purposefully selected on-farm points that involved fruit orchard farms, Mekong aquaculture regions, rice paddies, and farm flower gardens. These sites were chosen because these represent a broad sample of agritourism. It is noted that authors themselves approached the tourists at these sites briefly explaining the aim of the research and what data are required. The actual content of this first communication was important for

building rapport and for gaining consent. Visitors were to be informed that none of their identifying details would be taken. Those who agreed to participate in the study were then given the link to the Google Forms for the survey either on site or at their leisure (Guimarães et al., 2015).

This approach of data collection allowed the researchers to capture the views from a wide cross section of visitors thereby increasing the reliability and external validity of the study findings. Bias was reduced through direct engagement with participants in the course of the study, thereby making the responses obtained more ethical and above board. Other related studies including analysis of agritourism other regions have used both face-to-face recruitment in addition to online survey with success implying the efficacy of the approach for data collection (Barbieri et al., 2016).

### Data analysis

To ensure reliability and validity of the measurement constructs the present research utilizes several statistical techniques of analysis (Ko & Stewart, 2002). Initially, Cronbach's alpha was conducted to determine the test/retest reliability for the survey items. Acceptable Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70 was used for the scales measuring perceived authenticity of products, visitors' experience, perceived impact on environment and willingness to visit the area again.

Following this, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted with a view to confirming the factor structure of the above constructs. CFA facilitated the process of determining whether the data could be fitted onto the hypothesized measurement model, and thus assessing the association between the manifest and the latent variables. Key fit indices, such as the composite reliability, average variance extracted and matrix by (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Lastly, the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyse the structural connections between the theoretical constructs. Nonetheless, PLS-SEM should be preferred in explorative research studies or in situations where the complexity of the examined relationships dictates going beyond bivariate models, and PLS-SEM can be used when the sample size is not large and the data are not normally distributed (Hair Jr. et al., 2017); (Hulland, 1999). This method enabled assessment of the direct and moderating effects of perceived authenticity and perceived environmental impact, on the visitor experience and the revisit intention. This enabled the PLS-SEM analysis to provide rather conclusive insights into the strength and significance of these relationships with the help of which it is possible to make practical conclusions and recommendations for agritourism operators.

## RESULTS

### Sample information collected

From Table 1, the statistical results describe the demographic characteristics of farm-to-table agritourism. Among the participants a relatively higher number were females at 59.37% as compared to male participants at 40.62%. The ages of the respondents were distributed as follows: 26.42% of the respondents were from 18-29 years, 58.52% from 30-39 years and the remaining respondents were above 40 years of age. Of the employed three groups of job positions were noted, of them 19.88% worked in managerial positions, 65.62% were employees and 14.48% were unemployed. Despite the relatively small numbers, females make up more of the employee base, and more so the core working age 30-39 year olds (58.52%) indicates a highly engaged female workforce in the sector. Demographic data explained here allows to shade a light to the structure and changes in the selected sector, as well as to determine the needs of various subsectors of the tourist industry and design proper interventions and policy models (Minikhanova et al., 2024).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics by demographic characteristics (Source: Author's data analysis, 2024)

Demographics	Contents	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	143	40.625
	Female	209	59.375
Group age	18 - 29	93	26.420
	30 - 39	206	58.523
	40 - 49	14	3.977
	Up 50	39	11.080
Job position	Management	70	19.886
	Employee	231	65.625
	Unemployed	51	14.489

### Evaluate the reliability of each concept according to Cronbach Alpha

As depicted in Table 2, all Cronbach's alpha values exceed 0.70, confirming robust internal consistency reliability (Nunnally, 1978). Additionally, All the outer loadings are above the minimum cut off level of 0.708 showing a very high reliability of the reflective constructs. Due to multicollinearity bias, the VIF was computed next. Multicollinearity was not seen as a problem in the analysis process, as all the computed VIF statistics are lower than 5 (Sarstedt et al., 2017).

In detail, Cronbach's alpha was 0.739 – 0.775, outer loading was 0.709 – 0.813 and VIF was less than 3. This reduces bias in the research results and increases confidence in the reliability of the measurements the last thing any methodologist or statistician would wish when using their adopted methodological frameworks (Hair Jr. et al., 2017).

Table 2. Cronbach Alpha, outer loadings and VIF value analysis results (Source: Author's data analysis, 2024)

Items	Contents	Cronbach's Alpha	Outer loading	Outer VIF
EN	Entertainment experience	0.739		
EN1	Visitors find traditional farming demonstrations highly engaging.		0.758	1.349
EN2	Visitors perceive local cultural performances as authentic.		0.709	1.370
EN3	Visitors value entertainment that reflects the true essence of the locale.		0.761	1.399
EN4	Visitors appreciate entertainment activities rooted in local traditions.		0.762	1.467
ED	Educational experience	0.752		
ED1	Visitors find farm tours informative and engaging.		0.789	1.564
ED2	Visitors perceive workshops on traditional farming methods as authentic.		0.723	1.286
ED3	Visitors value hands-on learning opportunities with local farmers.		0.794	1.593
ED4	Visitors appreciate educational activities rooted in local agricultural knowledge.		0.721	1.439
EE	Escapism experience	0.767		
EE1	Visitors find staying overnight on the farm an immersive experience.		0.751	1.462
EE2	Visitors believe that engaging in harvester activity is a real way of getting out.		0.774	1.511
EE3	Visitors find a sense of adventure participating in farm activities.		0.775	1.465
EE4	Visitors enjoy programs which are genuine in the sense of what farm life has to offer.		0.767	1.475
ES	Esthetics Experience	0.775		
ES1	Visitors remark on the farm's visually appealing geomorphology.		0.757	1.442
ES2	Visitors perceive traditional farm structures as enhancing authenticity.		0.730	1.429
ES3	Visitors value the natural beauty of the farm environment.		0.813	1.609
ES4	Visitors appreciate esthetic elements that reflect local culture and agricultural practices		0.788	1.576
PA	Perceived authenticity	0.772		
PA1	Visitors find the farm's traditional farming practices to be genuine		0.766	1.450
PA2	Visitors perceive the locally sourced produce as authentic.		0.755	1.412
PA3	Visitors value authentic cultural interactions at the farm		0.793	1.599
PA4	Visitors recognize sustainable practices, such as organic farming, as enhancing authenticity		0.768	1.548
PE	Perceived environmental	0.759		
PE1	Visitors recognize the farm's commitment to reducing its environmental footprint		0.763	1.502
PE2	Visitors appreciate the farm's use of organic farming practices		0.796	1.578
PE3	Visitors value the farm's efforts in waste management and conservation		0.740	1.395
PE4	Visitors perceive sustainable practices as enhancing the authenticity of the farm experience		0.748	1.384
VE	Visitor experience	0.764		
VE1	Visitors enjoy the immersive farm activities		0.773	1.481
VE2	Visitors find the educational experiences valuable		0.742	1.400
VE3	Visitors appreciate the visual appeal of the farm		0.757	1.556
VE4	Visitors feel connected to the farm's authentic practices		0.786	1.473
RE	Revisit the farm	0.755		
RE1	Visitors plan to return to the farm		0.744	1.438
RE2	Visitors intend to recommend the farm to others		0.773	1.480
RE3	Visitors feel motivated to revisit due to the farm's authenticity		0.741	1.384
RE4	Visitors are likely to come back because of the farm's sustainable practices		0.779	1.513

### Determination of convergence and differentiation of measurement structures

The model was evaluated using two indices: reliability and concurrent validity. The assessment of reliability was conducted using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. Table 2 shows that the Cronbach's alpha values for all constructions were more than 0.7, indicating a high level of internal consistency.

Table 3. Correlation matrix according to Fornell and Larcker (Source: Author's data analysis, 2024)

	CR	AVE	ED	EE	EN	ES	PA	PE	RE	VE
ED	0.843	0.574	0.758							
EE	0.851	0.588	0.457	0.767						
EN	0.835	0.559	0.425	0.473	0.748					
ES	0.855	0.597	0.389	0.380	0.317	0.773				
PA	0.854	0.594	0.474	0.477	0.525	0.446	0.771			
PE	0.847	0.581	0.181	0.065	0.110	0.310	0.184	0.762		
RE	0.845	0.577	0.298	0.272	0.282	0.255	0.337	0.318	0.759	
VE	0.849	0.585	0.118	0.156	0.153	0.450	0.266	0.321	0.066	0.765

Note: Educational experience (ED), Escapism experience (EE), Entertainment experience (EN), Esthetics experience (ES), Perceived authenticity (PA), Perceived environmental (PE), Revisit the farm (RE), Visitor experience (VE), Composite reliability (CR), Average variance extracted (AVE)

Table 3 demonstrates that the Composite dependability (CR) values surpassed the threshold of 0.7, so affirming the dependability of the constructs. The second criteria, the convergent validity, was established by calculating the averaged

variance extracted in the tradition of Fornell and Larcker. The criteria for the suitability of the reflective items based on the value of AVE; when the convergent validity is higher than 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 3 shows that all variables had satisfactory converging validity, with an AVE greater than 0.55. These findings provide credence to the study's reasonableness and practicality by demonstrating that the measuring approach is acceptable.

### Testing statistical hypotheses

The significance of the indicator measurements is evaluated by the t-value, p-value, as shown in Table 4. Indicators are statistically significant if the t-value exceeds 2.00 ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) and the p-value is below 0.05 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004).

Table 4. Results of the analysis of the direct impact relationship of concepts (Source: Author's data analysis, 2024)

Hypothesis	Relationship	Coefficient	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
H1	EN -> PA	0.297	0.066	4.525	0.000
H2	ED -> PA	0.186	0.055	3.420	0.001
H3	EE -> PA	0.170	0.066	2.585	0.010
H4	ES -> PA	0.215	0.049	4.396	0.000
H5	PA -> RE	0.244	0.062	3.946	0.000
H6	PA -> VE	0.259	0.062	4.161	0.000
H7	PE x PA -> RE	-0.165	0.051	3.254	0.001
H8	PE x PA -> VE	0.169	0.055	3.067	0.002

Note: Educational experience (ED), Escapism experience (EE), Entertainment experience (EN), Esthetics experience (ES), Perceived authenticity (PA), Perceived environmental (PE), Revisit the farm (RE), Visitor experience (VE), Composite reliability (CR), Average variance extracted (AVE)

Table 4 presents the results of the analysis of the direct impact relationships among various concepts in the context of Farm-to-Table Agritourism. The hypotheses tested are as follows: educational experience, escapism experience, entertainment experience, esthetics experience, perceived authenticity, perceived environmental impact, revisit the farm intention and visitors experience (Chen et al., 2023). The analysis reveals that entertainment experience significantly enhances perceived authenticity (coefficient: 0.297, P-value: 0.000). Educational experience also positively affects perceived authenticity (coefficient: 0.186, P-value: 0.001). Escapism experience significantly influences perceived authenticity (coefficient: 0.170, P-value: 0.010), although there is moderate evidence, it can in fact increase perceived authenticity during immersive activities. Additionally, esthetics experience positively impacts perceived authenticity (coefficient: 0.215, P-value: 0.000) which mean that visually appealing environment enhance the perceived authenticity.

Importantly, perceived authenticity significantly positively influences the intention to revisit the farm, with a coefficient of 0.244 (P-value: 0.000). The forecast may be deduced from this that patrons are more likely to revisit a place if they feel they are really getting in touch with something real. Furthermore, the perceived authenticity was found to partially mediate the link between the visitors' farm revisit intention with entertainment, educational, escapism, and esthetics experiences.

This intermediate role conveniently underscores the role of perceived authenticity in making out of numerous experiences an increased likelihood to return (Li & Wang, 2023). Finally, the perceived environmental impact plays the role of a control variable that helps to control the influence of perceived authenticity on visitor experience and the extent of their willingness to revisit (Mandić & McCool, 2023). This implies that the contribution made by perceived authenticity on visitor experience as well as revisit intention is enhanced by the perceived organisational sustainability.

Table 5 presents details on the indirect influence of the experienter on the tourist experience. Overall, the findings confirm the impact of various kinds of experiences on the perceived authenticity and have shown that PE and PA are the key predictors of visitors' willingness to visit the trail again. This information is crucial for agritourism stakeholders who wish to offer exciting, genuine, and safe tourist experiences that create lasting customer relationships.

Table 5. Results of the analysis of the indirect influence relationship of concepts (Source: Author's data analysis, 2024)

Relationship	Coefficient	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
EN -> PA -> VE	0.077	0.025	3.026	0.002
EE -> PA -> VE	0.044	0.020	2.149	0.032
ED -> PA -> VE	0.048	0.018	2.742	0.006
ES -> PA -> RE	0.053	0.019	2.749	0.006
ED -> PA -> RE	0.046	0.018	2.598	0.009
ES -> PA -> VE	0.056	0.021	2.682	0.007
EN -> PA -> RE	0.073	0.024	3.062	0.002
EE -> PA -> RE	0.041	0.021	2.008	0.045

Note: Educational experience (ED), Escapism experience (EE), Entertainment experience (EN), Esthetics Experience (ES), Perceived authenticity (PA), Perceived environmental (PE), Revisit the farm (RE), Visitor experience (VE), Composite reliability (CR), Average variance extracted (AVE)

The survey analysis integrates and visualizes the analytical findings relating to the effectiveness of the analytical framework in managing visitors' perceived restoration and their holiday experience, as well as the role of mediated environmental behaviour in shaping this intention.



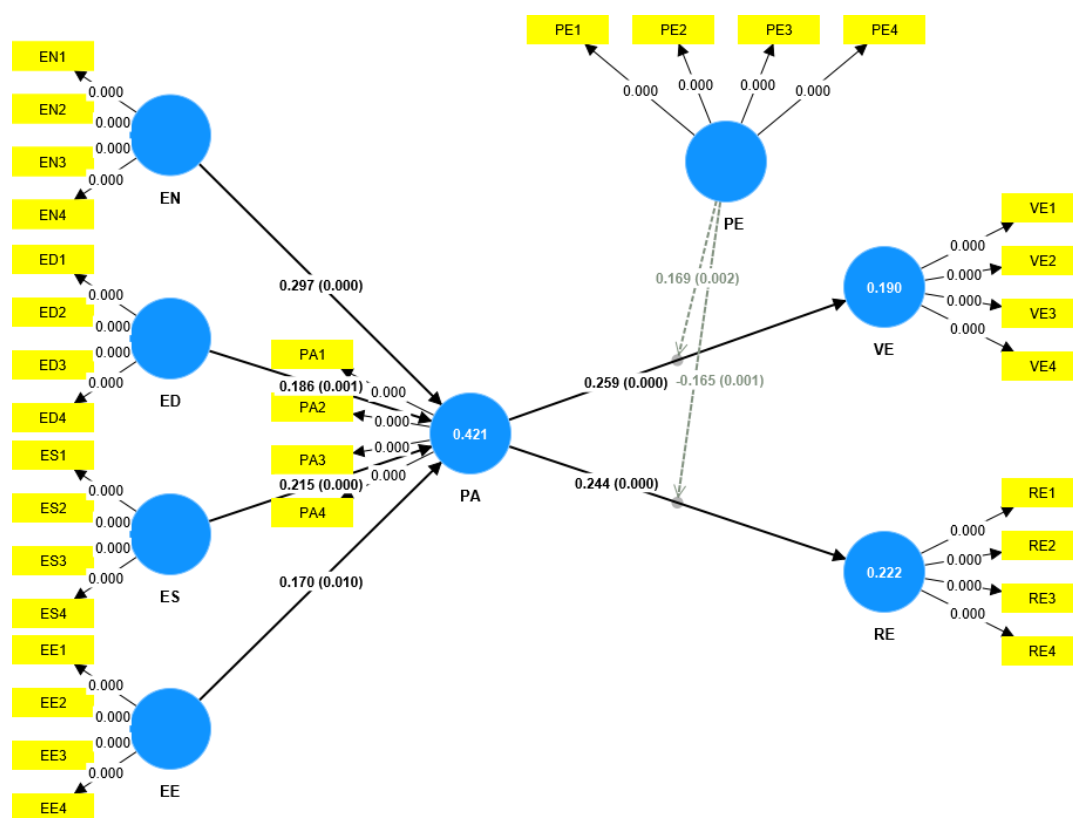


Figure 2. Farm-to-table agritourism authenticity and sustainability evaluation results (Source: Author's data analysis, 2024)

Note: Educational experience (ED), Escapism experience (EE), Entertainment experience (EN), Esthetics Experience (ES), Perceived authenticity (PA), Perceived environmental (PE), Revisit the farm (RE), Visitor experience (VE), Composite reliability (CR), Average variance extracted (AVE)

## DISCUSSION

This evaluation focuses on the relationships between experiential components (entertainment, educational, escapism, and esthetics experiences) and perceived authenticity, as well as the moderating role of perceived environmental impact. The results should be discussed in the context of related studies in the tourism field. Such scholarly studies on farm-to-table agritourism in Zimbabwe stress about the authenticity, sustainability with suggestions to step up agritourism activities through the sustainable use of the farm resources. The study offers important information to the stakeholders to help them boost the rate of agritourism development and the findings of the research can act as a benchmark for further studies (Baipai et al., 2024). In China, a study on perceived authenticity and environmental issues focus on the context of village tourism; furthermore the findings indicate that contextual involvement, cultural, and image all have positive effects on satisfaction (Zhao et al., 2024). This study reveals that perceived experience authenticity is associated with entertainment, education, escapism, esthetics mediated experiences. Furthermore, the findings confirm the mediating effect of perceived environmental impact in enhancing the relationship between perceived authenticity and visitors' intention.

First, demographic findings showed that the majority of the participants were female (59.37%), while 40.62% were males. About age, the highest percentage (58.52%) of respondents was in 30 – 39 years, and the second largest (26.42%) in 18 – 29 years. With reference to job status, 65.62% held employee status, 19.88% held management status, the remaining 14.48% were unemployed (Dsouza et al., 2023). These demographics mean a relatively diverse and largely working age female visiting population. This demographic may engage in farm to table agritourism because they are seeking the truth and sustainability. The specific target audience of women in their 30s and 40s are looking for activities that encompass family and education and health with food and farming being the areas of interest (Mat et al., 2024). The leisure activities that would interest the employees in this age group might also as well be a way of temporarily escaping work-related chores while the managers may opt for leisure activities that enable them to have a gripping and more naturalistic break (Lee et al., 2023). The emphasis on sustainability and authenticity in farm-to-table agritourism resonates with their values, encouraging repeat visits and engagement (Kerimbay et al., 2024).

Second, the relationships between various experiential components (entertainment, educational, escapism, and esthetics experiences) and perceived authenticity can be explained by the engaging nature of these activities. In this context, entertainment activities such as traditional farm demonstrations and exercise of cultural troupes expose the visitor to the farm's cultural and operating environment, hence increasing perceived credibility (Montefrio & Sin, 2021). Field sessions in the farm and workshops as well give more information on practices in sustainable and traditional farming making the farm more authentic (Widodo et al., 2024). Escape activities will enable visitors to explore the aspects of the farm culture to the fullest escapades away from their daily activities. The external environment, gardening, and appealing and breathtaking agriculture areas help support the cultural continuation hence the increase in authenticity (Andéhn & L'Espoir



Decosta, 2021). Third, the findings obtained indicate that authenticity has significant impact on the experience of the visitors to farm as well as their willingness to revisit the destination. Those customers who have been engaged in a way that makes them feel like real parts of the farm are more likely to return (Hassan et al., 2024).

Fourth, the results show that perceived environmental effect completely mediates the relationship between perceived authenticity and tourist experience, together with return intention. Farm aesthetics perceived by visitors are influenced by the overall rating of organic farming practices, waste management and conservation strategies of the farm (Yiamjanya et al., 2024). When the tourists perceive that a farm is decreasing their ecological footprint they consider it more genuine (Martinus et al., 2024). Sustainability is generally known to mean efficient management that reflects the true nature of the organizational standards. Today the people care about being environmentally friendly and want to have vacations that take that into consideration (Lee et al., 2023).

Agricultural business that experience sustainable approach makes them appealing to tourists with sensitive environment who are likely to revisit the farm (Esparza-Huamanchumo et al., 2024). As tourists tend to select attractions that align with their values, good attitudes toward the environmental tendencies of the farm increase the influence of perceived authenticity on return intention (Kuo et al., 2024). As a result, perceived environmental impact adds credence to what a farm is doing and what it offers, which fulfils visitors' expectation and hence they get a satisfying experience.

### Conclusions and implications (practical, social, future research)

Research results have shown that authenticity and sustainability are pivotal in shaping visitor experiences in farm-to-table agritourism. The greater proportion of respondents was female (59.37%), in the age category 30 to 39 years (58.52%) and employed (65.62%) indicate that youth, working population, especially females play a huge role in tourism.

Several latter experiential elements greatly contributed to perceived authenticity. They rated entertainment experiences (coefficient: 0.297, P-value: 0.000) as the most effective experience type and esthetics (coefficient: 0.215, P-value: 0.000), education (coefficient: 0.186, P-value: 0.001), and escape experiences (coefficient: 0.170, P-value: 0.010) as less effective experience. According to it these results indicate that kind of activities which are engaging, informative, immersive and visually appealing have a great impact on perceived authenticity.

This study further reveals that perceived authenticity plays an intermediate function which has a remarkable impact on the respondents' perceived disposition to revisit the farm (coefficient: 0.244, P-value: 0.000). Thus, visitors would like to return visitors if they feel that they received genuine experiences during their visit. Perceived authenticity in various experiences has a significant influence on the intention to revisit aspect among visitors. Moreover, perceived environmental impact mediates the influences of authenticity and tourist experience and return visitor intention. Cognitive and affective understanding of sustainability increases perceived authenticity, thereby, eco-friendly farms can enhance tourist loyalty.

In summary, these results highlight the importance of encouraging young active women to enhance their participation through active engagement, education, immersion, and appealing experiences while recognizing the perceived authenticity and ecological conscientiousness in repetition and sustained involvement in farm-to-table agritourism.

For purposes of enhancing the visitors' engagement in the farm-to-table agritourism activities, operators can utilize the following activities following the research on authenticity and sustainability.

The targeted clients should be convinced to embrace agritourism because this sector should create products and services that would appeal to these young working young women. This includes the design of the activities as interesting, informative, engrossing and aesthetic activities that increase perceived communication authenticity (Dağ et al., 2023). Four of these experiences; entertainment, education, escapism and esthetics can enhance perceived authenticity by visitors and thus encourage returning visitor (Zhao et al., 2024). Additionally, communicating practices and operation that are more environmentally friendly can help reinforce perceived genuineness as well as visitor commitment which means sustainability as an essential driver of the general visitor experience.

Encouraging the development of real and genuine farm-to-table agritourism enterprises may bring the current disconnect in understanding and value of agricultural cultures and traditions closer to par.

Through young, working aged women, agritourism can enhance this demography to encompass educational and family geared activities which are dear to them (Mat et al., 2024). Furthermore, adopting sustainability practices in agritourism can increase the perceived environment among the tourists, whereby, their behavior change can positively contribute to the achievement of most sustainable development objectives.

Further studies should reveal whether it is certain facets of entertaining, educational, or escapist experience or the esthetic experience per se that cause a higher degree of authenticity to be perceived. Additionally, future research focusing on the level of perceived authenticity that has a positive impact on visitor loyalty and visitation reinforcing the agritourism operations' sustainability could offer more elaborate information (Rauniyar et al., 2021). Exploiting other approaches, further studies can also focus on the impact of different eco-friendly approaches on the authenticity perceptions and the overall experience of the visitors (Riva et al., 2022). Finally, research could be conducted among other target population to find out their needs and motivations to visit agricultural destinations for tourism, which will give a broader insight to target population in the context of agritourism.

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