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Farm tourism: a cross-country empirical study in Germany and Italy

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Abbreviations

AIO	Activities Interests Opinions
ARM	Azienda Romana Mercati / Spin off of the Roman Chamber of Commerce
BAG	Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof / German association of farm tourism
BMELV	Bundesministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Verbraucherschutz / German Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Consumers' Protection
BWT	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie / German Ministry of Economics and Technology
BLFUW	Österreichisches Bundesministerium für Land und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasser Wirtschaft / Austrian Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management
CA	Confirmatory Analysis
CIA	Confederazione Italiana Agricoltori /Italian Agricultural Asoociation
DEHOGA	Hotel- und Gastättenverband / Hotels and Restaurant Association
DTV	Deutscher Tourismus Verband / German Tourism Association
ECEAT	European Centre for Ecological and Agricultural Tourism
EUROSTAT	European Statistical Office
e-WOM	electronic Word-of-Mouth
FUR	Forschungsgemeinschaft Urlaub und Reisen / Research Institute for Travel and Holiday
ISTAT	Istituto Nazionale di Statistica / Italian Statistical Office
MNL	Multinomial logit model
OBL	Osservatorio Banda Larda / Broadband observatory
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OLS	Ordinary Least Squares
ONT	Osservatorio Nazionale sul Turismo
PDO	Protected Designation of Origin
PGI	Protected Geographical Indication
PCA	Principal Component Analysis
PLS	Partial Least Squares
SEM	Structural equation model
SFSC	Short agri-Food Supply Chains
SPSS	Statistical Package for Statistical Survey
WOM	Word-of-Mouth

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Chapter 1

1 Introduction

Although exhibiting a slower pace than in the past, the world tourism market is still showing a "healthy growth" (Freitag & Pyka, 2009).

Governments are also increasingly conscious of their role: in the area of environmental policy and conservation, they become more directly involved in the promotion of ecologically-friendly policies aimed at minimizing the adverse impact of tourism on the physical environment and maximizing the sustainability of their tourism sectors (OECD, 2008). Hence, traditional niche markets, such as rural and farm tourism are enjoying increasing success.

This dissertation is dedicated to farm tourism, which is a subset of rural tourism (Nickerson, Black & McCool, 2001). Whereas the latter encompasses all activities which are undertaken in rural areas such as eco-tourism, adventure tourism, etc., (McGehee & Kim, 2004), the current literature has not as yet established a unique definition of farm tourism, and there are currently several definitions in use (Busby & Rendle, 2000; Roberts & Hall, 2001).

As a consequence, since the application of a universal meaning is considered "inappropriate owing to the diversity of activities, experiences as well as encompassed enterprises" (Davies & Gilbert, 1992; Hill & Busby, 2002), the following will narrow the scope of this term to those farms which offer lodging to their guests. To this end, we will use the terms "farm tourism" and "agritourism" interchangeably.

On the other hand, there is a much greater consensus with regard to the growing importance of this tourist sector which is inextricably linked to its particular characteristics.

One of these is the relationship between tourism and agriculture. The farm setting has contributed to innovation in tourist products by differentiating farm tourism from other tourist niches (cf. Hjalager, 1996). At the same time, the presence of "green" tourists in the countryside has had a number of positive repercussions on agriculture as well. For instance, nowadays there is a higher sensibility towards past agrarian food process traditions. This is confirmed by the rapid increase in food protection labels (such as Protected Designation of Origin and Protected Geographical Indication) throughout Europe. Agriculture also contributes significantly to the maintenance of regions that are reversing a depopulation trend, such as the alpine recreational landscape, which is an important tourist factor as well (Montresor, 1998; Pevetz, 1978).

The contribution of farm tourism in maintaining biodiversity (Sonnino, 2004) and in embellishing sluggish areas has led many scholars to consider it as a promoter of sustainable development of rural areas (Embacher, 1994; Knowd, 2006).

Finally, the value of farm tourism also relies on its social benefits. As confirmed in the literature, this tourist market combines the traditional values of both farmers and guests. Hence, it can be considered a "mutual learning experience" (Ingram, 2002) and in this way a catalyzer of social development (Nickerson et al., 2001).

Many studies help us to better understand the phenomenon of this tourist form. Some scholars have analyzed farm tourism as a tool for development in rural areas (Agöl, 2001; Skuras, Petrou & Clark, 2006; Tommasini & Rasmussen, 2004), whereas others have studied it as a diversification strategy (Wilson et al., 2001; Weaver & Fennell, 1997). A plethora of studies have focused on operators' motivations for starting farm tourism businesses (Nickerson et al., 2001; Valdivia, 1996) as well as on consumers' participation in this tourist market (Wohlmann & Lohmann, 1986; Oppermann, 1995).

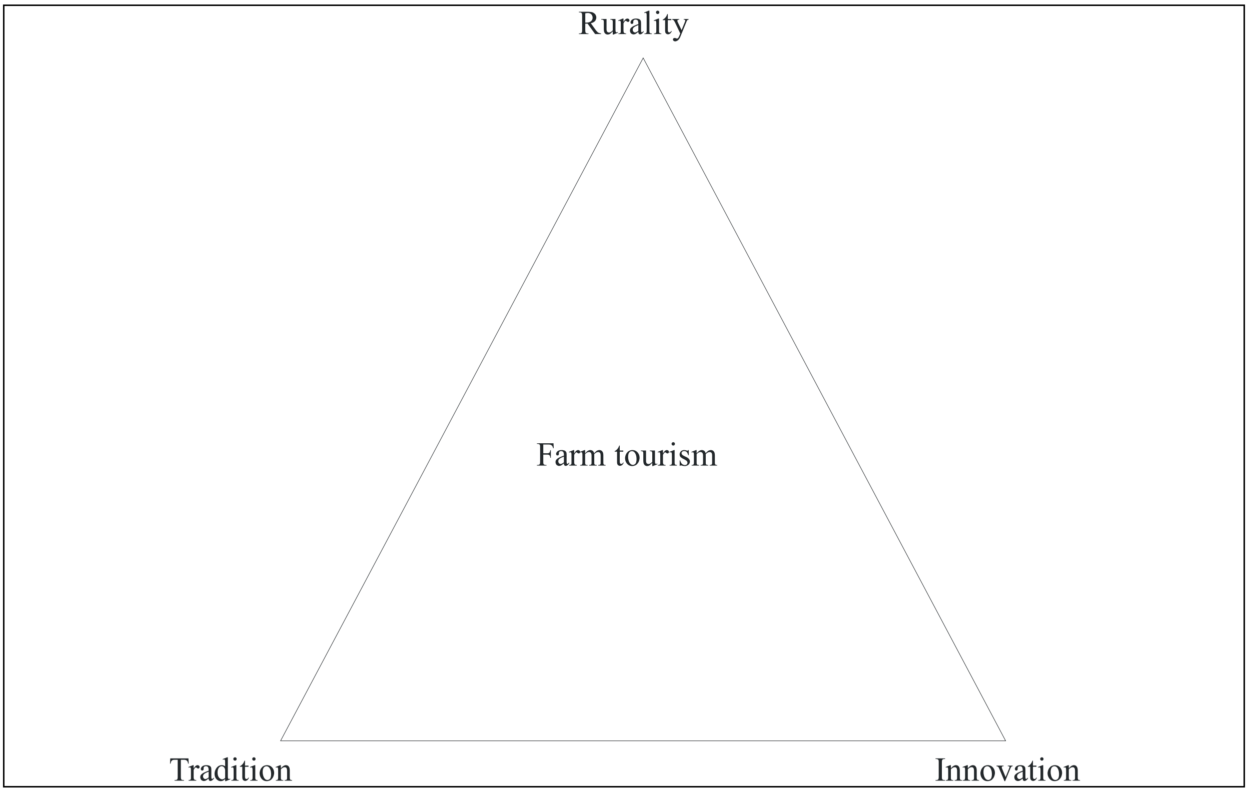
Nevertheless, "in the pursuit of sustainable tourism, the contribution of the marketing discipline has, to date, been marginalised" (Clarke, 1999). Thus, there is an urgent need to extend the application of marketing to farm tourism. Several scholars endorse this view as follows:

> "The idea of consciously orienting an enterprise or business towards the customer seems alien to many farmers" (Slee & Yells, 1985: 322)
>
> "Many farmers reported that they had faced severe marketing problems" (Hjalager, 1996: 109)
>
> "Small to medium-sized, locally owned agritourism and rural tourism enterprises have limited entrepreneurship capabilities related to innovations in management, product development, and planning for future growth" (Veeck, Che & Veeck, 2006: 246)

In this context, the efforts of many farm operators to differentiate their supply and to contribute, in this way, to the innovation of farm tourism are even more valuable. Therefore, Hjalager (1996), for instance, underlines the emerging of an "internal innovative process" which aims at turning the supply of nature into "something excitingly new" (ibid.: 109). In line with these considerations, Busby and Rendle (2000) identify an “innovation process” which conveys the transition from the traditional “tourism on farms” to “farm tourism” through the implementation of professional marketing. Thus, marketing channels can help farmers to create a “new agritourism” (Adams, 2008) which combines industrialized farming (innovation) with agricultural life (tradition) according to the consumption of nature (rurality) of customers (Figure 1).

Hjalager (1996: 109) confirms the importance of the marketing approach for the positioning of farm tourism along this triangle as “most often the experiences demanded by tourists [are] completely incompatible with modern farming”.

Figure 1 The transition from tourism on farm to farm tourism



Source: own elaboration based on Busby and Rendle, 2000

This dissertation focuses on the importance of this professionalism process and examines both the supply and the demand side of agritourism. To this end, we will conduct a cross-country analysis of farm tourism in Germany and Italy, which will explore commonalities and differences in this sector between the two countries. In doing so, the multidimensional nature of this tourism form is taken into account, as the success of farm tourism greatly varies among countries.

In Italy, for instance, with around 2 million guests annually, farm tourism has been flourishing for years (ARM, 2003). Nevertheless, despite these figures, it remains a niche segment. On the other side, German farm tourism has been gradually declining since peaking in late 1996 when it reached a volume of 3.9 million guests annually (BMELV, 2006) and image deficits are still a main issue according to several practitioners (BAG, 2008; Wagner, Burger, & Magnus, 1997).

The main idea is that a comparison approach between the two countries could help both German and Italian farm operators to develop common strategies to improve their businesses as well as to generate important insights into the sector. The consciousness of the benefits of such collaboration is growing also at national levels as "governments are becoming increasingly aware of the potential benefits to be gained from international co-operation in tourism marketing and promotion and generally take the lead in developing tourism linkages with other, often contiguous, states" (OECD, 2008).

1.1 Statement of objectives

As before mentioned, over the past ten years the scientific community has become increasingly interested in the farm tourism market, focusing on a variety of issues. Though, many knowledge gaps still exist in the context of marketing issues.

For instance, only a few studies address quality related issues such as certification schemes (Hill & Busby, 2002; Reichel, Lowengart & Milman, 2000) or examination of the farm marketing channels adopted by farm operators (Clarke, 1999; Veeck et al., 2006); moreover literature dealing with the intersection of online consumption patterns and farm tourism is almost nonexistent.

As stated above, the general objective of this dissertation is to provide a critical evaluation of the level of professionalism reached in the farm tourism market. To this end, we utilized a broader marketing approach in line with Roberts and Hall's concept of "post-tourist consumption patterns" (2004). According to these authors, consumer behaviour is not only assumed to depend on product/service characteristics but also on the "symbolic nature of consumption" (ibid.: 255).

Accordingly, specific objectives have been developed focusing on various aspects of the farm tourism market.

On the supply side, it is our intention to analyze farmers' attitudes towards agritourism as well as the differentiation grid they adopt in order to face competitors. On the demand side, we analyze the collective imagery of farm tourism as it is currently offered as well as its possible trends in the future. An analysis of online consumer behaviour in relation to farm tourism is also provided.

With regard to the methodology, five exploratory studies have been conducted in order to reach the above mentioned objectives. Data collection took place from 2006 to 2009 using three different methods: a catalogue of farm operators, an online survey, and face-to-face interviews. Thus, this dissertation presents systematic research into farmers' participation in the development of farm tourism, but it can also be read as an in-depth inquiry into the farm tourism experience as perceived by customers.

The contribution of this dissertation lies in its scientific investigation of the market of farm tourism which is analyzed from both the supply and the demand side. By employing a cross-country approach, this study builds on the work of other scholars who have studied the topic (Lo Surdo 1988; Nickerson et al., 2001; Oppermann 1995), adding to existing research in a logical and organized manner as has been advocated by numerous authors (Busby & Rendle, 2000; Nickerson et al., 2001; etc.).

1.2 Research design

An overview of German and Italian farm tourism is presented in the first two chapters of this dissertation. Next, five empirical studies are introduced which are the core of the dissertation. Below, we discuss each research project in more detail.

Study 1 is a vis-á-vis comparison of agritourism in Germany and Italy based on a case study. Here, this tourist sector is analyzed using the framework of tourist experience theories. The overall goal is to understand what farm guests value most in each country. Because of the influence of farm activities, differentiation patterns and quality of accommodation may differ in consumer willingness to pay for this tourist type; the results are compared in two parallel econometric models. Thus, the study shows whether the stated preference for farm tourism is more likely bound to the "supporting consumer" or "peak" experiences.

Study 2 examines the success factors of German farm tourism. The goal of the analysis is to generate systematic insight into the supply side of German farm tourism from the point of view of farm operators. The model adopts the theoretical framework of Busby and Rendle (2000), who determine the success of farm tourism operators according to their level of professionalism. Important issues are explored: how can success be defined in this tourist sector? Are quantitative variables more suitable for measuring it than qualitative ones? The study empirically extends the understanding of the structure of German farm tourism theorized in the previous chapter.

Study 3 analyzes the preference for German farm tourism among respondents in several German cities and pursues two objectives: firstly, the determinants of positive and negative images related to this tourist market are analyzed. The research framework is based on existing theories of image. Secondly, the analysis identifies the preference patterns of respondents towards five suggested scenarios of farm tourism.

Study 4 deals with the organic farm tourism market in Germany. In recent years awareness of organic farm tourism, which is a niche market of agritourism, has been gaining increasing momentum in Germany and many other countries. The aim of this chapter is to provide a market segmentation of potential organic farm holiday makers in Germany in order to identify potential consumer groups and their characteristics as a guide to determining their specific needs and interests.

Study 5 is dedicated to farm tourism and new technologies. In order to reduce information asymmetries in the tourist industry, both farm guests and non-farm guests refer to multiple information sources. Among these, online consumer-generated content is supposed to better reflect quality of information, because it is based on consumers' experiences. The purposes of this study are manifold: to test whether online e-WOM (word-of-mouth) has a predominant or a complementary role in consumer behaviour in comparison with other sources of information; to detect the determinants of trust in e-WOM and to measure the impact of trust in e-WOM on choice of farm accommodation. Finally, scientific and managerial implications are discussed.

1.3 Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation is based upon a theoretical and an empirical part. The theoretical chapters provide the basic knowledge of the marketing structure of German and Italian farm tourism. The five empirical studies are described from Chapter 4 to Chapter 8. Below is a brief synopsis of the chapters to give the reader an overview of the dissertation's structure.

Chapter 1 introduces the topic, explains the main objectives and presents the structure of the dissertation.

In Chapter 2 and 3 we discuss the problematic related to the definition of this tourism form, we classify it according to several approaches, we provide an analysis of strengths and weaknesses of farm tourism in both countries and finally we discuss the main issues related to the marketing channels of this tourism form within the frame of strategic planning.

Chapter 4 sums up the main features of the marketing structure of Italian and German farm tourism. Furthermore it introduces a comparative study based on the hedonic price model (Study 1).

Chapter 5 examines the supply-side of German farm tourism based on operators' perceptions (Study 2).

Chapter 6 investigates the collective imagery of farm tourism in Germany (Study 3).

Chapter 7 takes a demand-side approach as well and examines the demand for a German farm tourism niche market, i.e. organic farm tourism within the frame of Study 4.

Chapter 8 explicates the peculiarities of communication and interaction among consumers in a Web environment and analyzes the repercussions of the "digital revolution" on the German farm tourism market (Study 5).

Finally, in Chapter 9 we discuss the main findings of the dissertation and we place them in a conceptual framework which can be used as point of departure of future research.

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Chapter 2

2 A review of the state of the art of German farm tourism

2.1 Definition and typology

The purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of the marketing structure of German farm tourism based on the most important literature.

Defining *Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof* (German name for farm tourism) is problematic. Firstly, in the literature there are many different definitions of this form of tourism (Busby & Rendle, 2000; Roberts & Hall, 2001). Secondly, in Germany comprehensive statistics on farm tourism are lacking because the majority of farm operators, who are very small and privately managed (Oppermann, 1996: 93), are automatically included in the private operators hospitality directories (*privat Vermieter)* (BMELV, 2008). As a consequence, the majority of studies rely on estimations.

This situation is compounded by the fact that Germany does not have legislation specifically dedicated to farm tourism. Thus, farm operators are required to abide by several rules under civil law, as in the case of construction of new buildings (*Baugesetzbuch*), rural area regulations (*Landes-Gaststättenbau-Verordnung*), agrarian law, etc.

Whenever farm tourism is offered by a farm operator who hosts up to eight guests, the business is considered agricultural property management (*Vermietung als Vermögensverwaltung*), and no official registration is necessary. Above the eight-bed threshold, a holiday farm is subject to public catering law (*Gaststättengesetz*). The latter involves additional work (Oppermann, 1996: 93), which explains why the majority of farmers stay below this limit. Furthermore, in Germany farm tourism can also be offered on farms where there is no longer any farming activity. As a consequence, it is particularly difficult to demarcate this sector from other rural tourism operators, such as B&Bs and country hotels.

Henceforth, taking the legal framing as a point of departure for defining German farm tourism we will use the definition given by Przezbórska (2003), who explains farm tourism as “all tourism and recreation activities connected with a […] farm or any agricultural, horticultural, fishery or agribusiness operation.”

According to Barth and Theis (1998), we can classify farm operations based on their location, dividing them into mountain, hill, seaside or natural park farm operations. Another way to classify them is based on the grade of intensity of the farm experience that farm operators provide to their guests. A high-intensity farm experience implies a wide variety of farming-related products or activities (for example, the opportunity for guests to work on the farm). In contrast, some farm operators provide only accommodation. Another possibility to classify farm tourism operations is by the type of accommodation offered to farm guests. Farm vacationers can obtain lodging either in independent accommodation, such as apartments, holiday houses, etc., or in rooms. Furthermore, farm guest lodging in tents or caravans is gathering momentum (AgE, 2007).

Quality certification is also a reliable means of categorizing farm operations, which can be classified according to national systems (like the hotel star system, the DLG system and the BAG system) or regional ones (such as the flowers classification in Bavaria). Finally, farm tourism operations can be classified according to the financial contribution of agricultural activities in relation to the tourist ones: if the former predominate, agritourism is only a side activity otherwise it is the main activity. Table 1 gives an overview of various defining criteria applied to farm operations.

Table 1 Criteria for the classification of farm tourism

Defining criteria	Example
Legally set threshold	Agricultural property management Public catering law
Location	Mountain Sea Natural parks Lakes
Type of farming experience	High-intensity farming experience Low-intensity farming experience
Type of lodging	Apartments Rooms House Tent Caravan
Classification system	National (star system, DLG certification, etc.) Regional (flowers in Bavaria, etc.)
Financial contribution of agritourism activities	Agritourism as main activity Agritourism as side activity

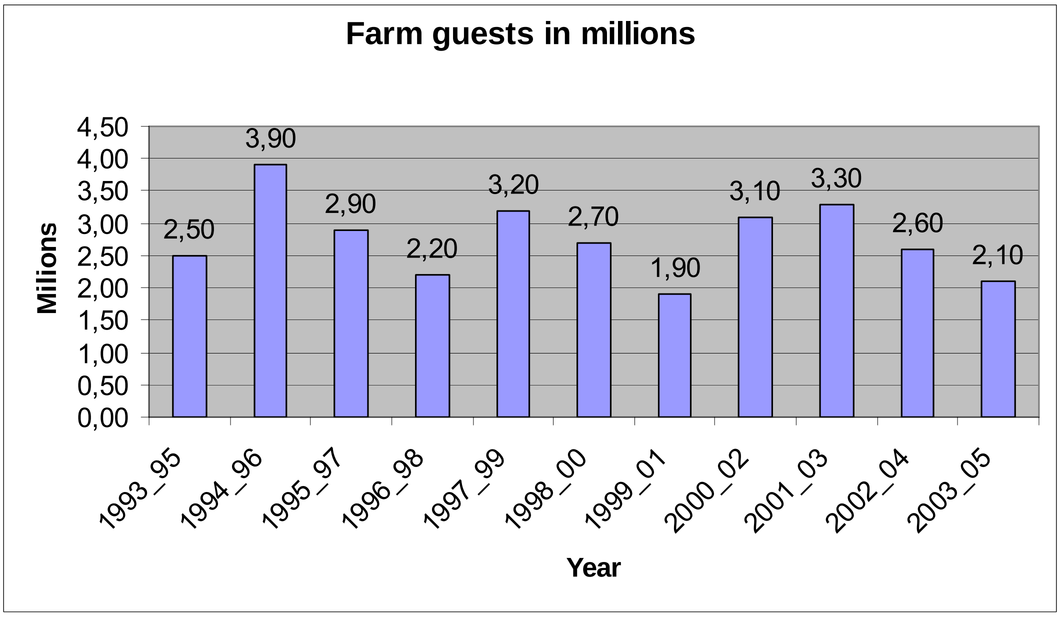
Source: own representation based on Barth & Theis (1998:14)

2.2 Historical development

The origin of farm tourism in Germany dates back 150 years (Nilsson, 2002), but it was after the Second World War that this sector began to gather momentum (Wagner, Burger & Magnus, 1997). Farm tourism boomed in the 1970s as is shown by the large number of studies of that time (Klöpper, 1974; Lehle, 1982; Mook, 1978; Schulz-Borck & Tiede, 1974; Tiede & Schulz-Borck, 1975). It was, however, during the 1990s that this tourist sector really gained national visibility. During this period uncertainty in the agricultural market was counteracted by significant investment in farm tourism, turning it into one of the common goals of European regional policy (Skuras, Petrou & Clark, 2006). As a consequence, farmers began to renovate their buildings in order to turn them into appealing tourist accommodations (Caballé, 1999).

According to the German Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Consumers' Protection (BMELV, 2006), German farm tourism reached its peak in late 1996 with 3.9 million guests (see Figure 2), but dropped again in the period 1999-2001 before gradually recovering. However, due to cyclic fluctuations, the trend for this form of tourism is particularly difficult to forecast (BMELV, 2008).

Figure 2 Farm guests in millions



Source: own representation based on BMELV, 2006

2.3 The supply side

In Germany, farm tourism is currently offered by around 25,000 farm operators and generates a yearly turnover of € 943 million (BMELV, 2006). The states of Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg are the most important destinations, followed by Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony (ibid.).

It is estimated that, for the majority of German farm operations (BWT, 2008; Lemke, 2003; Sidali, Schulze & Spiller, 2007), farm tourism activities contribute between 25% and 35% of overall income (see Table 2). According to several studies (Lemke, 2003; Sidali et al., 2007; Wagner et al., 1997) the mean age of German farm tourism operators is around 50 years old. Furthermore, German farm tourism involves numerous female farm operators, which is in line with the international trend.

Table 2 Supply side of German farm tourism

Supply side of German farm tourism	
Market share of agritourism in Germany	0.6%[1]
Total number of farm tourism operations	25,000
Total revenue (millions €) (2006)	943
Share farm tourism revenue : total revenue	25%-35%
Participation of female farm operators	High
Mean age of farm operators (years)	50
Occupancy rate (nights per year)[2]	Between 125 - 135

Source: BAG, 2008; BMELV, 2006; BMELV, 2008; Lemke 2003; Sidali et al., 2007

The main associations responsible for promoting this tourist sector are both agriculture-based organizations, such as the DLG (Deutsche Landwirtschaft Gesellschaft) and BAG (Bundesarbeitgemeinschaft für Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof), and tourist-based organizations, such as the DZT (Deutsche Zentrale für Tourismus) and the DTV (Deutsche Tourismus Verband). According to the BMELV (2008), the main competition facing German farm operators comes from the following sectors: campsites, hotels and foreign holiday destinations. With regard to the latter, it is interesting to point out that many Germans state that they are not interested in farm tourism in their own country; however, they are interested in this tourism form abroad (especially in Austria, Italy and Spain) (see Table 3).

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[1] Calculated as follows: ratio of the total revenue of the German agritourism (€ 943,000,000) (BMELV, 2006) to the total revenue of the German tourist sector (€ 150,000,000,000) according to the DTV (German Tourism Board) ([www.deutschertourismusverband.de/content/files/zdf% 202007.pdf] November 2008)

[2] Total number of nights per year during which beds are occupied

Table 3 Competitors

Market share of hotels in Germany	12.3%[3]
Market share of camping sector in Germany	0.8%[4]
Market share of agritourism in relation to hotels	5.0%
Market share of agritourism in relation to camping	79.9%

Source: BMELV, 2006; BMELV, 2008; Lemke, 2003; Sidali et al., 2007

2.4 Market demand and potential

According to the survey carried out on behalf of the German government (BMELV, 2006), the typical farm guest is 44 years old with an intermediate level of education and monthly income. Large-sized families dominate this guest group. The main motivations for having a farm holiday are to escape day-to-day life, to relax and to recuperate. For these reasons, the main activities on the farm are excursions, sampling regional products and relaxing (Table 4).

Several studies estimate that farm tourism is still not achieving its real market potential. According to the German government (BMELV, 2006), for instance, in the period from 2006 to 2008, around 2.5% of Germans indicated that they were definitely planning a farm holiday, and 8% said that they were probably going to do so. In contrast, among international guests the demand for German farm tourism is almost nonexistent

Table 4 Demand side of German farm tourism

Demand side of German farm tourism	
Total number of farm guests 2003-05 (millions guests)	2.10
Average German holiday farm guest	
Mean age (years)	44
Monthly income (€)	2,000
Education	Intermediate
Motivations for choosing a farm holiday	**Activities during a farm holiday**
1. Escape day-to-day life	1. Excursions
2. Relaxation	2. Sampling regional specialties
3. Recuperation	3. Relaxation

Source: BMELV, 2006; BMELV, 2008

[3] Calculated as follows: ratio of the total revenue of the German hotel sector (€ 18,500,000,000) according to DEHOGA (German hotel federation) ([www.dehoga-bundesverband.de/home/branchenthemen_0_1009.html]November 2008) to the total revenue of the German tourist sector (€ 150,000,000,000)

[4] Calculated as follows: ratio of the total revenue of the German camping sector (€ 1,180,000,000) according to the BMELV(2008) to the total revenue of the German tourist sector (€ 150,000,000,000)

2.5 Strengths and weaknesses analysis

The aim of this section is to provide an overview of the agritourism sector in Germany based on an analysis of the key literature from the 1970s to present. It is also based on a variation of the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) model suggested by Johnson and Scholes (1997).

Strengths

According to Bodenstein and Spiller (1998) strengths encompass everything a business does better than its competitors and all the positive product features within the operator's control. Hence, these are the characteristics operators should build on. According to the literature, the main strengths of German farm tourism are intangible assets, which constitute a clear competitive advantage over other tourist sectors.

"As this form of tourism is provided by the locals, and the benefits mainly remain in the region" (Embacher, 1994), farm tourism has been recognized as a form of sustainable development for less developed areas. Furthermore, its environmentally friendly nature has led to farmers being recognized as guardians of the landscape, or "environmental architects" (Roberts & Hall, 2001). This has been picked up by the government (Nilsson, 2002), which has, as a consequence, recently renewed its support for the "further development" of farm and rural tourism in order to economically support rural areas (German government press release, 24 September 2008). Furthermore, during the last few decades, a large number of programs aimed at enhancing farm tourism have been commissioned by the European Union (above all, the Leader program) (Nilsson, 2002; Skuras et al., 2006).

Farm tourism operators are characterized by a particularly high commitment (Sidali et al., 2007), which depends on several factors. First of all, tourism allows many farmers "to remain self employed and work solely on the farm" (Embacher, 1994), which is "a key element of the farmers' identity" (ibid.). Furthermore, other reasons, including companionship with guests and the (farmer's) "wife's convenience" (Nilsson, 2002), motivate farmers to diversify their activities and enter into this business (McGehee & Kim, 2004; Nickerson, Black & McCool, 2001; Wilson, Fesenmaier, Fesenmaier & van Es, 2001).

Also from the demand side, farm tourism is characterized by several strengths involving the "intensity of the tourist experience" offered by this sector (Ingram, 2002). In contrast to mass tourism, farm holiday–makers often choose this type of tourism as a means of escaping from the city (Nickerson et al., 2001; Oppermann, 1996). In addition, there is also a strong motivation to see children learning from farm activities (Ingram, 2002) and increasing their knowledge about agriculture and the food chain (Nilsson, 2002; Sidali et al., 2007). Finally, farm tourism gains from the special appeal of rural areas because of the "mystique" associated with them (Wilson et al., 2001).

Table 5 Main strengths of German farm tourism

Strengths
Political (national and European) support
Self commitment of farm operators
High female participation
Environmental protection protection, biodiversity, conservation, etc.
Sustainable development of rural areas
Social benefits (keeping farmers on the land, gender related benefits, etc.)
High customer loyalty

Source: own representation

These reasons can explain the huge number of repeat guests that typifies farm tourism both in Germany and abroad (Embacher, 1994; Oppermann, 1995) and which has lead Busby and Rendle (2000) to declare that "the relationship between the host and guest is the main strength of farm tourism" (ibid: 640).

Weaknesses

Weaknesses have been identified as internal factors that can influence the success or competitive advantage of a business. They are under the control of the operators who need to improve them in order to surpass or at least reach other competitors' levels.

The lacking of a law entirely dedicated to farm tourism is a weakness of the sector which implies further problems in acquiring reliable statistics.

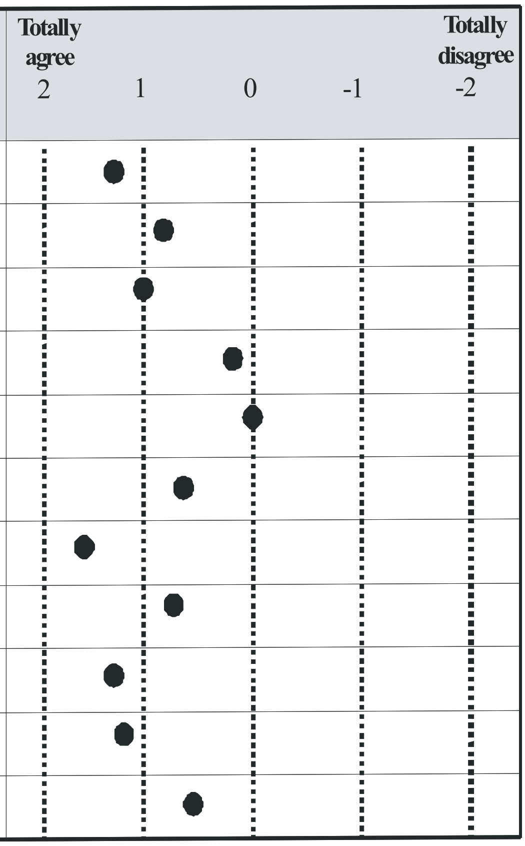
Other weaknesses of the German farm tourism sector occur on the demand side. In contrast with other countries, such as Italy and France, where this tourist sector is linked with food traditions but not necessarily with low prices, in Germany the image of farm tourism tends to be that of a low-budget holiday (Nilsson, 2002). Further image deficits related to German farm tourism have been identified by scholars, including few activities for guests (Lehle, 1982; Pevetz, 1978), lack of comfort and some "hygiene" deficits (Pevetz, 1978: 13). Furthermore, Wagner et al. (1997) state that the reason the demand for farm tourism fell in the 1960s was its perception as a "primitive holiday" which was probably conveyed by the extreme age of the buildings and the generally low level of investment.

Also the traditional concept of farm tourism as a holiday (exclusively) for families with children has been considered a risky image for years. In fact, there is the risk of a target dependency (BLFUW, 2007; Lüdke, 2001), which is even more serious if we take into account the decreasing fertility rate in Germany (EUROSTAT, 2008).

Starting in the 1970s, the DLG (the major farm tourism association) has tried to replace the low-budget image of farm tourism with that of a "quality holiday for a fair price" by means of the DLG certification system (Wagner et al., 1997). As a consequence, in the last few decades, the image of German farm tourism has considerably improved (ibid.). However, in the collective imagery, farm tourism in Germany still remains a "families-with-children holiday" (Boggarsch, 2007). Furthermore, although the perception of farm tourism cannot be considered negative, it still lacks significant attractive power. Other sectors related to rural tourism, such as camping holidays or the international farm tourism destinations of Austria and Italy, attract German customers more successfully (BMELV 2006; BMELV, 2008). A study by Sidali and Spiller (2008) conducted in Germany in 2007 on a sample of 567 respondents confirms the relatively poor attractive power of German farm tourism (Figure 3).

Figure 3 Collective imagery of farm tourism in Germany

Image[1]	μ	σ
Personal	1.3	1.0
Relaxing	0.9	0.9
Easy-going	1.0	0.9
Exciting	0.2	1.0
Comfortable	0.0	0.9
Varied	0.6	1.0
Child-orientated	1.6	0.6
Cheap	0.8	0.8
Down-to-earth	1.3	0.8
Authentic	1.2	0.8
Well-known	0.5	1.1



[1]Five-point Likert-type scale ranging from (+2) totally agree to (-2) totally disagree, μ=mean value σ= standard deviation

Source: own calculation

Another weakness related to German farm tourism and common to most tourist destinations is the high seasonality of the sector. According to the German government (BMELV, 2006: 16), more than the half of all farm holidays are taking between June and August.

A particular problem affecting this sector is the visibility of farm operators. According to Lemke (2003), the marketing strategies adopted by the associations of farm tourism operators could be improved if they were unified under the umbrella of a common institution operating at a national level, as it is the case with Austria (see Embacher, 1994, for a review of the Austrian farm tourism market.). In Germany, farm operators are organized into several agricultural and tourist-based associations scattered over regional and national levels, and this dispersion works to the detriment of a coherent corporate identity (Lemke, 2003). Similarly, the co-existence of several certification systems remains an issue. Among them, the conventional star system provided by the national tourism board and the DLG certification of the German association for agriculture are the most widespread. Nevertheless, the message conveyed to the customer is confusing.

Another problem of farm tourism concerns investments. The findings of a study conducted by Sidali et al. (2007) show that investments in promotion are of paramount importance for the success of German farm tourism; however, only a small number of farm operators seem to be aware of this fact.

Thus, it appears that farmers are still lacking sufficient marketing knowledge in this sector because they rely heavily on their intuition. These findings are also confirmed by Busby and Rendle (2000: 638), who state that "many farmers are isolated with a lack of knowledge, expertise, and training in the tourism field". Table 6 gives an overview of the main weaknesses of German farm tourism.

Table 6 Main weaknesses of German farm tourism

Weaknesses
Lack of legislation dedicated to farm tourism and of reliable statistics
Lack of a common institution for unified marketing strategies (clear corporate identity)
Co-existence of several quality certification systems
Lack of professional skills of farm operators, especially in terms of marketing knowledge
Dependency on large-sized families
High seasonality
Lower attraction in comparison with other holiday types (city break, holidays abroad etc)

Source: own representation

2.6 The external environment

The aim of the present section is to identify the main trends in the external environment in order to see which realistic opportunities can be built upon by farm operators as well as which risks provided by the sector/competitors should be addressed. The tourist sector has undergone dramatic changes in the last few decades. From the supply side, a great deal of innovation has affected the distribution chain: the deregulation in the flight sector has caused a rapid increase in low-cost flight companies. For the German farm tourism sector, this has had negative repercussions since distant holiday destinations have suddenly become affordable, even for large families, the traditional market target.

Furthermore, the consumption patterns of tourists have changed in such a dramatic way that scholars nowadays identify a new type of tourist, the so called “post-tourist”, whose travel style is characterized by, among other things, a great degree of autonomy and a renewed sensibility for the countryside (Clarke et al., 2003; Roberts & Hall, 2001). As a consequence, nowadays it is harder to track guests’ needs, and tourism operators must compete for custom by providing more flexible offers (such as short breaks or last-minute packages). For instance, it is now common, even among older individuals, for customers to book from home online, bypassing travel agencies. As a result, in order not to be put out of business, farm tourism operators have been forced to act, and today the majority of operators possess an Internet home page (whether self-created or supported on a farm association platform).

If the changes in the tourist sector have been remarkable, so have the changes in society. According to European statistical reports, the birth rate in Germany has fallen below the European rate of 1.5 children (EUROSTAT, 2008). The structure of the family life cycle has changed as well: The marriage age is later than ever, and the number of so-called “patchwork families” (families constituted by former marriages) has been increasing rapidly. At the same time, the older generation displays particularly high travel intensity. These changes affect the farm tourism sector as well. In Germany in particular, adapting to the needs of new market segments (seniors, one-parent households and so on) is recognized as a top priority.

Of great importance for the farm tourism sector are the new social values. Many studies confirm a new environmental sensibility (Clarke, 2003; Roberts & Hall, 2001). In addition, one consequence of the repeated food scandals has been to lead many individuals to question the origin of the food they eat. Overall, there is a general desire for a healthier lifestyle in harmony with nature.

Table 7 Key issues in the external environment

External environment	Opportunities	Risks
Tourist sector	Demand for rural and farm tourism is expected to increase.	New consumption patterns and greater competition in the tourist sector require more flexible and differentiated marketing strategies.
Society	Social changes (e.g., household composition) and new values may increase demand for farm tourism.	The declining fertility rate may reduce the number of families among farm guests.
Climate change	Better climate may attract more foreign tourists.	Agricultural produce may deteriorate.
Economic and geopolitical issues	Austerity and need for security may direct attention towards domestic destinations.	The economic recession and widening social gap may reduce tourist expenditures.
Technology	The spread of Internet booking may allow even small farm operations to gain worldwide visibility.	Poor Internet competence may result in loss of customers.

Source: own representation

Agritourism is also affected by exogenous factors, which can have contrasting effects. Thus, for instance, climate change may cause agricultural produce to deteriorate, but, at the same time, improve the climate in Germany and, in this way, attract more foreign tourists. Furthermore, the austerity caused by the economic recession, although negative for total tourist expenditures, could nevertheless increase the number of domestic tourists and, therefore, work to the advantage of farm tourism. Even geopolitical issues, like the terrorist menace, may enhance the demand for safer types of tourism, such as farm holidays.

Finally, technological advancements can have both positive and negative repercussions on the farm tourism sector. With regard to the Internet, for instance, whilst, on the one hand, the Web allows even small farm operations to gain worldwide visibility, on the other, because of their poor Internet competence, farmers may pass up a golden opportunity, thereby losing customers to more tech-savvy competitors.

2.7 Strategic planning

Scenarios

As already mentioned, the birth rate among Germans is predicted to continue to fall, whereas the proportion of people aged 50–70 (the so-called senior 50+ generation) will keep on increasing. Taking this data into account, the family lifecycle of Germans is expected to follow two main trends: an increase in mixed households (patchwork families) and a proliferation of one-parent households.

Based on these trends, many scholars have derived possible scenarios of German farm tourism in the short-to-medium term:

- Farm tourism as a tourism form for the 70+ generation (Lofner-Meir, 2008). This scenario would mainly imply substantial investment in the construction and configuration of the accommodation (adequate lighting, recreation rooms and so on) as well as collaboration with external contractors for the provision of healthcare services.
- Farm tourism as a tourism form for handicapped people (BMELV, 2008). This scenario would fill a gap in the current tourist market, where there are no totally barrier-free tourist offers (ibid.). As with the previous scenario, a great deal of investment would have to be made in the accommodation, whereas the promotion strategies would imply cross-marketing solutions with health organizations.
- Farm tourism as a customized tourism form based on the needs of one-parent families (ibid.). In this scenario the main investment would concern high quality child care. Networking with the principal child- and family-related institutions would advantage the implementation of this scenario.

With regard to the first and second scenarios, it seems that current farm tourism operators are not able to fulfill the main criteria. Where the first option is concerned, the main criticism is that health institutions in Germany are not yet in a position to give farmers the support necessary to implement this scenario. Similar considerations also affect the second option, which, except for sporadic examples, seems even more difficult to implement. In particular, it seems plausible that farmers could have a psychological conflict in accepting the role of health agents for this special type of guest (Albers, 2008; Daniel, 2008). The third scenario should be easier to implement than the previous two, as it resembles the current supply of farm tourism in Germany.

Overall, it may be said that the market for German farm tourism will probably grow if the sector is able to take advantage of the growing consciousness of consumers about personal issues (healthy life style, increasing interest in wellness activities and the like.) and environmental problems (climate change and so on), which can create new opportunities for farm tourism (Flessner, 1996).

Furthermore, as already mentioned, it seems that German farm tourism could attract more customers than it does at present. Thus, if in the future German farm operators succeed in attracting these potential guests, there would be many advantages for the entire sector such as a rejuvenation of the main target and positive repercussions for the region.

Goals

As with all businesses, farm operators and the main associations for farm tourism should clearly define their goals for the future in order to continue their growth. As early as 1991, the DLG association affirmed that the main objective of farm tourism was to replace the low-budget image of farm tourism with that of a "quality holiday for a fair price" (1991). However, in 2007 this goal seemed not yet to have been reached, as the most common reason for not taking a farm holiday was "the absence of little children" in the household (Boggarsch, 2007). Other objectives of the main farm tourism associations are a lower dependency on seasonality and better profiling in the eyes of customers (Wetterich, 2007).

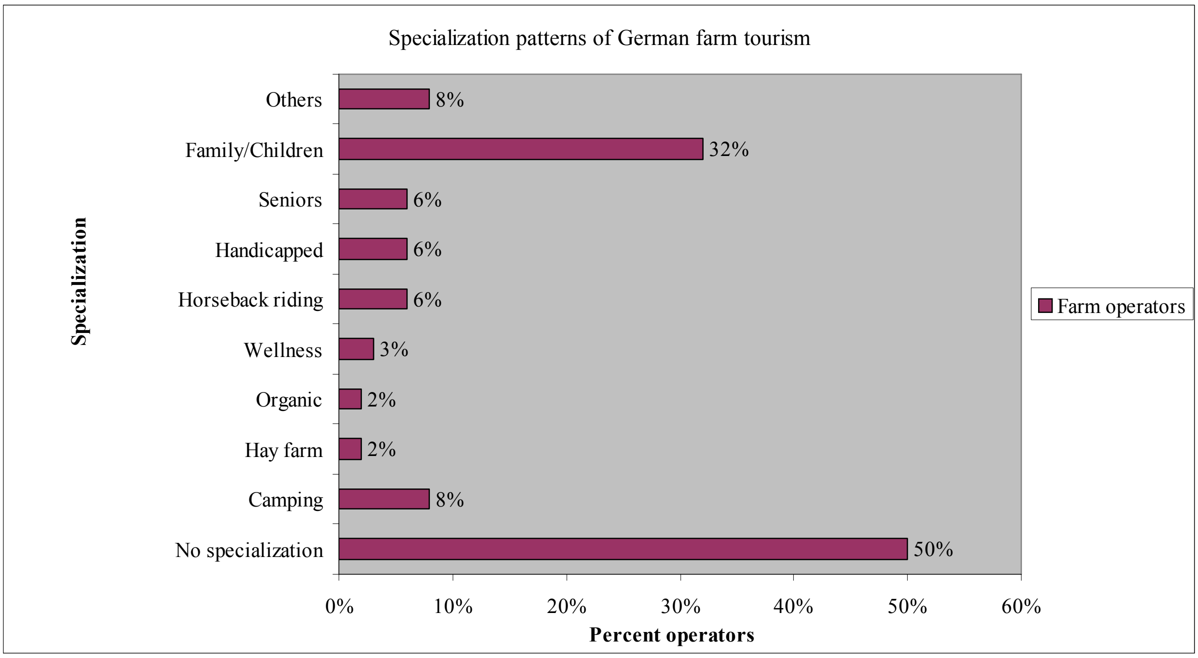
All in all, it appears that there are two main goals for the sector. Firstly, a quantitative growth should be obtained through the attraction of other customer types and a lower dependency on the family sector. Secondly, qualitative growth should be achieved, by targeting such goals as better performance by differentiating the sector with products or/and services tailored to the needs of selected customer types (such as the handicapped and seniors).

Strategies

According to Kotler, Bowen and Makens (2003), marketing "has the main responsibility for achieving profitable growth" of a business unit. To reach this purpose, in the hospitality sector many companies identify market segments, select one or more, and develop products and marketing mixes tailored to each selected segment (ibid: 264). This means, for instance, segmenting the market by quantitative variables, such as income, and accordingly, offering their services to only the top-end segments. Another type of segmentation is based on attitude and life-style (the so-called AIO-model, compare Solomon, Bamossy & Askegaard, 2000). This is the case, for example, of the LADY'S FIRST design hotel ([www.ladysfirst.ch], June 6, 2008) in Zurich, which is open only to female customers.

As far as German farm tourism is concerned, however, there are not clear figures about the magnitude of specialized operations. According to Lemke (2003), the percent of Bavarian farm operations that are already specialized is around 41%, whereas the BAG (2008) estimates that 50% of their associated operations have already become specialized, of which 32% in children-friendly services. Nevertheless, overall the number of farmers who have already specialized is still low.

Figure 4 Specialization patterns of German farm operators.



Source: BAG, 2008 (Multiple answers were allowed, which explains a total score above 100)

It is expected that in the short and medium term farmers will further differentiate their supply (BAG, 2008). The literature is rich with examples which farmers can exploit in order to attract farm guests. In her study, Adams (2008) sums up several "best practices" adopted by farmers, as follows:

- Offering harvesting stays
- Herbal scented candle-making workshops
- Food preservation lessons
- Picnic cooking workshops

- Fiber arts workshops
- Children's face-painting based on farm themes
- On-farm museum of family, local, or farm antiques (etc.)

All these examples show that creativity enables farm operators to exploit their limited resources in order to add value to their farm. So, for instance, in the Bavarian state the farmers who live on the border of the Czech Republic have joined with the Czech farm operators in a common project to host guests during their German-Czech bus tours. More northerly, in the German state of Lower Saxony, farm tourism associations took advantage of the alarm raised by veterinarians who denounced the very high concentration levels of urine on the fields caused by mountain bikers. Thus, farm operations have organized stopovers and trails for mountain bikers which are very successful.

The strategies which farmers can adopt in order to differentiate their offerings are manifold. In order to analyze them, the model proposed by Ansoff in 1957 could be used and adapted to farm tourism (see Table 8).

Table 8 Ansoff's product-market expansion grid

	Existing products	**New products**
Existing markets	Market penetration	Product development
New markets	Market development	Diversification

Source: Ansoff, 1957; Kotler et al. , 2003

Market penetration: this strategy implies that farm operators could find a way to increase occupancy rates without changing their product. Thus, in this case, farmers are already satisfied with their market segment and could just enhance their supply by, for instance, promoting special offers during rural festivals, etc.

Market development: in this case farm operators would open their farms to new types of customers without changing the farm facility. A very successful example of this strategy is the existing school-orientated farm. Many farmers have learned to make educational tours of their farm very beneficial to school children. In addition, the main emphasis on farm education is not only limited to children. Adams (2008), for instance, lists several new target segments who could be interested in this type of farm such as adults wanting to learn to farm, public school teachers interested in shorter learning field trips, members of local communities (such as Slow Food Movement, etc.).

Product development: according to Kotler et al. (2003), this strategy implies that management offers new or modified products to the current markets. In many Bavarian farm operations, the farmers enhance their guests' holidays by offering attractions for children, such as a hay playground, a petting zoo, etc., in combination with spa facilities for the parents. In such cases, farm associations suggest that the wellness supply should match the farming environment. So, for instance, many eco-friendly farms offer only treatments based on the theoretical and practical fundamentals of the Kneipp treatment, which was originated in Germany. Others offer herbal healing workshops and treatments which are entirely derived from the farm's produce and use their herbal products for the spa treatments.

Diversification: this strategy requires farm operators to tailor their offering to the desires and needs of new customer segments. For instance, farmers could rent their rooms to a separate business unit (e.g. a company) for management seminars. According to Adams (2008), this can be "a win-win situation for both businesses, one enhancing the other".

Since this diversification process is in its early stage, we conducted a survey in 2007 in order to detect the degree of appreciation of some scenarios of farm tourism. In the study, respondents were asked to state their preference for several types of farms, including an organic farm, a manor house[5], a farm with a wild-west setting, a wellness orientated farm and a child-orientated farm (more details of this study are provided in Chapter 6). Overall, the latter as well as the organic and the manor house farm were more highly rated than the current supply of farm tourism. On the other side, the wellness-orientated farm and the farm with wild-west setting scored lower than the current supply of farm tourism (see Table 9).

Table 9 Stated preference for different forms of farm tourism.

Form of farm tourism[1]	Mean	Standard deviation
Child-orientated farm tourism	0.54	1.36
Manor farm tourism	0.27	1.21
Organic farm tourism	0.21	1.15
Current farm tourism	-0.02	1.19
Wellness orientated farm tourism	-0.09	1.29
Wild-West farm tourism	-0.09	1.22
[1]Five-point Likert-type scale from (+2) totally agree to (-2) totally disagree		

Source: own calculation

The findings show that customers' perceptions differ greatly. Therefore, it is important for farm operators that the subjective frames of reference of customers are conveyed in common criteria. For this reason, in recent years the main farm tourism associations have created

[5] described as a farm in a renovated classical style (i.e. with elegant furniture, ornamental architecture, etc.)

separate certification labels (such as farm holiday, winemaking farm holiday and horse-riding farm holiday) in order to differentiate farm operations according to the various market segments.

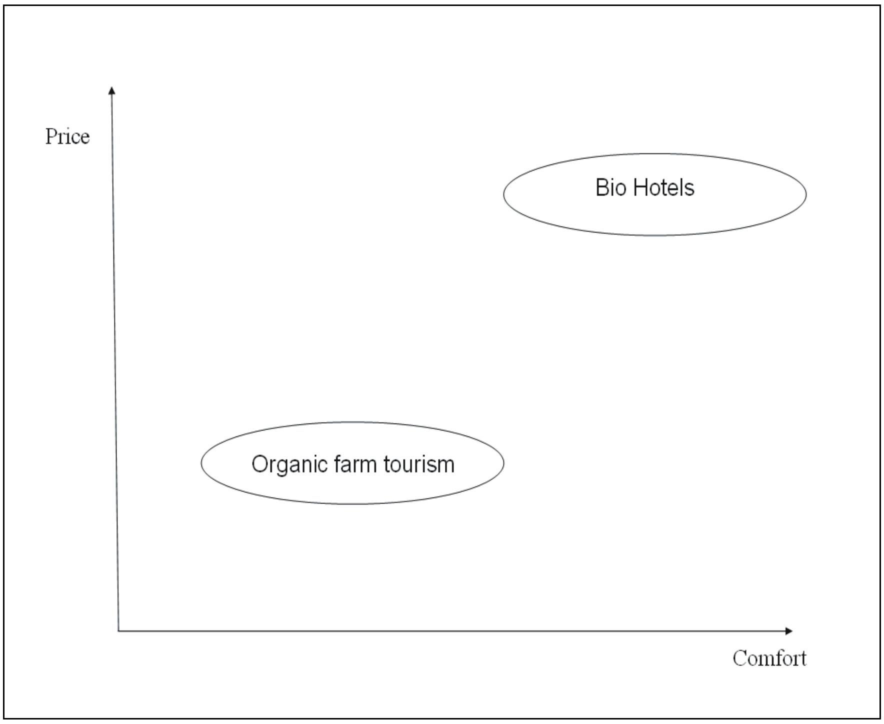
Whichever differentiating strategy a farm operator may have chosen, the next step is to decide which position to occupy based on product attributes and/or against existing competitors. According to Kotler et al. (2003), “a product’s position is the way the product is defined by consumers on important attributes, the place the product occupies in consumers’ minds relative to competing products.” An example of successful market positioning is provided by the organic farm operators in German-speaking countries (above all, in Austria and Switzerland).

Today, there are about 18,703 (Oekolandbau, 2008) organic farms in Germany, which belong to a number of organic farming associations (Bioland, Demeter etc.), and around 400 offer tourist services. The most frequently stated motivations of organic farm tourists are healthy lifestyle, environmental sensitivity (especially animal welfare) and children’s attraction to the animals (Agöl, 2001). According to a survey conducted in Germany in 2007, the respondents with the highest degree of appreciation for this form of tourism displayed high environmental awareness, low need for comfort while on holiday and high educational levels (more details of this study are provided in Chapter 7).

One of the main competitors for organic farm operators is “Bio-Hotels”, which is a chain of organic hotels. Established in 2001, “Bio-Hotels” has recorded a high growth, especially in Austria and Switzerland. According to a “Bio-Hotels” internal report, their current guests share many similarities with the ones of organic farms: they have high environmental awareness, and they demonstrate high loyalty to the holiday location. On the other hand, in contrast to current and organic farm holiday-makers, Bio-Hotels guests have higher incomes and look for greater comfort on their holidays.

Hence, as far as organic hospitality is concerned, organic farm operators and organic hotels seem to have reached an ideal positioning grid because each business unit targets a different consumer group. Figure 5 provides an overview of the positioning grid of the two hospitality units based on income and comfort. (Here we refer to a lower degree of comfort relative to organic hotels, as the general comfort level in the agritourism sector has recorded constant growth [cf. Flessner, 1996]).

Figure 5 Market positions of Bio Hotels and organic farm tourism



Source: own representation

2.8 Marketing mix

Price and Product Policy

Concerning prices, many farmers complain that the overall expectations of farm tourism are inextricably bound to low prices. However, Sidali et al. (2007) show that, through specialization and high quality standards, higher prices can be attained. In the analysis, there is a significant positive correlation between DLG operators and accommodation prices: in comparison with other operators the DLG farmers set, on average, higher prices (€25 as opposed to the average price of €21 [cf. Chapter 5]).

As far as the product policy of farm tourism is concerned, a preliminary consideration is necessary. Since the supply of this tourist form consists mainly of services, quality issues must be studied in relation to the service as well as the product dimension.

Holidays are intangible goods. As stated by Hills and Busby (2002) they are produced and consumed simultaneously and cannot be either displayed or touched (Shostack, 1977). As a consequence, farm operators should be particularly aware of not destroying customers' expectations by subjecting them to a comparison with actual experience or performance (Clarke, 1999). Hence, a true description of the activities and setting of the farm should immediately communicate to the customer the ”degree of agricultural life” that it is possible to experience on the farm. If, for instance, the farm is highly modernized and/or there are no animals to be seen, farmers should include this in their description. Otherwise, it is understandable that customers would be disappointed since, according to Clarke (1999: 42) it is exactly “such agricultural linkages” that strengthen the “product authenticity” of farm tourism. With regard to activities, according to Schöppner (1988: 155), these should be tailored to the needs of the guests. To this end, she identifies four categories of activities addressed to pragmatically orientated, culture-seeking, relaxation-seeking and gourmet farm guests. These recommendations are partially confirmed by more recent studies by Lüdke (2001), who states that the set of activities offered should be a varied mix ranging from tourist routes - provided by the German Tourist Association or even self-drawn by the operators (cf. Wagner et al., 1997) - to the staging of farm activities for children and adults, provision of traditional meals and arrangement of relaxation corners or quiet rooms. Whatever kind of activity is offered, the design of those activities should also include measures to prevent conflict among the various guest segments (BMELV, 2008).

As mentioned, service quality is linked to customer expectations of the farm experience. The latter consists both of uncontrollable elements (such as guests’ values, weather, etc.) and controllable ones (such as type of accommodation, price, etc.). In order to prevent disappointment caused by uncontrollable elements such as bad weather, some farm tourism associations have developed a kind of “bad weather reimbursement”.

With regard to the controllable elements of experience, farm operations offer several types of quality certification (Figure 6).

Figure 6 Types of quality certification labels

DLG	BAG	LANDSELECTION
Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof	Urlaubs Bauernhof	Zentrale für den Landurlaub Landschriften-Verlag

Source: own representation

The most well known labels are the DLG Gütesiegel awarded by the German association for agriculture, the BAG Gütesiegel provided by the BAG association of farm tourism and the clover of the private association Landselection. The "stars provision" regards the quality assessment of farm accommodations and can be awarded either by the German Tourist Association (DTV) or the Hotels and Restaurant Association (DEHOGA).

Lemke (2003) criticizes this combination of tourist and agricultural associations for the design of marketing strategies. Furthermore, she expresses a preference for tourism bodies, as they are "better organized" than agricultural bodies where placement strategies are concerned. She claims, for instance, that a star system provides better visibility for consumers, as the star system is better known than the DLG and BAG systems. On the other hand, Clarke (1999) asserts that the support of agricultural institutions enhances the idea of the authenticity of farm tourism as a product that is really related to farming life. In addition to the certification labels of national agricultural and tourist associations, there are also regional certification labels (for instance, the Bavarian certification of wellness farm operations).

Placement and promotion

Once the right mix of activities has been designed, farm operators must address the issue of finding an appropriate distribution system in order to provide a steady flow of customers (Kotler et al., 2003).

The innovative ways developed by many hotel companies of reaching new markets, such as using strategic alliances, are the exception rather than the rule in the German farm tourism market. For instance, only a small number of farm operations rely on travel agents specialized in sustainable tourism (such as "Viabono"). Tour wholesalers do not often include farm tourism operations in their offer, unless they are highly specialized or they are associated and can therefore provide a large number of beds.

Henceforth, the majority of farm operators use therefore the placement strategies of the farm tourism association to which they belong (state, regional or private), although the latter predominantly rely on their own Websites or print catalogues. However, some farmers complain that these placement strategies are either inefficient or too expensive.

On the other side, the least expensive method is to put a signboard along the road (Hjalager, 1996). Though, in some German states the regulation concerning street signage is considered too overwhelming (BAG, 2009). With the advance of GPS-technologies, however, farm operators have a new tool in order to alert the existence of their farm to a higher number of people. Analogously to GPS-technologies, travel recommendation systems such as expedia.de or tripadvisor.com enable farm operators who have a Website to draw other Internet users' attention to the home page of their farm facility. Hence, Internet-based technologies have revolutioned marketing channels, making the demarcation between placement and promotion almost evanescent (Kotler et al., 2003). This does not mean that the traditional promotion channels of the farm tourism associations (brochures, regular participation at agricultural shows, fairs and tourism events) have disappeared. However, the Web environment has brought many advantages also for very small-sized operators. The posession of a Website reduces, according to Lüdke (2001), the dependency of farm operators on the large family target group as the visibility of farm tourism spreads to new potential market segments.

In addition, the Web offers new and more efficient farm marketing tools which are based on the principle of word-of-mouth (WOM). The latter has been for many years one of the best ways of promoting farm tourism. Its alter ego on the Web is called e-WOM (electronic word-of-mouth) and encompasses several forms of user-generated-content such as webblogs, newsgroups, wikis, etc. So, for instance, a farmer can decide to host a blog on his Website thus allowing readers to see the comments of other peers and leave their own contribution.

What's more, online WOM permits farm operators to have constant feedback on one's own promotional strategy. This is of paramount importance since "the lack of monitoring and evaluation of advertising effectiveness" is one of main weaknesses in farm operators' promotional strategies (Clarke, 1996: 612). Further insight about online farm marketing is provided in Chapter 8.

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Chapter 3

3 A review of the state of the art of Italian farm tourism

3.1 Definition and typology

According to Dettori, Paba and Pulina (2004), in Italy agritourism has "its own legal, administrative and fiscal structure" (ibid: 22). In fact, in this country agritourism is regulated by the law no. 96 of 20 February 2006, which replaced the outline law no. 730 of 5 December 1985.

Hence, the main feature of Italian agritourism is a rich legislative body dedicated to this sector which, since the majority of countries do not distinguish between rural tourism and agritourism, is unique in Europe (Di Muzio et al., 2000; INNOREF, 2006). In addition, the first Italian law on agritourism (730/1985) can be considered a pioneer of the European Agenda 2000 (ibid: 8) since it already contains several principles afterwards included by the European Union (for instance, measures for the sustainable development of rural areas and improvement of farmers' standard of living). In the following, we will focus on the development of the Italian regulation of agritourism.

Law no. 730/1985

The *ultima ratio* of this law is the principle of connection (*principio di connessione*) between farming activities and tourist activities. The latter encompass accommodation, catering, school-orientated farms, outdoor activities and the like, and are legally only allowed to be a secondary source of income. Thus, Italian agritourism can only take place on working farms, and the host has to be a farmer (pursuant to Article 2135 of the Civil Code) or a form of joint-stock companies or partnerships (INNOREF, 2006: 28). Moreover, in order to use the name *agriturismo* (agritourism), the agricultural activities of the farm, and not its tourism activities, must be predominant. However, this proportion is not fixed in terms of income but in terms of working hours. According to Carbone and Ribaudo (2000), this measure is very effective, boosting agritourism activity in less developed regions and supporting agriculture in richer agricultural areas.

In his study of 1994, Gregori draws the state of the art of Italian farm tourism and criticizes some problems related to the law no. 730/1985. For instance, he stresses that the principle of connection as stated in general terms by the law has led Italian regions to translate it in general terms as well. For instance, they have just introduced a threshold in the bed capacity of farms as a criterion for receiving the financial subsidies available to start-up agritourism operations. Several other restrictions, such as the predominance of farm-made foods over externally sourced food products, can also be traced back to the above-mentioned law. Furthermore, according to Gregori (1994), this law makes it impossible for farmers to grow and reach the size of other tourist operators. Some years later, other scholars report that Italy has a very limited number of agritourism operations in comparison with other European countries and that this is a consequence of the strictness of this law (Di Muzio et al., 2000; Idda et al., 2001).

Law no. 96/2006

Although in many aspects the law no. 730/1985 remains "an organic reference on the agritourism activity" (Agostini, 2007: 4; Russo, 2007: 75), the Italian legislator in 2006 is forced to promulgate law no. 96. This law provides that the tourism activities of the farm be connected to agriculture, which remains the fundamental role of the farm. However, the value of this new law is that it boosts the pluriactivity of farms by enhancing the role of all activities related to farming (such as the provision of hospitality) and thus contributes to their success. In gastronomy, for instance, the rule requiring the prevalence of farm-produced foods over external products has been replaced by a rule mandating the prevalence of locally produced food products. Furthermore, in order to promote Italian regional gastronomic traditions the law recommends the provision of foods with protected quality names such as PDO and PGI[6] (cf. ARM, 2007), which are so-called niche commodities, for they are produced on a small-scale and in very limited areas (Belletti et al., 2007: 520).

Mention should also be made of those activities that are not directly bound to agriculture but are nevertheless essential for adding value to farm tourism, like wellness services. In this case, the new law establishes that they must be for the use of the farm's guests.

Thus, it is possible to define Italian agritourism in a number of ways. The first is to refer the relevant laws, as discussed above. Next, depending on the scope of their studies, some authors use geographical location to distinguish among farm operations. Then, Marino, Mastronardi and Rubertucci (1999) use the principle of connection as their point of departure. Table 10 offers an overview of the different approaches.

[6] For an overview of protected quality names for agricultural products and foodstuffs see reg. (EEC) no. 509 and no. 510 of 20 June 2006, as well as the database of protected food product names in the European Union: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/door/browse.html?display

Table 10 Criteria for the definition of farm tourism

Defining criteria	Example
Legal framing	National level: Law no. 730, 1985 Law no. 96, 2006 Regional laws
Location	Mountain Hills Sea Cultural cities
Principle of connection	1. Less agriculture and high agritourism development 2. High agriculture and high agritourism development 3. High agriculture and less agritourism development 4. Low agricultural and high agritourism development

Source: own representation based on Di Muzio et al., 2000; Lo Surdo, 1988 and Marino et al., 1999

3.2 Historical development

Lo Surdo (1988) identifies three historical steps that explain the creation of agritourism:

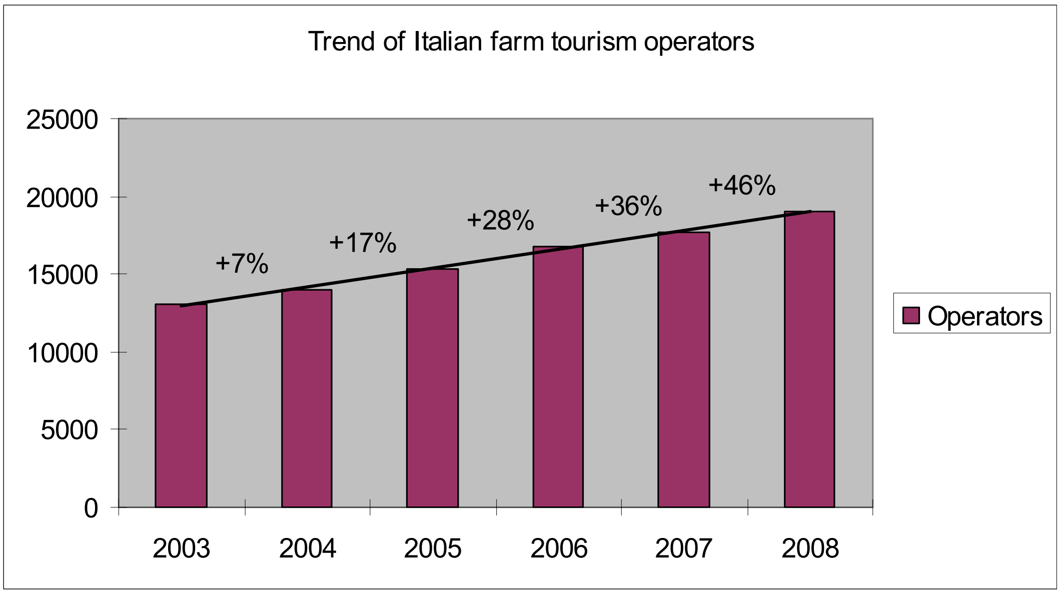
In the first half of the twentieth century, urbanization and industrialization processes take place simultaneously. Nevertheless, the main values of agrarian society remain untouched.

Between the 1950s and the oil crisis of 1973–1974, increasing industrialization is accompanied by negative repercussions on society and the environment, such as uncontrolled urbanization and a social identity crisis, resulting in a fracture between agrarian and urban societies. The subsequent arrest of the industrialization process due to the oil crisis causes a generalized sense of insecurity. Individuals start looking back to the traditions associated with the agrarian society of the past. Already in 1975, Magagnotti suggests that agritourism could function as a means of "re-establishing the equilibrium between nature and the industrialized society" (ibid: 13). In these years, the first farmers of the region of Trentino Alto-Adige begin to transform their farms into agritourism accommodation influenced by the Austrian and German models (Garruti et al., 2003: 314).

The 1980s are characterized by a real "come back to the countryside" sentiment. Many city dwellers return to the countryside, at least during their holidays; others buy and refurbish old houses and use them as second homes. There is an increase in enrolment at agricultural colleges and universities, and a growing number of city dwellers show a preference for buying products at farms rather than supermarkets. During this period, the first agritourism operations in central and northern Italy open their doors to tourists and experience rapid growth.

According to a number of authors (Flabiano & Di Santolo, 2001a; Paolini, 2000), the first farmers to decide to go into this business are winemakers. However, in some regions, social reasons also boost the creation of this tourism form. For instance, in Sardinia in 1977, the first agritourism operations are founded in order to empower women in rural areas (Idda et al., 2001: 37). Similar findings are described by Flabiano and Di Santolo (2001b), who focus on agritourism in the Italian region of Friuli Venezia-Giulia. The institutionalization of this sector follows a similar path. According to Germini (1990) this process is boosted by farmers and men of culture who had examined and studied the phenomenon of agritourism in different European countries. In 1968 the first conference on agritourism, *Città e campagna* (City and countryside), takes place in Florence (Lo Surdo, 1988: 30) with the stated objective of protecting gastronomic traditions and the agrarian landscape thorough agritourism. As a consequence, the first association dedicated to the development of agritourism, Agriturist, is founded by the Confagricoltura (Italian Farmers' Association). In the following years, the other two main agritourism associations are also founded: Terranostra (controlled by the Italian Farmers' Association Coldiretti) in 1972 and Turismo Verde (the former Alturist) (controlled by the CIA, Confederazione Italiana Agricoltori) in 1975.

Figure 7 Trend of Italian farm tourism operators



Percentage variation in relation to 2003.

Source: own representation based on Agriturist 2008 ([www.agriturist.it]Nov. 2008), ISTAT 2004 and 2008 ([www.istat.it]March 2009)

According to Di Muzio et al. (2000), the 1980s can be considered the official "birth decade" of this tourist sector, which is rather late in comparison to the northern European countries (Naspetti, Segale & Zanoli, 1999). Since then, Italian farm tourism has undergone rapid growth. For instance, between 1997 and 2004, it has displayed a growth of 65%, from 8,034 *agriturismo* facilities in 1997 to 14,017, in 2004 (Adua, 2007).

3.3 The supply side

In Italy farm tourism presently includes around 17,895 farm tourism operators (Agriturist, 2008).

Table 11 Supply side of Italian farm tourism

Supply side	
Market share	0.7%[7]
Total number of farm tourism operations	17,895
Total number of farm operations with lodging permission	14,810
Total revenue (millions €) (2008)	1,008
Share tourist revenue : total revenue	30-40%
Average no. beds per farm	18
Participation of female farm operators	High
Mean age of farm operators (years)	48
Occupancy rate[8] (nights per year)	Above 200
Location	
Mountain	50%
Hills	37%
Plain	13%
Other competitors	
Market share of hotels in Italy	16%[9]
Market share of the camping sector in Italy	1.9%[10]
Market share agritourism in relation to hotels	4.3%
Market share agritourism in relation to camping	37.3%

Source: Adua, 2007; Agriturist, 2008; ARM, 2003; Flabiano & Di Santolo, 2001b and ISTAT, 2004.

[7] Calculated as follows: ratio of the total revenue of Italian agritourism € 1,008,000,000 according to Agriturist (2008) to the total revenue of the Italian tourist sector of € 140,000,000,000 according to Federalberghi (2008) ([http://www.federalberghi.it/ notizia1.asp?id=4723]November 2008)

[8] Total number of nights per year during which beds are occupied

[9] Calculated as follows: ratio of the total revenue of the Italian hotel sector € 23,000,000,000 according to by Databank (Databank Consulting) ([http://www.databank.it/index/index2.html]November 2008) to the total revenue of the Italian tourist sector € 140,000,000,000

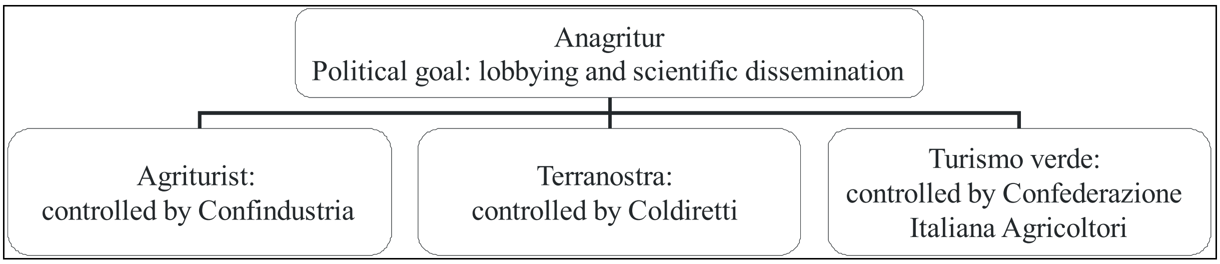
[10] Calculated as follows: ratio of the total revenue of the Italian camping sector € 2,700,000,000 according to Databank (Databank Consulting) ([http://www.databank.it/index/index2.html]November 2008) to the total revenue of the Italian tourist sector € 140,000,000,000

This figure refers to the operations allowed to incorporate the label "agriturismo" in their trade names. Among these, 14,810 are authorized to provide lodging for holidaymakers.

On the other hand, farm operators with lodging permits can also have a second specialization, such as catering or outdoor activities. According to Agriturist (ibid.), the estimated yearly turnover of Italian agritourism in 2008 was around € 1,008 million, which corresponds to an increase of 4.4% compared to the previous year. Around one-third of all farm tourism operations are managed by women (Adua, 2007).

However, since the number of farm operations has increased as well, the average turnover per operation has decreased by approximately -2% (AgE, 2007). The average percentage of total revenue made up by agritourism is between 30% and 40% (Idda et al., 2001: 68)**.** The regions of Tuscany, Sicily and Lombardy score the highest number of guests overall (both national and international), whereas the Venetian region, Liguria and Sardinia host the highest concentration of international guests (ibid.). Tuscany continues to be the region with the highest number of available beds, while Alto Adige is the region with the highest number of operations (Adua, 2007; Becheri & Bartolini, 2000; Lo Surdo, 1988)**.** In their study on Sardinian agritourism, Idda et al. (2001: 67) state that there is a strong relationship between this tourist form and farming patterns. The majority of farm operations have a varied agricultural system, and crops are more common than animal husbandry. In the case of the latter, small animals are preferred, primarily for catering purposes.

Figure 8 Italian agritourism associations



Source: own representation

As mentioned above, Agriturist, Terranostra and Turismo Verde are the main associations responsible for promoting this tourist sector (see Figure 8)[11]. Since 1981 the three agritourism associations have joined the group Anagritur, which was founded in order to improve political and lobbying activity on behalf of agritourism. It also promotes further studies on agritourism-related issues.

[11] Most farmers of South Tyrol belong to "Roter Hahn" which is controlled by Bauern Verband Süd Tirol

Agriturist, Terranostra and Turismo Verde are all backed by the national agricultural associations, and they support farmers by listing their addresses in brochures, by allowing them to use booking facilities on their homepages and by creating alliances with partners located abroad. Despite this, some farmers do not judge the work of the main agritourism association very positively (Marinelli, 2001), which may explain why many of them prefer to join local pools of operators. The degree of fragmentation in the sector is therefore quite high.

3.4 Market demand and potential

In the following section, the most important traits of Italian farm guests are presented based on both governmental and academic literature. Among the most recent studies, the survey carried out by Coldiretti in 2008 (www.coldiretti.it [5 December, 2008]) is a good point of departure. The findings stress that, out of 1,700 individuals, around 3% are repeat farm guests, 4.2% occasional farm guests and 5.5% potential farm guests. Around 90% of respondents are not interested in farm holidays. The majority of farm guests are aged between 35 and 54 (41%) and have an intermediate to high education level, 36% of repeat guests are aged between 18 and 34, and 23% of repeat guests are over 55. The high education level of farm guests is confirmed by previous studies (Gregori, 1994; Naspetti et al., 1999). With a monthly income of around €2,266, the Italian farm holidaymaker displays a higher income than the national average of €1,838.

As also confirmed by Cambi in his study of 2006 (http://www.centoare.it/ricerche_studi.asp [27 November 2008]) and by Naspetti et al. (1999), it seems that the main target of Italian agritourism are families with parents aged between 30 and 40, although younger people and single people are also represented.

Table 12 Composition of Italian demand of agritourism

	Families	Couples	Groups	Singles	Business (individuals)	Business (groups)
Agritourism	47.8%	43.1%	2.9%	3.5%	2.3%	0.3%
Italian tourist sector	37.7%	38.7%	6.4%	8.6%	8.5%	0.3%

Source: Cambi (2006)

With regard to the latter, they usually prefer to spend a farm holiday in a group. The low propensity to spend a farm holiday among individuals traveling alone has also been noted by previous studies (Naspetti et al., 1999). Many scholars (ARM, 2003) refer to new consumer trends related to Italian farm tourism, such as the recent tendency of young people to spend New Year's Eve on farms (ibid.). Finally, the reduced number of business trips to farms seems to confirm the fact that farm tourism is still not achieving its real market potential in this segment (see Table 12).

Table 13 gives more details on the composition of the demand for Italian farm tourism. Although the majority of farm guests are Italian, the percentage of foreign guests (primarily Germans) is also very important (69.8% and 30.2% respectively) (Cambi, 2006). In fact, according to the Italian Observatory on Tourism (ONT, 2008), foreign guests spend on average one day more on the farm. With a percentage of 38.5%, the number of guests who book a farm holiday on the Internet is quite high. Finally, Italian farm tourism also experiences a high number of repeat guests.

Table 13 Features of Italian agritourism demand

	Agritourism	Italian tourist sector
Italian guests	69.8%	71.3%
Foreign guests	30.2%	28.7%
Nights stay Italian guests	4.8*	4.4*
Nights stay foreign guests	5.9*	5.5*
Internet guests	38.5%	34.7%
Repeat guests	32.1%	42.0%

Source: Cambi, 2006; *ONT, 2008 (http://www.governo.it/GovernoInforma/Dossier/rapporto_turismo/index.html [16 January 2009]).

Overall, the findings of many scholars tend to confirm that the main motivations for spending a farm holiday are contact with nature, interest in agricultural life and traditions, need to escape day-to-day life and special interest in typical regional and/or organic products (Cambi, 2006; Idda et al., 2001; Marino et al., 1999). Other reasons, such as price convenience and curiosity, are not significantly represented (Gregori, 1994; Naspetti et al. 1999). Concerning guests' favorite activities, it seems that national and international guests show two tendencies: the majority of Italian farm guests use the farm as a point of departure for visiting the natural and archaeological surroundings and sampling food and wine specialties. On the other hand, international guests spend more time on the farm and make greater use of its leisure facilities (Lo Surdo, 1988).

Table 14 Demand side of Italian agritourism

Demand side	
Market share (farm tourism stays in relation to total overnight stays)	3.27%
Total number of guests in 2008 (millions)	2.1
Main traits of guests of Italian leisure farms	
Age (years)	41
Monthly income (in euros)	2,266
Education	Intermediate-to-high
Motivations for choosing a farm holiday	**Activities during a farm holiday**
1. Contact with nature	1. Visiting natural surroundings
2. Agricultural life and traditions	2. Visiting archaeological highlights
3. Escape day-to-day life	3. Tasting oeno-gastronomic specialties

Source: own representation based on AgE, 2008; Cambi, 2006; Coldiretti, 2008.

3.5 Strengths and weaknesses analysis

Strengths

As with other forms of tourism located in the so-called Belpaese, Italian farm tourism also benefits from the favorable location, dramatic surroundings and propitious climate. As reported by Cambi (2006), despite the adverse economic conjuncture "Italy still remains the country with the greatest evocative power over foreign vacationers". Furthermore, this tourist form is not perceived as the prerogative of a particular market segment as it attracts both families with or without children as well as young people traveling in groups (Cambi, 2006; Idda et al., 2001; Lo Surdo, 1988). A literature review identifies the following features as its main strengths:

A great architectonical variety of farmhouses: since farm buildings had to be adapted to regional climatic conditions, each geographical area in Italy has its own farmhouse style. For instance, in the Alps masi altoatesini are ancient farmsteads for cattle husbandry, in the Padan regions case coloniche and casali are farmhouses with a quadrangular form with or without a dovecot tower, in the south of Italy masserie are large estate properties with sumptuous decorations that used to belong to rich landlords, and trulli in the Apulia region are white houses with conical brown roofs.

A rich oenological and gastronomic heritage: if many Italian farm operators can boast of architectonical richness, their oenological and gastronomic traditions are even richer. According to Paolini (2000) many farm and rural holidaymakers are showing an increasing interest in rediscovering wine and food traditions. In this field, Italy has been a forerunner. With 109 and 165 food products respectively, Italy has the highest number of both PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) and PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) products of any European country (as of December 2007). Since their success is deeply-rooted in agrarian traditions, many farm guests associate them with the farm landscape, which is a great asset for the whole farm and rural sector.

Closely connected with the latter is, according to Ammirato (2007), "the ability of typical agrifood producers to access to Short agri-Food Supply Chains (SFSC) of which agritourism represents a significant example". In fact, "while it reduces the agrifood supply chain stages, [farm tourism] is able to be the contact point between the request for quality of life and the offer for typical products".

The image of Italian farm tourism has benefited a lot from the particular fascination of Tuscany, which has been carefully fostered by the local administration for many years (cf. Balestrieri, 1997). In addition, this tourism form is attractive for both domestic and international tourists (Cambi, 2006; Idda et al., 2001, Lo Surdo, 1988).

Finally, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, agritourism has a particular legal status, which gives some fiscal advantages to this niche sector in comparison to other tourist sectors.

Table 15 Main strengths of Italian farm tourism

Strengths
Architectonic agrarian heritage
Linkage with food tourism (economies of scope)
Smart image (Tuscany and varied target)
Short agri-Food Supply Chains
Fiscal advantages

Source: own representation

Weaknesses:

One of the main weaknesses of Italian farm tourism lies with regional legislation dealing with the sector. Since Italy is a regionally administered country, there is no comprehensive legislative corpus for agritourism. Each region decides, based on the agricultural characteristics of the area, to what extent the general criteria stated in national laws should apply to local needs. For instance, Tuscany does not allow farmers to provide meals to any but their own residents, whereas in other regions, such as Umbria, it is permissible to provide meals to non farm guests. In their study on accuracy in interpreting national law to promote regional farm tourism, Idda et al. (2001; 2000) show that the northern regions of Friuli Venezia-Giulia and Veneto as well as the southern region of Abruzzo rank highest in providing detailed regional legislation dealing with farm tourism.

Another weakness is related to catering. Despite the legal recommendation in law 96 to use regional or certified foods in catering in order to promote the regional identity of the whole rural area (Brunori, 2003), Italian farm operators seem to have some difficulty adopting this "corporate view" although regional differences are huge. Many farmers underestimate the potential of promoting the area through gastronomic specialties and instead continue to provide standardized food to their guests (Idda et al., 2001; Lo Surdo, 2008). The same applies to regional handicraft products, which are are often totally neglected by farm operators as well. This leads to further problems, such disappointment among farm guests who had anticipated a more regional cultural experience from their holidays. In general, Italian farm operators show an insufficient level of professionalism (ibid.).

The challenges that Italian farm operators have to cope nowadays differ from those in the past. Whereas in the 1980s the main concerns were quality related, such as the use of low-quality furniture or poor hygiene (Lo Surdo, 1988), the current supply of farm tourism does not differ very much from other rural tourism competitors. To these problems, Carbone and Ribaudo (2000: 69) add the illegal use of the label "agriturismo" by external tourism operators who are not legally authorized to use it.

Problems of minor magnitude facing farm operators include some image deficits. For example, many guests report becoming bored during their stay on the farm (Idda et al., 2001). This shows that farm operators have not invested enough in leisure activities, which seems invaluable, given the slow pace of rural life or, in Gregori's words, the "melancholy evoked by rural areas" (1994).

Another problem lies in Tuscany's powerful image. Admittedly, Tuscany's popularity has had positive repercussions throughout the sector, especially where prices are concerned. However, because this image does not suit their local identity, an increasing number of operators in other regions feel imprisoned by it (Lo Surdo, 2008).

Finally, insurance-related matters are also a problem. Unlike other tourist sectors, Italian farm guests come primarily to visit - and experience - the farm itself (cf. Ohe & Ciani, 2000). This means that many of them would like to take part in farming activities. However, the legal framework for doing so has not been sufficiently developed.

Table 16 Main weaknesses of Italian farm tourism

Weaknesses
Co-existence of different laws at the regional level
Insufficient level of networking with other agents in the area
Low quality standards of activities programs
Tuscanization of farm tourism image
Guests' expectations are easier to be disappointed than as in other hospitality sectors

Source: own representation

3.6 The external environment

As a consequence of the severe economic conjuncture of the last few years, Italians have changed their tourist patterns by reducing the length of their average stays as well by choosing less expensive accommodation (Ciset, Mercury Srl & Doxa, 2008). Furthermore, the composition of foreign vacationers has been gradually changing: as stated by Adua (2007), overall the number of tourists from the US and Germany has slightly decreased. According to Roberts and Hall (2001) this tendency could be counterbalanced by a new profile of tourists, above all from Eastern Europe. However, these tourists may be less interested in rural destinations (ibid.).

Whilst on the one hand tourist demand for destinations in rural areas has recorded lower losses than the hotel sector, with particularly positive repercussions for farms, B&Bs, country hotels etc. (Ciset et al., 2008), on the other hand the recent changes in the distribution channel, such as last minute offers, also constitute a threat for farm operators, who are not able to readjust their offers appropriately (Cambi, 2006).

Changes in society can affect the sector in manifold ways. First, the decreasing fertility rate may cause a decline in the traditional target of agritourism, i.e. families with children. However, in contrast to Germany, the losses could be moderate due to the varied market segment of Italian farm tourism. Further, the demographic change could provide both challenges and/or opportunities to the farm sector. As in the rest of Europe, Italian society has also witnessed radical changes in its demographic structure and is undergoing an aging process. However, unlike northern European countries, in Italy the correlation between travel frequency and age is not a positive one. In fact, in the Italian society, the older people are, the less likely they are to travel (Ciset et al., 2008).

With regard to the farm tourist sector, the recent analysis of Coldiretti (2008) endorses this view. As shown in Table 17, the category of individuals aged over 55, who form the majority of Italian society, is the least represented both among current and potential farm guests. These findings confirm a tendency previously analyzed by Naspetti et al. (1999), who found that older people have a lower preference for farm holidays (ibid: 44).

Table 17 Demographic structure of Italian farm guests (percent)

Age	Current farm guests (%)	Potential farm guests (%)	Italy (%)
18-34	36	41	26
41-54	74	31	35
over 55 years	23	28	39

Source: Coldiretti, 2008

Information technology is another important issue for farm operators. The rapid growth of the Internet offers new management and business opportunities and can enable operators to gain competitive advantages, becoming a presence in the global market (Huang, 2007). However, according to Buffa (2008) rural areas suffer both a cultural and an infrastructural digital divide from urban areas. Cultural digital divide is due to the lack of information technology related skills (Hegarty & Przezborska, 2005) whereas the infrastructural digital divide indicates that many rural areas do not yet have the necessary infrastructure to connect to Internet. In Italy, for instance, only 72% of rural areas are equipped with cable broadband (*banda larga tradizionale*) which is currently the most advanced technology (OBL, 2008 http://www.osservatorio bandalarga.it/ index_list.aspx?id_sez=20 [January 16, 2009]). However, the government support for the implementation of new technologies such as satellite broadband and Wi-Max technology could in the short-to-medium term improve the Internet access of farm operators (Buffa, 2008).

Many scholars assert that in Italy, as in other parts of Europe, the concern about food related issues (such as genetically modified food products) is increasing, as shown by the higher interest in organic food (Idda et al., 2001). This could provide new opportunities for farm operators, above all for the organic operators of southern Italy (especially the islands) who have recorded ongoing growth in recent years (Adua, 2007). The increasing demand for food security (Demos & Pi, 2008) could also work in favor of farm tourism. However, it is expected that the healthier lifestyle pursued by individuals will increase competition in the rural tourism sector as well.

Table 18 Key issues in the external environment

External environment	Opportunities	Risks
Tourist sector	New tourists from eastern Europe could counterbalance the decrease of US and German vacationers.	Decrease of traditional foreign vacationers could reduce farm revenue.
Demographic change	Aging population could provide new opportunities for Italian farm tourism.	The decreasing fertility rate may pose a threat to the traditional target of agritourism.
Life style	Farm and organic farm tourism encompass new values in society.	Higher competition in rural tourism.
Technology	Internet based technology allows presence on the global market.	Farm operators face cultural and infrastructural digital divide.

Source: own representation

3.7 Strategic planning

Scenarios

In order to predict scenarios of Italian farm tourism, the economic conjuncture as well as the professionalism process of farm operators will be taken into account. Accordingly, three main scenarios have been outlined:

- *Conservation of the status quo despite economic crisis*. Although a procrastination of the economic conjuncture in the short-to-medium term would result in a reduction of traditional foreign vacationers, this contraction may be counterbalanced by the quite stable domestic demand. In fact, even in a period of recession, individuals rarely renounce to holidays and rural destinations offer good- value-for-money holidays (Ciset et al., 2008). Thus, as confirmed by Idda et al. (2001) recession can have positive repercussions for farmers at least in the short-to-medium term. Moreover, it is supposed that the initiatives of farm tourism associations concerning linkage with other shared interest groups such as Fair Trade Associations and Slow Food Movement, which many farm associations have begun, will continue. As a consequence, the shared promotion and advertising may produce synergies which allow farm operators to survive in times of “austerity”.

- *Decrease of revenue despite economic growth.* This scenario, portrayed by Idda et al. (2001), seems paradoxical only at a first glance. The authors affirm that economic growth would probably attract more tourists into rural areas because of the devastating consequences of further urbanization, but not automatically to farms, where further measures related to improvement of professionalism process (strong differentiation of the supply, reduction of digital divide, etc.) are necessary
- *Increase of revenue along with economic growth.* This is the reverse of the previously discussed scenario. According to this perspective, farm operators take advantage of the economic growth to further develop their marketing activities and thus improve their market knowledge. Their entrepreneurship skills enable them to turn the changes in the society to their benefit: so, for instance, for some years now the number of foreigners in Italian society has been growing, along with the demand for organic and traditional food. Thus, new forms of agritourism such as farms owned by cooperatives of both Italian and foreign farmers may evolve.

Goals

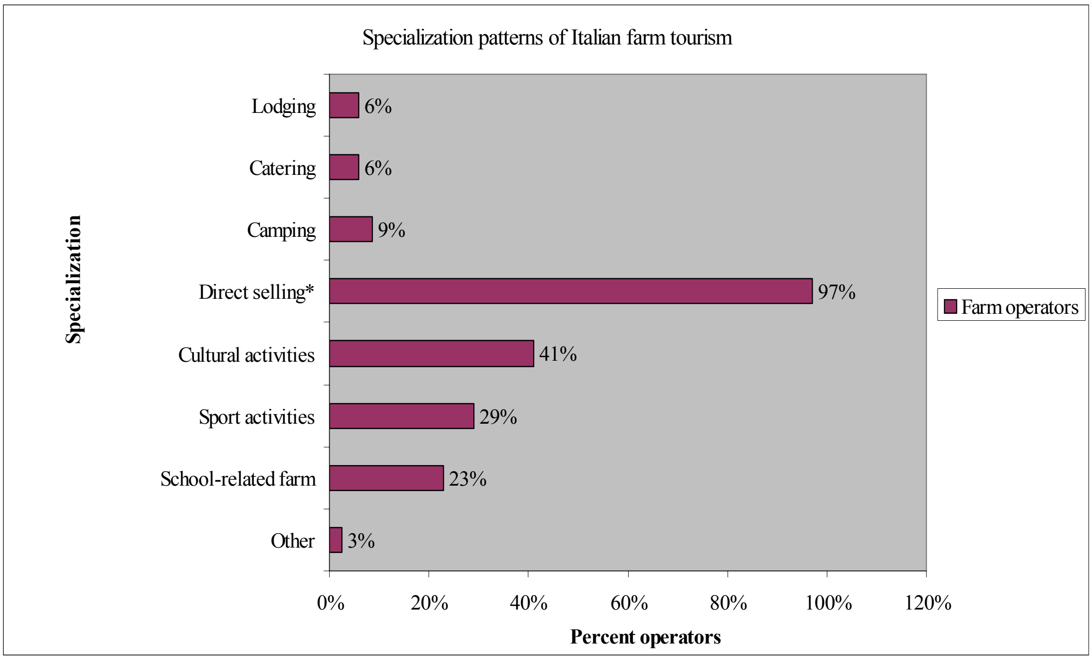
Among the goals mentioned by farm tourism associations is the will to aim for high-end, select audiences rather than low-end, high-volume ones. Hence, the idea is to avoid large numbers of low-paying visitors, and instead choose a few one-of-kind programs for those who can pay for them. To this end, Agriturist's endeavours are geared towards attracting more foreign guests as they have greater buying power than Italian farm guests (AgE, 2007).

The clear will to create a strong image of farm tourism makes use of all possible synergy effects with the surrounding rural community. This means, among other things, emphasizing regional particularities, such as handcrafted products and food specialties. Other goals pursued by the main farm tourism associations are the further market differentiation of offers to target groups and a national classification system for farm tourism.

Strategies

In Italy the development of Italian farm tourism has followed either intensive or extensive dynamics (Lo Surdo, 1988), which in marketing terms can be classified as market differentiation or market standardization (cf. Barth & Theis, 1998). The former generally implies that farmers provide a wide variety of activities for their customers, and catering is the norm. According to Hjalager (1996), this strategy is based on the concept of providing the "farm experience" to tourists by means of a "reinvention" of (agrarian) tradition. This approach is favored by farm operators in Tuscany and in areas far away from the sea or cultural cities (Lo Surdo, 1988). In the case of extensive farm tourism, the farm setting acts as a backdrop since farmers provide only lodging (in most cases in separate apartments without catering). According to Lo Surdo (ibid.), this is favored by farms located near cultural highlights or seaside resorts. Between these two extremes, there are also hybrid forms of tourism adopted by farmers who use the farm setting to provide a new form of tourism. This is the approach adopted by farm operators specializing in wellness farms or offering horseback riding therapy, which are both services totally unrelated to agrarian traditions.

Figure 9 Specialization of Italian farm tourism operators



*this category includes both selling of own produce and sampling of wine & food
Source: own representation based on ARM, 2003

A recent study by Sidali et al. (2009b) finds that Italian farm operators have already started to differentiate their offer by providing their guests with different kinds of activities (such as fishing) or additional facilities (such as swimming pools). These attempts at product differentiation are a viable strategy as, according to Ciset et al. (2008), tourists tend to combine traditional tourism forms (sun & sea tourism, rural tourism) with additional activities (sport, culture and so on). As outlined in Figure 9, in Italy more than half of operators include catering and sale of they own products in their offer (Sidali et al., 2009b) in order to differentiate themselves from other operators of rural/mass tourism. In the following, two examples of differentiation strategies are presented, namely the organic farm tourism and the camping farm tourism.

Organic farm tourism and camping farm tourism

Organic farm tourism is a well organized subset of agritourism. Its origin has been traced back to the 1980s when "alternative people" came to Italy searching for a new lifestyle and introduced the first organic farming techniques (Santucci & Pignataro, 2002). Although they lacked an agricultural background, they were characterized by good agricultural knowledge. Thus, they can be considered the forerunners of organic farmers (ibid.). Nowadays, the organic farm tourism sector is estimated to be between 2,000 and 3,000 operations (INNOREF, 2006). According to a survey conducted by Sidali et al. (2009b), most operators are located in central Italy (predominantly in Tuscany), followed by 22% situated in the north (above all in the region of Trentino-Alto Adige), 12% in the south and 14% on the islands.

The perspective for further growth is very favourable as shown by the rapid growth of the organic farming sector (Santucci & Pignataro, 2002), where the number of operators increased from 4,189 in 1993 to 40,965 in 2008 (INNOREF, 2006; www.sinab.it programmi/ biostatistiche.php ?tp=sit [February, 14 2009]). At present the total turnover of the organic market is around 1.6 billion euros. Furthermore, the demand for organic products among the Italian population is expected to further increase (Biobank, 2008).

In this context, the specialization of organic farming can be particularly successful. Moreover, because of the strong tie between organic products, local areas and traditions (INNOREF, 2006), above all, the operators who offer catering, food and wine sampling or direct selling increase their opportunities for better remuneration for organic farm products, since the added value of organic production is directly perceived by guests (ibid.).

A recent study conducted by Sidali et al. (2009b) shows that organic farm operators are aware of the benefits of the linkage of agritourism and food tourism. In comparison to conventional farm tourism operators, organic farmers are more likely to offer direct selling as well as catering. Furthermore, winemaking farms are almost equally distributed both among conventional and organic farm operators.

Table 19 Conventional and organic farm tourism operations

	Conventional farm operator (%, n=365)	Organic farm operator (%, n=151)
Catering	53	65
Direct selling	83	90
Winemaking	50	48

Source: own calculations

Farm tourism with camping specialization is another possibility for Italian farm operators. Farmers who pursue this differentiation strategy try to position the farm accommodation away from other rural offerings in order to attract “open air tourists”, that is individuals who prefer either a campsite or their own caravan as holiday accommodation. According to Jannucci (2006), these tourists represent 11% of all tourists visiting rural areas. In comparison to the average Italian tourist, open air tourists travel more frequently and stay longer (ibid.), but they also more often spend their holidays abroad.

In the last years, the number of Italian agritourism operations licensed for hosting caravans and tents has been rapidly increasing, and in 2004 there were 5,386 businesses 12 with this specialization with a total of 846 authorized camping areas (ISTAT, 2004; Jannucci, 2006). The majority of these are located in Southern Italy - including Sicily and Sardinia - (57%), followed by Northern Italy (30%) and Central Italy (13%).

3.8 Marketing mix

Price and product policies

The usual pricing policy adopted by farm operators is seasonal, with two main rates - one for the high and one for the low season (in some cases, there is also a mid-season fare). According to Cambi (2006), this is not sufficient since, in order to compete with other operators in the tourist sector, farm operators should include innovative formulas such as “last minute” deals. Most farm operators usually offer price discounts as “special offers” in order to attract tourists and only a few offer more innovative fares like “all inclusive” packages (Cambi, 2006).

Alternatively, farm operators could perform a product policy by offering additional services or products to their guests for the same price. To this end, in the last years the European Union has financially supported a wide variety of services or products in order to enrich the agritouristic offer such as tennis courts, put-and-take fishing lakes, shops selling farm products and educational facilities (cf. Hjalager, 1996).

Italian farm tourism associations have proven to be particularly creative in the attempt to design innovative products as well. A good example is the provision of a “literature package” that is a sort of book shelf of rural novels for the living rooms of farm operations.

[12] This figure refers to all businesses authorized to use the label “agriturismo” and host caravanning/camping.

Particular attention should be paid to quality certification systems for Italian farm tourism. At present there are a number of labels that certify the quality of Italian farm tourism operations, but no single system has reached visibility at national level. One of the first to be introduced was the quality label "Agriturist Qualità", awarded by the largest Italian farm tourism organization, Agriturist. In order to obtain this quality label, farm operators who apply for it must meet a list of criteria dealing with such operational aspects as buildings and the protection of the environment. With regard to the quality classification system, almost every Italian region has developed its own: in Emilia-Romagna the flowers system, in Alto Adige stars and so forth.

Among operators and farm tourism associations, there is a general consensus that the sector needs a national system to classify operators in relation to the activities they offer or the segments their target. However, at the same time, there is uncertainty concerning the number and types of classification levels. Another area of uncertainty is the institution that should be responsible for the labels. Furthermore, many farmers are unwilling to give up the regional classifications they have worked for over the years, and it is probable that, in the end, local classifications will co-exist with the (yet-to-be-established) national system. Table 20 displays a current proposal for classification designed by the Italian farm tourism association Terranostra as proposed at the Italian farm tourism trade fair "Agrietour" in Arezzo (Buffa, 2008).

Table 20 Proposal of classification of Italian agritourism.

Specialization label	Necessary conditions	Upgrade conditions
Oeno-gastronomic farm	Particular focus on own or regionally produced foods.	More than 65% of food has to be own or regionally produced etc.
Experience farm	Prevalence of apartments (with cooking facilities).	Rooms with own lavatory or guided tour of the farm etc.
Environmentally oriented	Location in environmentally protected areas.	Bicycle tours, participation in environment protection programs etc.
Culturally oriented	Location close to cultural areas (historic, artistic etc)	Tourist information, participation in cultural festivals etc.

Source: Terranostra 2008([www.terranostra.it]December 2008)

Placement

Italian farm tourism has a well developed distribution system because it encompasses a varied number of channels. The direct marketing channel involves farm operators selling their offer directly to consumers. In most cases, this takes place thanks to the contacts established through the Italian farmers' private Websites or through the home pages of the main Italian farm tourism associations.

In the next stage, farm operations use marketing intermediaries to sell their leisure offers. The most common intermediaries are travel agencies and tour wholesalers. The former usually add a fee of 10% to the final price, whereas the latter, because of the great number of guests they supply, usually add a fee of 25% (ARM, 2007).

At present, farm operators are struggling to attract tour wholesalers because the latter can reduce the uncertainty associated with unpredictable "post-tourist" behavioral patterns[13] (Roberts & Hall, 2004). Apparently, this is a sound strategy. In fact, according to Cambi (2006), farm operators who work together with tour wholesalers have a higher occupancy rate than those who do not (71.9% and 63.5%, respectively). On the other hand, due to the relatively small size of farm operators, there is a real risk of being a victim of the monopsonic power of tour wholesalers. The Tuscan village recently bought by the German tour operator TUI might be seen as a menace to the authenticity of rural areas (Shoenau, 2007). Italian farm tourism associations advise farmers either to contact tour wholesalers committed to sustainable tourism (such as Farm Holidays, which is Agriturist's commercial partner) or to sell to customers personally since "personal relations among farmers and guests are the real strength of farm tourism" (ARM, 2007: 120).

Incoming activities are performed through alliances with foreign agents or with tour wholesalers in order to attract farm guests from abroad. Agriturist and Roter Hahn, for instance, ensure international visibility for their members through an alliance with the German private association Landselection, which publishes the addresses of Italian farm operations in its online and in its print catalogues for German farm guests.

As mentioned, the Internet is revolutionizing the entire distribution channel in the tourist sector. Travel agencies, like Expedia, or large tour wholesalers, like the German TUI, locate many marketing activities on the Web.

[13] A definition of "post-tourist" has been provided in Chapter 1.1.

The Internet tends to blur the boundaries between distribution and promotion (Kotler et al., 2003: 509). For instance, farm operators who enable customers to book directly on their home pages are expanding their promotional activities into distribution. The same applies to travel platforms specializing in Italian farm tourism, such as turismoitaliano.it and agriturismo.it. Although at present they only host the addresses of their farm members, it is more than likely that their natural evolution will lead them to include additional services, such as direct booking of farm holidays.

Promotion

The historical means of promoting Italian agritourism is word of mouth. According to a number of authors (Lo Surdo, 1988; Naspetti et al., 1999), more than half of repeat farm guests have chosen this form of tourism as a direct result of suggestions from friends or colleagues. However, in an era of globalization, this method of promotion is no longer sufficient.

Nowadays, Italian farm operators and farm tourism associations rely primarily on the community approach. An example of this is food-and-wine routes. These are groups of hospitality agents (either individuals or organizations) who work together for the mutual benefit of the route members (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Kotler et al., 2003).

According to many authors, the alliances created by farm operators with other agents in the same area (handicrafts, food processors etc.) allow individuals to remain independent in ownership and management while benefiting from the advantages of group marketing (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Carbone & Ribaudo, 2000; Kotler et al., 2003). Such synergies contribute to the creation of symbolic capital, providing advantages for the entire rural area (Brunori et al., 2003). This would otherwise be difficult to accomplish due to the small scale of many farm operations.

According to Brunori (2003), diversity is the very unique resource of rural areas. This idea has led to the creation of several initiatives in order to enhance specialization in rural areas. Well-established examples of this are found in Umbria, where farm tourism does not operate alone but is combined with typical Umbrian tourist products (gastronomy tours, living festivals), theme parks (soul places, paths of crafts) and instruments to facilitate the flow of tourist information (Jaszczak, 2003). Thus, through the creation of synergies among the various agents living and operating in a given area, there are positive repercussions for the whole community (operators who offer lodging services, catering, village festivals etc.) For these reasons, the European Union also encourages such initiatives with an ad hoc program founded in 1987 (cf. www.culture-route.lu). The inclusion of PDO and PGI labeled products within such food-and-wine routes is part of this strategy as “through the food it is possible to communicate a territory” (Brunori, 2003; Paolini, 2000).

In this attempt, farm tourism associations have again shown themselves to be pioneers. In a 2006 campaign, for instance, typical foods were promoted together with farm tourism (e.g. “PDO and PGI…AGRITOURISM…watch for fakes”, “Choose agritourism: taste PDO and PGI”).

One of the most effective tools for promoting agritourism and contributing to the study of agritourism-related issues is “Agrietour”, a trade fair dedicated to Italian agritourism. It takes place annually in Arezzo (Tuscany) and hosts farm operators and researchers working in the area of farm tourism. At present, this is the only trade fair dedicated to agritourism in the whole of Europe.

Finally, mention should be made of the role of the Internet in Italian farm tourism. In fact, according to Sidali, Schulze and Spiller (2009a), the most useful reference material in the tourist sector is user-generated content on the Web (including online reviews, blogs and newsgroups), followed by travel guides, travel agency recommendations and star systems. With this in mind, it seems very important that the community approach to the promotional activities mentioned above should also be applied online.

An example of this is online travel platforms. For Italian farm tourism, ones of the most well-known are agriturismo.it and agriturismoitaliano.it. These are online channels for farm operators, who work together on a virtual platform in order to gain worldwide visibility. The inclusion of online reviews on such a platform has positive repercussions because farm operators can establish a direct contact with the (potential) guests.

Another example of online promotion with a community approach is described by Severini (2008). In his study on “*Le potenzialità del Web nel settore dell’agriturismo*” (Internet’s potential for agritourism), he asserts that farm operators could take advantage of the “speculative nature” of communities (such as forums, wikis and blogs) for promotional goals by establishing such things as “vertical communities of farm operators united under a logo” (such as an online Chianti community or a virtual community of organic farm operators).

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Chapter 4

4 German and Italian farm tourism: a hedonic price approach

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters we have analyzed the marketing structure of both the Italian and the German farm tourism markets. The following pages will discuss the main similarities and differences between the two countries regarding this form of tourism. Furthermore, we will present a comparative case study based on a hedonic price analysis.

4.2 Comparison of main differences and similarities

At first glance, Italian farm tourism is distinguished by a higher overall quality of supply and a positive image derived from the high degree of appreciation among national and international guests. This has been encouraged both by a proactive Government (through national legislation, funds, etc) as well as by networking activities with shared interest groups (Slow Food Movement, Committees for Protected Food, Fair Trade Associations), local festival committees (Italian *sagre*), etc. Thus, Italian farmers know that individuals value the stunning environment created by the agriculture and a rich variety of seasonal programs which include the subjects of healthy cuisine, history, nature and agriculture, such as the production of organic olive oil and the sampling of wine and food. The reverse of the coin is, however, the "concern that "boutique" farms may replace authentic agriculture to receive funds" (Adams, 2008). Another problem is that state subsidies should be accompanied by management courses in order to really help farmers to start their businesses. Adams (ibid: 188), for instance, asserts that "some funds have been offered to farmers for on-farm hospitality, but when the farming families know nothing about the hospitality business, a disaster is waiting to happen".

On the other hand, German farm tourism shows more professionalism in the designing of quality labels that have gained national visibility. This is of paramount importance in unlocking the "hidden potential" consistently identified in the annual national report of the German government (BMELV, 2006). In order to reduce the dependency from families, farm tourism associations have tailored farm tourism activities to the need of new market segments (seniors, handicapped, etc.). Furthermore, in some regions they collaborate with national health insurance institutes and other external contractors (Neu, 2007). Finally, in order to professionalize the marketing knowledge of farm operators, they organize management seminars with business education institutes (ibid.). Table 21 gives an overview of the main differences between German and Italian farm tourism as presented in Chapters 2 and 3.

Table 21 Comparison of the main differences between German and Italian farm tourism

Characteristics	German farm tourism	Italian farm tourism
Legal framing	Legal vacuum	Ad hoc law
Market segment	Dependency on large sized families	Varied target
Average age of operators (years)	48	50
Share agritourism farms : total no. farms	5%[1]	1%[2]
Average occupancy rate (nights)[14]	Between 125-135	Over 200
Image	Not well defined, little known	Defined, positive, "tuscanized"
Quality certification	National level	Regional level
Share of international tourists	Low	High
Distribution channel	Low level of development	High level of development
Integration within the territory (cross promotion, tourist routes, etc.)	Low	High

Source: own representation based on [1]DBV (2009), [2]Garruti et al., 2003

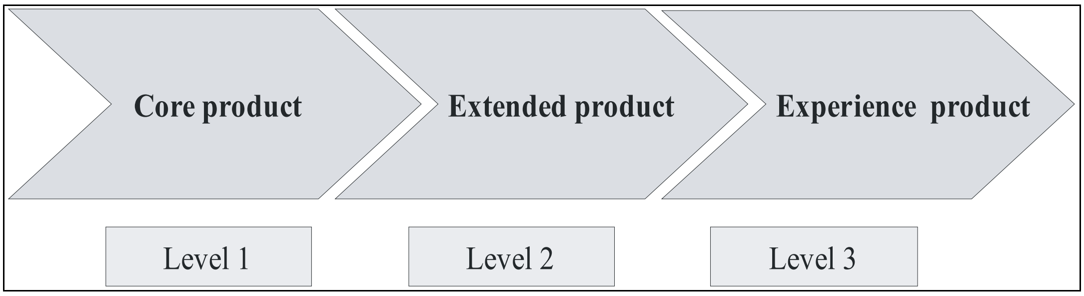
If the differences between German and Italian farm tourism are notably, so are the similarities. In both countries, farm tourism operators have been pursuing high differentiation within the tourism industry in order to attract new customer segments. Thus, as stressed by many researchers, these days successful tourist products are designed following the main principles of the "experience economy" described by Pine and Gilmore (1999).

Following their approach, not only should a tourist product be characterized by excellent products and services, but, even more importantly, it must have the ability to create a memorable impression on the customer "experience set".

Roosen (2008) explains the implementation of the experience approach in the case of farm tourism. The sole provision of farm lodging for guests, which is typical of the first phase of the evolution of farm tourism, constitutes the core of the farm tourist product (see Figure 10).

[14] Total number of nights per year during which beds are occupied.

Figure 10 Levels of provision of farm tourism products



Source: own representation based on Roosen (2008)

Examples of the first level can still be found in Italy, especially in farm operations located near seaside resorts and/or cultural cities (such as Florence and Venice). This form is also still predominant in some German states (above all, eastern Germany) which, according to Nilsson (2002), can be explained by the strong relationship between farm tourism as a form of social tourism and the Marxist concept of socialization as one of the state's main duties (page 10).

At the second level, the offering to the tourist is enriched by additional products or services with the purpose of compensating for the main deficits of tourist products. These, according to the current literature on tourism (cf. Hill & Busby, 2002; Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2003; Matthes, 2008; Shostack, 1977), are the following:

- *Immateriality*: in contrast with a physical product, the quality of a holiday cannot be tested in advance.
- *Inseparability*: the production and the consumption of a tourism product are simultaneous.
- *Integrity*: the host is part of the holiday process/experience.
- *Quality fluctuations*: unlike physical products, the intrinsic features of holidays are of an intangible nature and therefore unstable. Thus, a zero defects policy should be pursued.

Thus, both in Italy and in Germany, farm operators have tried to add transparency to their leisure supply. In Germany, for instance, quality certification labels attempt to correct the information asymmetry caused by the fact that farm tourism is not yet very well known among the German population. In a similar way, the Italian law dedicated to farm tourism helps farmers gain visibility in the market by distinguishing themselves from other tourism providers.

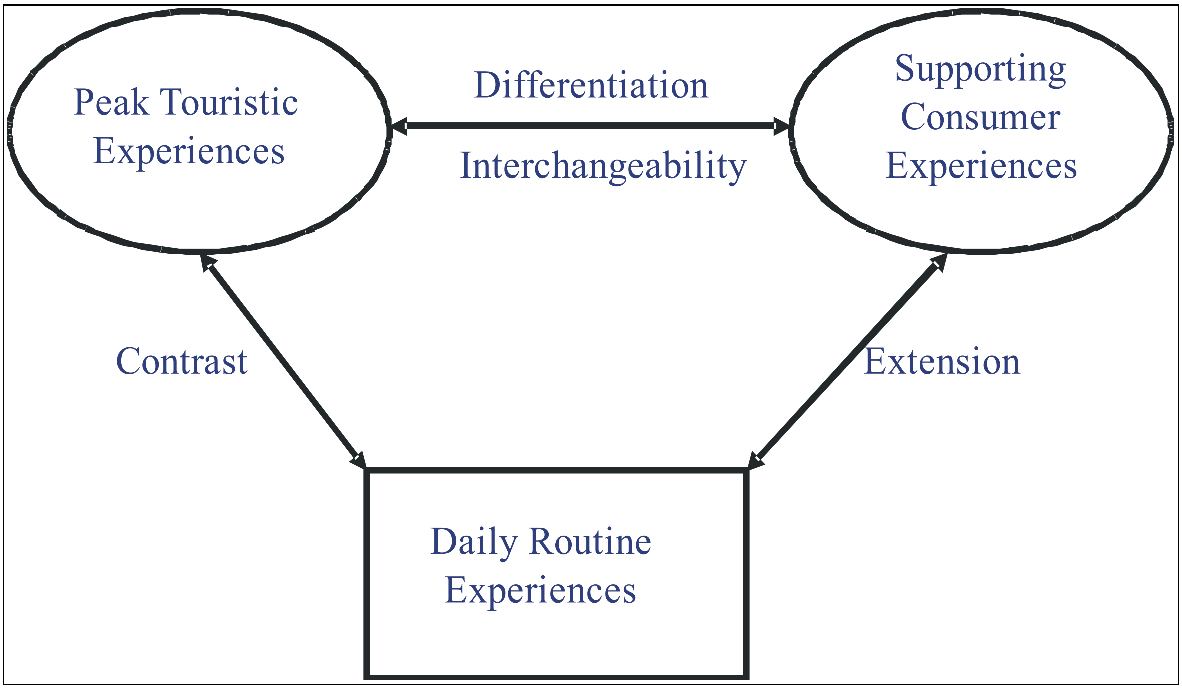
Next, on the third level, tourist products are designed with the purpose of shaping customers' memories, which in themselves become tourism products (cf. Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Schulze, 1992). Thus, at this level, the farm holiday is highly personalized to the needs of customers who are pursuing not merely a farm holiday but a farm holiday *experience*. As explained in the previous chapters, both German and Italian farm operators have been working on several ways of adding value to their offer, focusing on the experience of farm tourism consumption. An example of this is the "adventure farm" quality label (Erlebnis Bauernhof) recently developed by the German association of farm tourism (BAG), in which farm operations cluster a range of varied activities designed to generate not only satisfaction but also enthusiasm among their guests. For instance, some farm operators encourage farm guests to plant their own seedlings during their holiday (such as trees) and regularly return to reap their own harvests.

In the following section, the "experiential" dimension of Italian and German farm tourism products will be further analyzed within the conceptual framework of Quan and Wang (2004). To this end, the differentiation patterns of farmers discussed in the previous chapters will serve as a point of departure for our study.

4.3 Conceptual framework of the comparative study

According to Quan and Wang (2004), there are multiple ways of interpreting the tourist experience. As depicted in Figure 11, this can be considered either an experience that is in sharp contrast to the tourist's everyday life or one that is an extension of it (ibid.: 297). For the former, the authors use the label "peak touristic experience" and provide exotic tourism as an example. Here, experiencing the attraction constitutes the major motivation for tourism. A "supporting consumer experience" is, in contrast, an extension of the tourist's daily life. Here, Quan and Wang (ibid.) refer to the "experiences of gratifying basic consumer needs, such as eating, sleeping and transport". The authors state that neither peak nor supporting consumer experiences can be regarded as separate dimensions because they are mutually dependent. So, for instance, if the basic needs of tourists are not fulfilled, the greatest attraction may still cause disappointment for customers and vice versa.

Figure 11 The tourist experience model applied to farm tourism



Source: own elaboration adapted from Quan and Wang (2004)

Another important issue is the interchangeability of the two dimensions of "peak touristic experiences" and "supporting consumer experiences". Thus, a basic need, such as food, can turn a holiday into a peak experience. Similarly, a love affair can turn a mass-market sun-and-beach holiday package into a memorable consumer experience (ibid.).

A literature review of the previous chapters clearly shows that the experiences provided by farm operations in the two countries differ greatly. For instance, in Italy food consumption, a supporting consumer experience, has turned into one of the main attractions of farm tourism and nowadays represents a peak experience. As discussed above, the creation of agrarian routes, such as the Chianti route, has provided an opportunity for farmers and food producers to add value to their agricultural products. Furthermore, as each Italian region is rich in vernacular foods, which are at least to some extent protected by the PDO and PGI European labels, food-related events (Italian *sagre*) contribute to the promotion of farm tourism as well as food tourism. Other peak experiences such as children-related activities or sport activities are, in contrast, not as much widespread as food related activities (above all catering and sampling). On the other hand, the diffusion of swimming pools and wellness related infrastructure such as saunas seem to indicate that guests highly value these services which can be considered supporting consumer experiences.

In contrast, in Germany food marketers have only recently begun to catch up with the process of rediscovering food-related traditions as confirmed by the low number of registered PDO and PGI German food labels (Spiller, Voss & Deimel, 2007). This situation is also reflected in the supply structure of German farm tourism, where self-catering (except for breakfast) is the norm.

On the other side, the large amount of quality labels that German farm operations have designed in order to segment the market clearly show that farmers are moving towards a demand orientated approach (Clarke, 1996). Furthermore, if we examine the quality labels in which farm operators invest a large amount of money as a proxy for the willingness of farm guests to pay, we can distinguish among labels with an emphasis for "peak touristic experiences" such as child-related activities, horseback riding, etc. as well as labels with a focus on "supporting consumer experience" such as the star provision system of the German tourist association (DTV) which assesses the quality of the farm facility.

Based on the literature reviewed in the previous chapters, we have theoretically shown that the experiences provided by farm operations to their guests in the two countries greatly differ. In the following we will try to empirically test these assumptions and we will use an econometric model in order to analyze which type of farm activities is valued at most in the willingness to pay for farm tourism. We therefore assume that in Italy:

- "peak touristic experience" attributes have a stronger positive influence on the rental price than the influence of "supporting consumer experience" attributes (hypothesis 1)

On the other hand, we assume that in Germany:

- "supporting consumer experience" attributes have a stronger positive influence on the rental price than the influence of "peak touristic experience" attributes (hypothesis 2)

4.4 Procedures

4.4.1 Research design and data collection

In the following, two hedonic price models will be presented for Italian and German farm tourism to detect to which extent the type of activities offered by farm operators influence prices of tourist accommodations. Thus, we examine whether the type of amenity or farm activity in an area is valued in the willingness to pay for farm tourism (Van Huylenbroeck et al., 2006). Moreover, the comparison of the findings of the models should give insight whether the willingness to pay for farm tourism differs in the two countries.

For both the Italian and the German models the digitalized catalogues of the German publisher Landchriften-Verlag are used. This company specializes in publishing catalogues for Germans interested in farm holidays either in Germany or abroad. The sample used in the study includes 1,445 addresses of the German farm operations promoted in the catalogue "Raus aufs Land – Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof". In addition, on the Website of the company a broader number of addresses are available (N=12,609) (because of its magnitude, the latter will be used as the statistical population in chapter 4.5.1.). Data for the Italian catalogue are the result of the networking activities between Landselection (controlled by Landchriften-Verlag) and some of the major associations of farm tourism in Italy.

Although the data come from the same company, the two catalogues slightly differ in some variables. For instance, in the Italian dataset, geographical data are also included, whereas, due to cultural divergences related to accommodation typologies, the German catalogue also distinguishes among holiday houses (Ferienhaus), apartments (Appartment) and holiday flats (Ferienwohnung). Whereas apartments are generally considered one-room apartments (there is not a clear separation between the cooking and the sleeping area), holiday flats have more than one room. In Italy, on the contrary, such a distinction is less common, as it is usually distinguished only between rooms and apartments.

Overall, the Italian data set consists of 365 records of farm operations, whereas the German data set includes 1,445 units. The analysis was carried out in 2008 (May-October) with the financial support of the DAAD-Vigoni Program.

4.4.2 Methods

The application of the hedonic price method to tourism studies is common since it has the advantage of being applied to a real market than a hypothetical (Khalil, 2004). A classic example is the fact that two otherwise identical houses will be priced differently depending on the characteristics of their locations (Van Huylenbroeck et al., 2006: 15). The relationship can be found by regressing the price of the marketable good on a number of independent variables (ibid.).

In the following, the log-linear model is used:

$$\log P = b_1 + b_i X_i$$

The dependent variable in the Italian model is the price per person per guestroom (€/night/person) whereas in the German model the information related to the capacity was not available. In this case the price per accommodation (€/night/accommodation) was used. Furthermore, in both models, the prices are regressed on characteristics linked to accommodations[15] as well as to attractions (products or activities) offered by farm operators to their guests such as attributes related to wellness, food tourism, etc. The results of such analyses estimate the influence of the characteristics included in the models on the price. This influence is measured as the percentage change in the logarithmic price scale when the independent variable changes by one unit (Van Huylenbroeck et al., 2006: 15).

4.5 Results

4.5.1 Description of the Italian sample

The majority of accommodations (48%) are located in central Italy (with a high concentration in the Tuscany region), followed by 29% located in northern Italy, 13% in southern Italy and 10% on the islands of Sicily and Sardinia. All in all, the sample has a high similarity with the national distribution according to ISTAT (2004) (see Table 22). With regard to the type of accommodation offered, the majority of farmers still offer rooms for their guests (n=356); however, the high number of apartments (n=208) confirms the recent tendency of farm operators to combine the two types of accommodation. Furthermore, apartments are a sound investment both for farmers, because this type of accommodation is less time consuming, and for tourists, as the average price per person of apartments is lower than that of rooms (€28.64 and €35.60 per night, respectively).

Table 22 Geographical distribution of Italian farm operators

Geographical location	n	%	ISTAT*
Northern	104	29%	40%
Central	175	48%	39%
Southern	48	13%	15%
Sicily and Sardinia	38	10%	6%
Italy	365	100%	100% (N=11,575)

Source: own calculations , *ISTAT (2004)

[15] In the German model the explanatory variables relate both to type of accommodation (double room, apartment, holiday houses etc.) and to the activities offered by the farm. In the Italian model, since the dependent variable is the guestroom price the only explanatory variable directly related to the accommodation is the presence of apartments on the same farm.

4.5.2 Description of the German sample

The majority of farm operators are located in the western states of Germany. Among these, Bavaria is the state with the highest concentration (27%), followed by Schleswig-Holstein and Baden-Württemberg (both 15%). In the eastern German federal states, around half the operators are established in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (3%). Table 23 provides an overview of the geographical distribution of German farm operators and indicates that the farm operations of Bavaria and Northrhine-Westphalia are overrepresented.

Table 23 Geographical distribution of German farm operators

German state	n	%	N	%
Berlin/Brandenburg	23	2	586	5
Mecklenburg-West. Pomerania	44	3	1,333	11
Saxony	34	2	720	6
Saxony-Anhalt	11	1	218	2
Thuringia	29	2	317	3
Baden-Württemberg	221	15	1,381	11
Bavaria	384	27	3,401	19
Hesse	66	5	399	3
Northern Saxony	199	14	1,865	15
Northrhine-Westphalia	115	8	676	5
Rhineland Palatinate/Saarland	104	7	1,136	9
Schleswig-Holstein	215	15	1,578	13
Germany	1,445	100	12,609	100

Source: own calculations based on Landselection’s catalogues

Table 24 compares the degree of differentiation attained by German farm tourism operators with that achieved by Italian ones. Italian farm operators display a higher degree of specialization in the following differentiation patterns: direct selling of farm produce (83% of Italian operators versus 37% of Germans), swimming pool (58% versus 21%), catering (53% versus 46%), handicapped services (42% versus 12%), organic farming (41% versus 12%), winemaking farm (48% versus 5%) and bicycle service (62% versus 55%).

In contrast, German farm operators are more differentiated than Italian ones in senior-orientated facilities (25% versus 1%), provision of apartments (91% versus 55%), one-night stays (87% versus 47%), pet accommodations (70% versus 53%), opportunity to work on the farm (69% versus 34%), horseback riding (62% versus 22%), farm tourism with winter sport activities (26% versus 4%) and particular child-related offers, such as children’s playgrounds (91% versus 44%), services for unchaperoned children, (6% versus 1%), tennis (10% versus 1%) and provision of a sauna (22% versus 4%).

In the farm tourism literature, practitioners point out the growing importance of so-called micro-niche differentiation patterns (Hassan, 2000; Stone, 2005), such as business or fishing farm tourism. The analysis also provides some results concerning these micro-niches. German farm operators perform better in the following specialization patterns: fishing farm tourism (17% versus 3%), hunting (9% versus 5%), business (18% versus 5%), camping (19% versus 10%).

All in all, it appears that Italian and German farm operators have often chosen divergent differentiation paths: the former investing more in catering and selling farm produce and the latter in child- and senior-orientated facilities as well as some sport and fitness services.

Table 24 Comparison among German and Italian farm operators

Characteristic	Italy	Germany
unchaperoned children	1%	6%
hunting	5%	9%
organic farming	41%	12%
vineyard	48%	5%
handicap services	42%	12%
tennis	1%	10%
fishing	3%	17%
business	5%	18%
sauna	4%	22%
camping	10%	19%
swimming pool	58%	21%
seniors	1%	25%
winter sport	4%	26%
selling own produce	83%	37%
catering	53%	46%
horseback riding	22%	62%
work possibilities	34%	69%
bicycle service	62%	55%
table tennis	0	70%
pets	53%	70%
children playground	44%	91%
one night	47%	87%
apartment on the farm	55%	91%

Source: own calculation

4.5.3 Results of the hedonic price models

In the following hedonic price models, all the pertinent explanatory variables, influencing rental prices are tested. Regardless of which variables are considered, the identification of the appropriate functional form constitutes the decisive step in estimating the hedonic model. Several functional forms were tested and compared (linear, semi-log, log-log). On the basis of the statistical significance of the coefficients and the suitability of their indicators, as well as the power of the parameters R and F, the best econometric results are obtained using the semi-logarithmic form. Using the coefficients of the estimated model, the implicit marginal price of each attribute is generated. The estimated coefficients and the implicit marginal price of each attribute are presented in the following.

Findings of the Italian model: Table 25 provides an overview of the findings of the regression analysis. As expected, catering has the strongest influence on the rental price. This is plausible, as food-and-wine consumption is an important feature of Italian farm tourism. On the other side, the presence of apartments on the farm has a significant but negative effect on the rental price of farm accommodations. The explanation for this may be derived from the different level of investment related to the type of accommodation. Thus, for operators who offer both rooms and apartments the former may be considered only a side-income in relation to the latter. As a consequence, operators are more likely to invest in apartments than in guestrooms.

Table 25 Influence of variables on the rental price (Italian model)

Results of the regression analysis			
Number of observations	365		
Average price (€/night/person)	37.25		
Adj. R^2	0.18		
F value	14.369 ($p<0.001$)		
Independent variables	St. beta value	t-value	p
Intercept	3.253	37.136	.000
Catering	.244	4.916	.000
Presence of apartments on the farm	-.194	-3.874	.000
Swimming pool	.141	2.787	.006
Internet Website	.126	2.593	.010
Horseback riding farm	.139	2.798	.005
Altitude	-.126	-2.584	.010
Dependent variable: log price guestroom/night/person			

Source: own calculation

Not surprisingly, the presence of an Internet Website positively affects the rental price, showing that these days the presence on the Web is essential. Furthermore a location characteristic has a significant but negative influence on price: the higher the score related to the altitude of the farm, the lower the room price. Thus, farm accommodations located on the mountains seem to set lower prices than other operations. Furthermore, both the presence of a swimming pool and of horseback riding activities has a positive and significant influence on price. Overall, the over mentioned variables explain 18% of the variance of the rental price (R^2).

Findings of the German model: as depicted in Table 26, the greatest influence on rental price is depicted by the type of accommodation. Guestrooms (single, double or multiple rooms) seem to affect negatively the rental price, whereas holiday houses have a significant and positive impact on the rental price. These findings show that "guests want the farm experience without missing home luxuries" (Pearce, 1990).

Furthermore, attributes related to the farm's positioning as a winemaking farm or as fishing farms, as well as the presence of child-related attributes (i.e. children playground, children caring etc.) have a strong and significant impact on the price as well.

Next, both the provision of single-night stays and the characterization of farm with winter sports activities display negative influence on the rental price. The negative impact of the former on price is probably due to the low number of guests who take into consideration this offer and consequently the low level of revenue provided to the farm operation.

Table 26 Influence of variables on the rental price (German model)

Results of the regression analysis			
Number of observations	1,445		
Average price (€/night/person)	34.36		
Adj. R^2	18.179		
F value	26.149 ($p<0.001$)		
Independent variables	St. beta value	t-value	p
Intercept	1.536	62.51	.000
Holiday house	.100	3.813	.000
Double room	-.274	-10.261	.000
Multiple room	-.164	-6.276	.000
Single room	-.117	-4.464	.000
Vineyard	.111	4.238	.000
Children playground	.112	4.283	.000
Fishing	.088	3.390	.001
One-night stay	-.080	-3.077	.002
Winter sport	-.069	-2.674	.008
Web	.054	2.105	.036
Children alone	.070	2.727	.006
Dependent variable: log price/night/accommodation			

Source: own calculation

With regard to the latter, this variable can be considered an indicator of the location of the farm. Thus, it is supposed that farms located near mountain resorts set generally lower prices than other operations. Similar findings are also included in the Italian model.

We assume that farm operators located on the mountains can set lower prices than other farmers because of the higher occupancy rate that they display the all year around. In Austria, for instance, farm operators host ski vacationers during the winter season and other vacationers such as seniors or families with children in summer.

4.6 Discussion

Based on the hedonic price method, the study presented in this chapter shows which characteristics significantly affect the rental price for both Italian and German farm operations. The findings show that the magnitude of the differentiation strategies adopted by farm operators varies within the two countries.

It appears, for instance, that strategies that recall farming traditions are particularly effective for setting higher prices for Italian farm accommodation. Gastronomy, for instance, enables farmers to have higher returns, and, at the same time, permits farm guests to reappropriate their gastronomic history (Bessière, 2001). In paraphrasing the theoretical framework of Quan and Wang (2004), food consumption has become a "peak touristic experience attraction" for Italian farm guests. This attribute together with horseback riding allows Italian farmers to achieve higher returns on the rental price. On the other hand, "supporting consumer experiences" attributes, such as the presence of a swimming pool, play a positive but minor role. Thus, we can accept hypothesis 1.

Overall, Italian farm operators seek to add value to their offer. This is confirmed by previous scholars who stressed that "in Italy, farmers tend to offer complete packages containing differentiated services aimed at encouraging customers to return and at increasing the number of guests" (INNOREF, 2006).

On the same line, German farm operators seem to heavily invest in the variety of their supply. In contrast to Italian farmers, they do not seem to focus on one type of attribute only (cf. food tourism), but to put the emphasis both on "supporting consumer experiences" and on "peak touristic experiences" attributes.

With regard to the former, the high importance given by guests to the type of accommodation show that Germans pursue the comfort of home during their holidays. This is confirmed by Quan and Wang (2004), who state that, "although tourists seek various and novel experiences, they often 'bring' their habits and preferences formed at home with them" (ibid.: 301). Thus, even if many Germans choose alternative tourist forms, such as "farm tourism", it is possible that most tourists prefer sleeping in familiar accommodation, i.e. holiday houses, for most of their holiday. Moreover, the strong influence of the farm positioning as a winemaking farm and as a children-related farm on the rental price demonstrates the importance of “peak experience” attributes as well. Accordingly, we can only partially accept hypothesis 2.

Overall, it appears that German farmers have begun to position their farms in manifold ways. As far as the positioning as a winemaking farm is concerned, this seems to be a very successful strategy.

Especially in the Federal State of Rhineland Palatinat, where about 63% of all viticulture acreage is produced (Barten, 2007) as well as in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, notably known for the good quality of wine, winemakers could combine their farming activities with wine tourism. In addition, the resemblance of the landscape of these states (above all Rhineland Palatinat) with the stunning environment of the Italian region of Tuscany could work in favor of the further development of farm tourism.

Farms with children-related services are, in contrary, equally widespread throughout the country. Our model shows that this farm specialization is a sound strategy as well. Mention should be made to the successful examples of the federal state of Northrhine-Westphalia where farmers have taken advantage of the funds of the European financial program labeled ELER in order to invest their resources and to position their farms towards this market segment (Hunke-Klein, 2008).

4.7 Conclusions and limitations of the study

The study described in this chapter has empirically examined the differentiation patterns of Italian and German farm operators by means of two hedonic price models.

The results have shown that in both countries farmers have begun to sharpen their management skills in order to position their farms. Thus, as stated by Shakur and Holland (2000) the marketing component is being recognized as particularly important in the rural location due to the relatively unorganized nature of this industry.

Before concluding, we should point out the study’s limitations. Since the two catalogues present some differences, the question of cross-country generalizability is germane. Closely related with the above is the small size of the Italian dataset. Finally, farmers of both samples belong to farm associations, which can be a bias, since, generally, these farmers are more committed than other farm operators who do not belong to any farm tourism association.

As a consequence, further research and the replication of findings with other samples are called in order to further increase the market knowledge of farm tourism in both countries.

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Chapter 5

5 Success factors of German farm tourism: the operators' view

5.1 Introduction

In this section of the dissertation, data from a 2006 German study are used to analyze the success of farm tourism in Germany from the farm operators' point of view. There are many reasons to examine the factors influencing the success of farm tourism.

In the literature there is a great number of studies documenting farm tourism because it is considered a panacea for a range of problems such as decreasing agricultural profits, a significant drop in rural population, etc. On the other side, many scholars have also noted the modest profits resulting from farm tourism. This study adds to the analysis of farm tourism's true share of the rural tourism market.

The analysis of the German farm tourism sector provided in the first chapters of this dissertation follows for the most part a strategic management approach based on meta-analysis of core studies on the sector. The following empirical analysis examines whether the strategic design described in the initial chapters differs from operators' perceptions of their success. Is, for instance, the success of German farm tourism based primarily on quantitative variables such as differentiation in operation of the farms or on intangibles such as the farmers' vision and commitment to their business?

Moreover, the current literature has focused mainly on the key factors of rural tourism, of which farm tourism is a distinct market segment. According to Huang (2006), the key components of rural tourism include advertising, promotion, marketing, location, and customer relationship whilst Wilson et al. (2001) stress the importance of the surrounding community. However, farm tourism has a multidimensional nature and its success varies significantly among countries. In New Zealand, for example, many operators prefer to host international guests and spend little effort on attracting domestic tourism (Shakur & Holland,, 2000). In Europe, however, a far higher percentage of farm operators are interested in attracting tourism within the domestic market. Hence, in order to analyze the supply of German farm tourism an ad hoc study is necessary.

In recent years many studies (Busby & Rendle, 2000; Roberts & Hall, 2001; Sharpley & Sharpley, 1997) have stated that innovations in farm tourism including higher quality standards in accommodation and service and richer programs of activities have resulted in growing farm tourism income. This study seeks to confirm the benefits of a higher level of operator professionalism which combines the traditional values of farm tourism (the guests' perceived rural holiday experience) with a comprehensive marketing approach (commodification of the traditional image of farm tourism).

Based on these assumptions, an empirical study was carried out in Germany during 2006 as the follow up to a pilot investigation conducted in the German Federal State of Lower Saxony (Schulze et al., 2006). The latter determined that personal commitment on behalf of the farm manager was of paramount importance as a predictor of the farm's success. In this study however, this result was only partially confirmed, whereas advertising and provided guest activities seem to play a more essential role in the success of this recreational business.

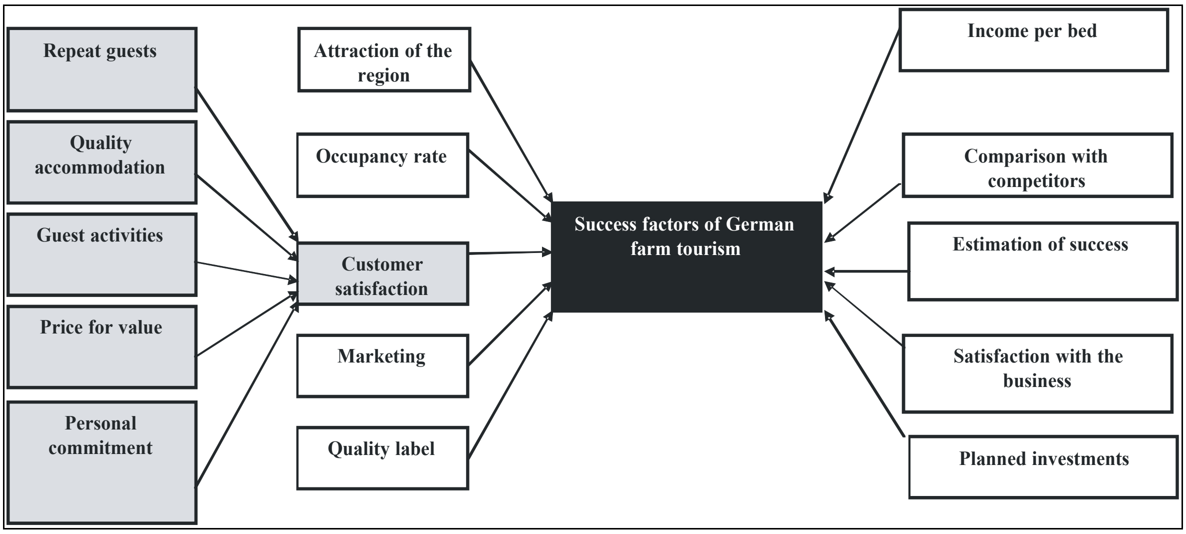
The following chapters introduce an overview of the state of research into success factor analysis along with an outline of the adopted procedure and the results of the empirical analysis. Several draft conclusions and a discussion of future research directions round out the final section.

5.2 Conceptual framework and study design

Scientists have been analyzing business success factors in varied fields for almost 40 years (Homburg & Giering, 1996; Schmalen, Kunert & Weindlmaier, 2006). The main objective of this sort of investigation is to determine methods and models which may explain a company's success. Rather than offering an overall explanation of all factors which characterize an economic sector, a success factor analysis takes a strategy-oriented approach, presenting evidence of the implications of economic decisions.

As a theoretical framework, this dissertation utilizes the model of Busby and Rendle (2000) who determined the success of farm tourism operators in light of their level of professionalism. The key components for success are therefore identified as the following: customer satisfaction (repeat guests, perceived value, guest activities, guests' appreciation of accommodation and personal commitment of farm operators), tourist attractions in the region, occupancy rate, amount and type of investment (such as the Internet), quality certification labeling, operators' personal satisfaction with the business, comparison with other competitors, determinants of success as estimated by operators (see Figure 12).

Figure 12 Conceptualization of success factors of German farm tourism



Source: own representation

In the next stage, a success index, based on a factor, was created according to Homburg's conceptualization and operationalisation model (Homburg & Giering, 1996). Once the success factor was determined and its reliability measured (factor analysis and conceptualization) three success groups were created (operationalisation). Next, the distribution within the three groups of key components for success was analyzed.

5.3 Methodology

Questionnaire design and data collection

The authors conducted an on-line survey in Germany. Based on the findings of previous scholars (Lemke, 2003; Schulze et al., 2006) and on the results of discussions with industry and university personnel, an online questionnaire was developed to identify the success factors of German farm tourism.

The latter was sent per e-mail to 1,435 farm tourism operators for completion between June 27 and July 11, 2006. In exchange for survey participation respondents were offered the opportunity to win a basket of agricultural products valued at €150.

The questionnaire consisted of two main parts: (1) general information about the respondent's operation (husbandry patterns, type of accommodation, etc.) and (2) the 10 dimensions of success of the agritourism business mentioned above. Following preliminary data cleaning, the number of usable responses was determined to be 167, which corresponds to a response rate of 11.6 %. Data analysis was conducted in different stages. The first phase involved a statistical description of German farm tourism as a whole, on the basis of our survey. In response to these preliminary results, a principal component factor analysis was conducted in order to obtain a success factor, which included both qualitative and quantitative statements. Based on this factor, respondents were then split into three different success groups. Next, the distribution of the statements which form the factor (active variables) as well as descriptive variables (other statements of the questionnaire) among the groups was analyzed. Afterwards, we compared the variance distribution of success factors (statements) quoted by the respondents with the ones conceptualized in our conceptual framework. For each construct of the above-mentioned framework, the variables with the highest variance among the groups were then used as independent variables in a regression analysis towards the success index (dependent variable).

5.4 Results

5.4.1 Demographic profile of respondents

As depicted in Table 27 over half the respondents are female (75%). Female farm operators fill a leading role in farm tourism: firstly, they are particularly motivated to work in this recreation field, since they are more inclined to interact with guests. Furthermore, the impact of financial returns of farm tourism on the family's budget increases both the visibility and the value of female work within the familial sphere (Caballé, 1999).

As far as age is concerned, the mean among respondents is 49 years. Around 44% of respondents are between 48 and 65 years of age, followed by 38% between the ages of 66 and 80 and 18% between 19 and 47. Respondents to this survey are from nine of the 16 German Federal States. The states most represented are Bavaria (32%), Schleswig-Holstein (25 %) and Lower Saxony (17%).

Table 27 Demographic profile of respondents

German state	n	%
Schleswig-Holstein	42	25
Lower Saxony	28	17
Bavaria	54	32
Mecklenburg-West. Pomerania	5	4
Rhineland Palatinate	5	3
Northrhine-Westphalia	10	6
Hesse	10	6
Thuringia	5	3
Saxony	6	4
Gender		
Female	120	75
Male	40	25
Age		
19-47 years old	29	18
48-65 years old	74	44
66-80 years old	62	38
Mean age (years)	49	

Source: own calculation

5.4.2 Economic profile of respondents

For the majority of the respondents (53 %), agriculture is still their main activity, whereas for 19 % of them it is a side activity. Nine percent of respondents have already abandoned the agrarian activity. Only 2 % have never entered into the farm tourism business (see Table 28).

Table 28 Farming activity

Farming	n	%
Main activity	88	53
Side activity	32	19
Past activity	15	9
Never been a farmer	3	2
Others	7	4
Missing values	20	13

Source: own calculation

As far as other sources of income are concerned (Table 29), it is noteworthy that the great majority of farmers are in the conventional agrarian business (32%). Selling of the operator's own products on the farm (11%) and organic farming (7%) are of far lesser significance. For 11% of respondents, farm tourism is the only activity. Finally, 5% of respondents offer horseback riding on the farm, and 3% operate a café on the premises.

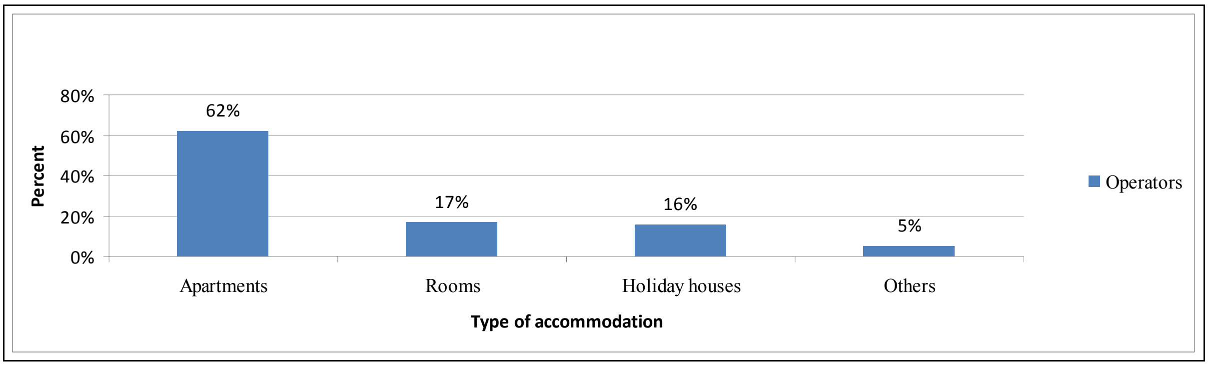
Table 29 Other activities additional to farm tourism

Activity	n	%
Conventional farming	65	32
No other activities	23	11
Selling farm products	23	11
Organic farming	14	7
Horseback riding on the farm	11	5
Café on the farm	7	3
Others	62	31

Source: own calculation

Most farm operators in this study converted to the farm tourism business in the 1990s. This is consistent with previous studies. In fact, farm tourism has shown a fluctuating trend and a steady increase in the 1990s thanks to support from the German government (Oppermann, 1996). According to the literature, the type of accommodation has also substantially changed throughout the years: in the 1970s farmers began converting from room accommodation to holiday apartments (ibid.). The results of this trend are reflected in the survey (see Figure 13): apartments (flats) are the most common accommodation for guests (62%), followed by guest rooms (17%) and holiday houses (16%). Other types of accommodation are minimally represented (5%). This can be seen as a financial improvement for the sector, as returns on apartments are higher.

Figure 13 Type of accommodation offered to guests



Source: own representation

The average farm facility in our survey has 17 beds; the minimum number of beds offered by farmers in the survey is two, whereas the maximum is 85. The average duration of stay is eight days. For ease of discussion, the respondents are further divided into three groups according to the number of beds offered (see Table 30). The first group, with fewest beds, is the most heavily represented (40%) and includes all farm facilities up to a maximum of ten beds. The second group, (medium-scale facilities), includes all farm accommodations from 11 up to 20 beds. This represents 36 % of the total number of respondents. The third group corresponds to 24 % of the sample and includes establishments with a maximum of 85 beds.

Table 30 Descriptive data according to three groups of operators

Size of property	No. beds μ (σ)	Days of stay μ (σ)	Occupancy rate μ (σ)
Small-scale facilities[1] (n=68) (40%)	7 (2)	8.4 (3.1)	122 (74)
Medium-scale facilities[2] (n=60) (36%)	16 (3)	7.6 (2.8)	123 (69)
Large-scale facilities[3] (n=39) (24%)	38 (18)	7.9 (2.5)	141 (55)
Sample (167)	17 (15)	8.0 (2.8)	128 (64)
σ = standard deviation, μ= mean, [1] = < 11 beds, [2] = 11-20 beds [3] = >20 beds			

Source: own calculation

There is a significant correlation between the number of beds and the year of inception of the business: the older the establishment, the greater the number of beds offered. This relation had already been stressed by Oppermann (1996). A possible explanation for this might be that these days this tourist sector incurs high entrance costs. Furthermore, it seems that larger scale accommodations may be perceived by the farmers as a possible impairment to a close relationship with their guests (Nilsson, 2002; Shakur & Holland, 2000).

In the tourist sector the "economic wealth" of a company is analyzed by its occupancy rate (total number of nights per year during which beds are occupied) and is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Average number of guests per year * Holiday vacation (no. days)}}{\text{Average days per bed per year}}$$

The survey included a direct inquiry for this information. Table 30 reveals that no group had occupancy rates below 100 nights per year, which is considered the minimum occupancy rate in order to be profitable (Oppermann, 1996).

In fact, in the sample the average occupancy rate is 128 nights which is similar to the rate found in the pilot study conducted in Lower Saxony (Schulze et al., 2006). The average revenue in farm tourism is €38,208 per year with relevant differences among the facilities (see Table 42). As might be expected, there is a significant correlation between occupancy rate and revenue (p<0.01).

Table 31 shows the percentage of farm tourism returns in relation to total revenue. For 57% of operators surveyed, farm tourism is a minor portion of their income contributing about 16% to the total revenue of the farm. Albeit still moderate, for 33% of farm operators farm tourism returns have become an additional source of income - with a mean ratio of farm tourism to total revenue of 42%. Finally, for 10% of respondents farm tourism already represents the main source of income, representing 76% of the total revenue of the farm. In the sector the average percentage of farm tourism income in relation to gross revenue is 31%.

Table 31 Share of farm tourism returns in relation to total revenue

	Mean	n	%
Minor source of income (0-25 %)	16	70	57
Additional source of income (26-50 %)	42	40	33
Main source of income (51-100 %)	76	13	10
Sample	31	123	100

Source: own calculation

With respect to prices, respondents were asked to declare the average price that they set per person without breakfast. The average price is € 21.3 with a maximum of € 27.01 in Schleswig-Holstein and a minimum of € 14.20 in Thuringia. Not surprisingly, prices in the Western states of Germany are higher than in Eastern states. Mention has to be made in the case of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (former East Germany), which ranks highest after Schleswig-Holstein and henceforth constitutes an exception (see Table 32).

Table 32 Prices per person without breakfast

German state	Price per night (€)	Standard deviation (€)
Schleswig-Holstein	27.01	17.64
Mecklenburg-West. Pomerania	25.10	16.80
Northrhine-Westphalia	21.75	8.36
Lower Saxony	20.77	13.62
Hesse	20.66	12.48
Bavaria	19.21	11.42
Rhineland Palatinate	15.75	4.35
Saxony	14.40	3.78
Thuringia	14.20	3.96
Germany	21.30	13.40

Source: own calculation

In order to calculate the price for value in the sector, respondents were asked to estimate their average prices in comparison to those of competitors by means of a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from +3 (extremely more expensive) to -3 (extremely less expensive). As depicted in Table 33 the majority of operators choose to set prices at a level equal to their competitors.

Table 33 Estimation of own prices in comparison with competitors

Price in comparison to competitors[1]	%
Extremely more expensive	1
Moderately more expensive	7
Slightly more expensive	17
Equivalent	52
Slightly less expensive	12
Moderately less expensive	9
Extremely less expensive	2
[1] Scale: 7-point Likert-type scale from (+3) extremely more expensive to (-3) extremely less expensive	

Source: own calculation

Not surprisingly for this sector, farm operators state that over one-third of all guests are repeat visitors. However, as depicted in Table 34, large-scale operations have the highest percentage of repeat guests (42.81%), followed by medium-scale (34.37%) and small-scale (30.73%).

Table 34 Repeat guests according to the size of the farm operation

Operation	% repeat guests
Small-scale facilities (<11 beds)	30.73
Medium-scale facilities (11-20 beds)	34.37
Large-scale facilities (>20 beds)	42.81

Source: own calculation

Regarding investment in marketing, the surveyed respondents were invited to provide various details about the structure of their investments (see Table 35). Around 29.5% of respondents agree or totally agree that they place a high investment in publicity, followed by 19% who only somewhat agree and 32.5% who neither agree nor disagree.

Table 35 Types of investment of respondents (percent)

Investment	(- 3) Tot. disagree			Neither / nor			(+3) Tot. agree
I strongly invest in Internet	0	2.4	12.2	24.4	14.6	32.9	13.4
I prefer investing in repeat guests	6.2	16.8	24.2	29.8	11.8	8.7	2.5
I strongly invest in publicity	0.6	4.9	13.5	32.5	19	26.4	3.1

Source: own calculations

Fewer than 20% of operators surveyed disagreed that their investment in publicity is high. Thus, publicity is viewed as an important investment. On the other hand, investments in the

Internet show even more impressive ratings, since 46.3% of respondents agree or totally agree that their investment in the Internet is high, followed by 14.6% who somewhat agree. The percentage of "neither/nor" answers is 24.4, whereas about 14.6% somewhat or completely disagree.

Finally, only 23% of respondents somewhat to totally agree that investments in maintaining repeat guests are more important than other marketing investments, followed by 29.8% who neither agree nor disagree and 24.2% who somewhat agree. Finally, 23% or respondents disagree or totally disagree.

Table 36 Power of attraction of the region in comparison with other competitors

Power of attraction of the region[a]	n	%
Low level of attraction[1]	12	6
Medium level of attraction[2]	72	44
High level of attraction[3]	81	50
[a]Scale from (0) lowest degree of attraction to (100) highest degree of attraction, [1] = between 0 and 30 rating points, [2] = between 31 and 70 rating points, [3] = between 71 and 100 rating points		

Source: own calculation

To evaluate the power of attraction of the farm operation's surrounding area (geographical location), respondents were asked to score the attraction of their region in comparison to competitors by means of a 100-point rating scale ranging from zero (lowest degree of attraction) to 100 (highest degree of attraction). Table 36 shows that half of respondents (50%) scored regional attraction as highest, followed by 44% who scored it at a medium level and only 6% who assigned regional attraction the lowest score.

The quality of guest accommodations is analyzed both from the farmers' point of view and from the type of certification labels ascribed to by operators. Table 37 provides an overview of the most important quality-related criteria declared by surveyed respondents. Farm operators are particularly concerned with the provision of well-arranged comfortable rooms for their guests (79%). Only 14% of respondents state that comfortable accommodations are not a priority for them. This is a crucial point, as in the past low levels of comfort were taken for granted both by farm operators and guests. Furthermore, farm operators are more likely to invest in general aspects related to hospitality such as the provision of a cozy atmosphere (76%), i.e. Germany's famous "Gemütlichkeit", rather than focusing on the rural nature or "country features" (38% and 30% respectively) which are the outstanding characteristics of farm tourism. As mentioned, the quality of accommodation can also be assured by external independent agents who assign a quality label such as the DLG, the DEHOGA, etc. In this survey (data not shown) 39% of respondents have a DLG quality label, followed by 50% who have other quality labels and 11% who did not answer. Of those who have a quality label other than that of the DLG, the most common is the DTV star system and the *Vom Gast empfohlenes Haus* or "guest-recommended accommodation" rating provided through the Landselection publishing house (see Chapter 4).

Table 37 Quality of accommodation

Quality of accommodation[1]	Percent of respondents who totally agree or agree
Guests appreciate the arrangements of rooms	79
Our farm has a cozy atmosphere	76
The rural atmosphere of the farm is important to us	38
Our accommodations are arranged in a "country" style	30
Comfort is of minor importance to us	14
[1] Scale: 7-point Likert-type scale from (+3) totally agree to (-3) totally disagree (here: +2 and +3)	

Source: own calculation

Not only is the quality of accommodation an important aspect of guests' satisfaction, the provision of a rich program of leisure activities for guests is an aspect that farm operators should not underestimate. Table 38 provides an overview of operators' perceptions related to guest activities.

At the top of the list of activities provided for guests, the opportunity to directly participate in farming activities is important (48% agree or totally agree on this issue). Furthermore, survey respondents are more likely to offer socializing activities to their guests rather than child-related ones (42% and 21% respectively, among those who agree or totally agree with these statements).

Table 38 Statements concerning guests' activities

Guests' activities [1]	Percent of respondents who totally agree or agree
Guests can actively participate in farm activities	48
We offer socializing activities to our guests	42
We offer several attractions for children	21
[1] Scale: 7-point Likert-type scale from (+3) totally agree to (-3) totally disagree (here: +2 and +3)	

Source: own calculation

The personal commitment of operators was measured by several statements (see Table 39). Overall, respondents show a high commitment towards guests' satisfaction: for instance, 97 % agree or totally agree with the statement "guests' satisfaction is our first priority". Around

86% affirm that they enjoy getting in touch with new people and 82% love interacting with guests. Hence, it seems that a primary component of customer satisfaction in this sector is directly related to the high motivation of operators.

Table 39 Farm operators' commitment

Commitment [1]	Percent of respondents who totally agree or agree
Guests' satisfaction is our first priority	97
We enjoy getting in touch with new people	86
Interacting with guests is a pleasure	82
[1] Scale: 7-point Likert-type scale from (+3) totally agree to (-3) totally disagree (here: +2 and +3)	

Source: own calculation

To get an idea of respondents' estimation of success, the survey asked them to rate their success in comparison with other competitors, using a 100-point rating scale ranging from zero (no success in comparison with competitors) to 100 (the respondent himself is the most successful operator of all).

As depicted in Table 40 overall, respondents appear very confident with their market position in comparison with competitors in the farm tourism sector (mean value above 50). Furthermore, their estimation of success grows proportionally with the size of the facilities, ranging from a mean value of 58.92 among operators of small-scale facilities to 71.53 among those who operate large-scale facilities.

Table 40 Estimation of success in comparison with other competitors

Success in comparison to competitors[a]	Mean	Standard deviation
Small-scale facilities	58.92	19.29
Medium-scale facilities	67.07	17.77
Large-scale facilities	71.53	18.92
[a]100-point rating scale ranging from (0) not successful to (100) most successful		

Source: own calculation

Operators were also asked about their level of success independent of that of their competitors. Additionally, operators were asked whether they were planning to further invest in their business in the short-to-medium term. The results of both statements are shown in Table 41. Respondents' estimation of success as well as their intention to invest in the future proportionally increases with the size of the business, showing that economies of scale have positive effects on the self-confidence of operators.

Table 41 Satisfaction with own success and planned investments

Size		We are all in all satisfied with the business[1]	We will further invest in farm tourism[1]
Small-scale facilities	μ	1.37	1.24
	σ	1.22	1.42
Medium-scale facilities	μ	1.62	1.68
	σ	1.19	1.43
Large-scale facilities	μ	2.03	2.13
	σ	1.06	1.01

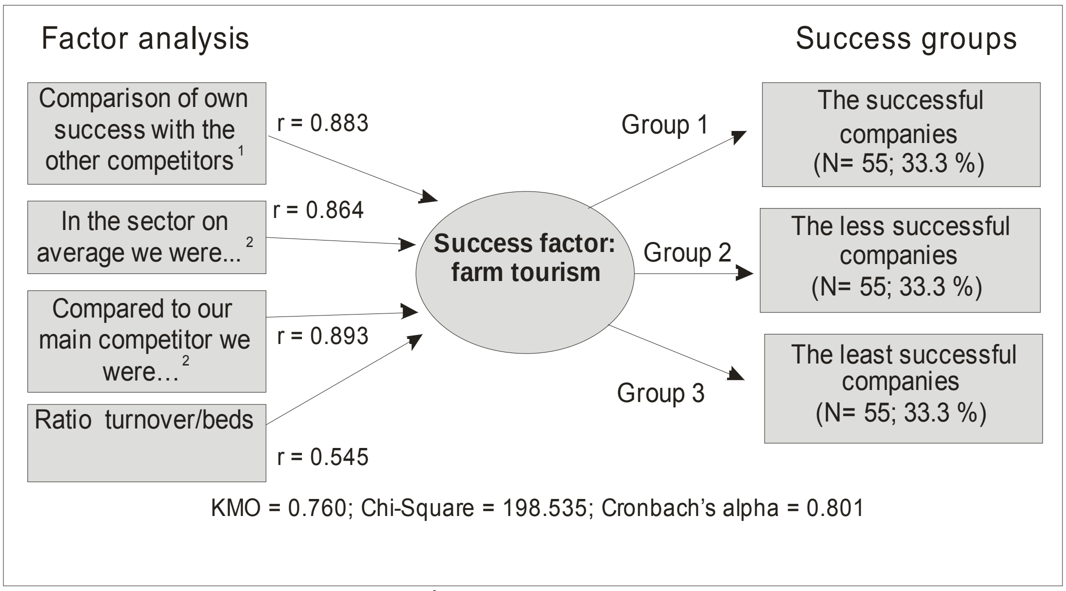
[1] Scale: 7-point Likert-type scale from (+3) totally agree to (-3) totally disagree; σ = standard deviation, μ = mean

Source: own representation

5.4.3 Findings of the multivariate data analysis

We conducted a confirmatory factor analysis in order to obtain a success factor which consisted of both qualitative and quantitative variables (Figure 14). The former are characterized by the evaluation of the farmer's own success both in comparison with the sector's average and with the farmer's main competitors. The qualitative variables figure the highest correlation (factor loading) with the success factor. Regarding the quantitative variable, we opted for variable farm tourism turnover per bed. Figure 14 stresses the Cronbach's alpha and the KMO of the model, which both have a high value.

Figure 14 Construction of a success factor and creation of an index



[1]Scale from (100) very successful to (0) very unsuccessful [2]Scale from (+3) very successful to (-3) very unsuccessful r=factor loading

Source: own representation

Based on the success factor, we divided the sample into three groups: the successful, the less successful and the least successful companies. Each group represents a tercile and contains 55 farm operations. Table 42 indicates the distribution of some descriptive variables among the three groups (analysis of variance). The average number of beds amounts, as before stated, to 17, which means that most respondents of the sample are registered farm operators (as reported in Chapter 2, German farm operators are obliged to register their farm tourism activity when they have more than 8 beds). At the end of the 1990s, the average farm accommodation only had 8.3 beds (Oppermann, 1996).

Table 42 Analysis of variance of descriptive variables

	The most successful group (G1)	The less successful group (G2)	The least successful group (G3)	Total
Number of beds**	μ= 23.5 σ =20.3	μ= 16.8 σ =13.6	μ= 13.5 σ =8.3	μ= 17.0 σ =15.0
Working hours*	μ= 1.11 σ =1.04	μ=.82 σ =.71	μ=.71 σ =.55	μ=.88 σ =.81
Years in the business	μ= 19.0 σ =14.7	μ= 20.7 σ =13.2	μ= 19.4 σ =15.8	μ= 19.7 σ =14.5
Price per guest	μ= 22.1 σ =12.4	μ= 22.3 σ =14.9	μ= 19.6 σ =12.9	μ= 21.3 σ =13.4
Total number of guests per year	μ= 620.0 σ =1523.2	μ= 284.9 σ =349.0	μ= 259.7 σ =412.1	μ= 384.0 σ =922.9
Holiday's duration	μ= 7.8 σ =2.7	μ= 8.3 σ =2.8	μ= 7.8 σ =3.2	μ= 8.0 σ =2.9
Occupancy rate	μ= 141.4 σ =57.8	μ= 123.4 σ =65.2	μ= 122.1 σ =67.4	μ= 128 σ = 64
% repeat guests**	μ= 39.0 σ =25.4	μ= 40.4 σ =23.6	μ= 25.4 σ =22.4	μ= 35.0 σ =24.6
Turnover***	μ= 76,883 σ = 127,423	μ= 23,211 σ=37,581	μ= 14,529 σ=11,948	μ= 38,208 σ=82,029
% ratio farm/ turnover	μ= 34.66 σ =20.34	μ= 32.00 σ =22.81	μ= 25.38 σ =18.72	μ= 30.82 σ =20.86
*** = p<0.001. ** = p<0.01. *=p<0.05; σ = standard deviation, μ = mean				

Source: own calculation

The average number of beds of the most successful farm operators (23.5) is higher than that of the less successful and of the least successful (16.8 and 13.5 respectively). Thus, the size of the farm operation seems to have a positive influence on success, which can demonstrate the importance of economies of scale in this sector. Because of the greater size, farm operators of group one also show the highest amount of working hours. Other variables such as the age of the farm operation and the holiday's duration of guests do not provide significant differences.

The same applies also to the average price (21.3 €). However, there is a significant correlation between DLG operators and the price in comparison to non-DLG operators: on average, the former set higher prices (25.0 €).

Concerning the total number of guests per year, group one (620.0) has twice as many guests as group two (284.9) and group three (259.7). However, due to the high deviation standard, the difference cannot be considered significant. On the contrary, the percentage of repeat guests and the farm tourism turnover are both statistically relevant ($p<0.01$ and $p<0.001$ respectively). Concerning the former, it is group two which displays the highest number of repeat guests with a clear 40.4 % attendance, whilst group one follows with 39.0 % and group three with 25.4 %. In regards to the farm tourism turnover, group one attains 76,883 euros per year versus the 23,211 euros/year of group two and the 14,529 euros/year of group three.

By means of open questions, we directly asked the farm operators which factors they recognized as extremely important for their businesses. Table 43 displays the statements related to success mentioned by the farmers and sorted by groups.

Table 43 Success factors quoted by respondents (open questions; %)

Success factors:	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total % (n)
Personal commitment	27.2 %	26.8 %	21.9 %	25.5 % (69)
Quality of the accommodation	19.0 %	19.7 %	14.3 %	17.8 % (63)
Guests' activities and service	19.8 %	13.4 %	20.0 %	17.6 % (62)
Location/attraction of the region	9.1 %	15.7 %	20.0 %	14.7 % (52)
Children and family orientation	6.6 %	13.4 %	11.4 %	10.5 % (37)
Advertising (Internet)	7.4 %	4.7 %	4.8 %	5.7 % (20)
Rural atmosphere	4.1 %	1.6 %	1.9 %	2.5 % (9)
Price for value	2.5 %	1.6 %	1.9 %	2.0 % (7)
Others	4.1 %	3.1 %	3.8 %	3.7 % (13)
Group 1= the most successful; Group 2= the less successful; Group 3= the least successful				

Source: own calculation

Personal commitment is the factor quoted most in all the three groups and it embraces such statements as a familiar atmosphere, a friendly approach and the provision of good services for the guests. Group three has the lowest rate (21.9 %) in comparison with group one (27.2 %) and group two (26.8 %).

The first group sorted guests' activities at the second place (19.8 %) and the quality of the accommodation at the third (19.0 %). Group two, on the other hand, quoted the quality of the accommodation as the second success factor (19.7 %) and the attraction of the region

(15.7 %) as the third. With a rate of 20 %, the third group chose both guests' activities and attraction of the region as similarly important.

In the next stage, we analyzed the distribution of several statements related to success (see conceptual framework) throughout the three groups by means of a variance analysis. Specifically, the following statements were examined: advertising, guests' activities, quality of accommodation, attraction of the region and personal commitment (Table 44).

According to the above mentioned self-quotation of key factors, the most successful respondents have the highest values both in comparison of guests' activities and in comparison of the quality of the accommodation. Furthermore, they also have the highest figures in statements related to the attraction of the region, advertising and personal commitment.

For the least successful farmers, on the contrary, guests' activities and attraction of the region are both at the lowest level, even though they had quoted them as the most important factors for success (see Table 43). As expected, operators of group one also display the highest scores related to personal commitment.

Table 44 Analysis of variance success related statements for success

Comparison:	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
Comparison of the quality of the accommodation with the other competitors of the sector[1]***	μ= 87.82 σ =8.96	μ= 86.48 σ =8.72	μ= 79.64 σ=14.65	μ= 84.63 σ=11.64
Comparison of the guests' activities with the other competitors of the sector [2]***	μ= 68.91 σ=22.50	μ= 65.28 σ=19.18	μ= 52.41 σ=19.99	μ= 62.22 σ=21.70
Comparison of the power of attraction of the region with the other competitors of the sector [3]*	μ= 76.00 σ=22.74	μ= 71.30 σ=20.75	μ= 64.73 σ=25.52	μ= 70.67 σ=23.42
Comparison of the advertising with the other competitors of the sector [4]***	μ= 65.00 σ=20.72	μ= 56.98 σ=15.39	μ= 46.55 σ=18.68	μ= 56.11 σ=19.82
Personal commitment:	**Group 1**	**Group 2**	**Group 3**	**Total**
We dedicate plenty of time to our guests[5]**	μ= 1.96 σ =0.96	μ= 1.57 σ =1.21	μ= 1.29 σ =1.18	μ= 1.61 σ =1.15
I really appreciate interacting with guests[5]**	μ= 2.27 σ =0.76	μ= 2.23 σ =0.78	μ= 1.76 σ =0.90	μ= 2.09 σ =0.84

[1]Scale from (100) very high quality of accommodation to (0) very low quality of accommodation; [2]Scale from (100) great variety of activities to (0) little variety of activities; [3]Scale from (100) great power of attraction of the region to (0) low power of attraction of the region; [4]Scale from (100) great amount of advertising to (0) low amount of advertising [5]Scale from (+3) = totally agree to (-3) = totally disagree, *** = $p<0.001$, ** = $p<0.01$, *=$p<0.05$, μ= mean, σ = standard deviation; Group 1= the most successful; Group 2= the less successful; Group 3= the least successful

Source: own calculation

In the final part of the research the influence of the professionalism features towards the success factor (dependent variable) was measured. For this purpose, we conducted a multiple linear regression model (see Table 45) by means of the stepwise ordinary least squares method (OLS). As independent variables we chose all success factors mentioned by respondents in Table 43 to which certification and the statements of Table 44 were added.

The F-test value shows the significance of the model, whereas the variance of the dependent variable is explained by 40 % (adj. R square). Based on the standardized beta coefficients, only five variables out of 14 display significant differences along the groups. The most important variable is advertising, which is followed by guests' activities ($p<0.001$), quality of the accommodation, attraction of the region (both p<0.01) and guests' appreciation of the price for value (p<0.05).

Table 45 Results of the regression analysis

Independent Variables	Beta value	T value	p
Comparison of own advertising with the other competitors of the sector [1]***	.327	4.137	.000
Comparison of own program of guests' activities with the other competitors of the sector [2]***	.294	3.755	.000
Comparison of own quality of the accommodation with the other competitors of the sector [3]**	.228	2.862	.005
Comparison of own power of attraction of the region with the other competitors of the sector [4]**	.221	2.822	.006
Guests appreciate our price for value[5]*	.167	2.081	.040

[1]Scale from (100) great amount of advertising to (0) low amount of advertising; [2]Scale from (100) great variety of guests' activities to (0) low variety of guests' activities; [3]Scale from (100) very high quality of accommodation to (0) very low quality of accommodation; [4]Scale from (100) great power of attraction of the region to (0) low power of attraction of the region; [5]Scale from (+3) totally agree to (-3) totally disagree; adj. $R^2 = 0.395$; $F = 14.824$***; *** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$

Dependent variable = success factor (index)

Independent variables: comparison of the advertising, comparison of the guest activities, comparison of the quality of the accommodation, comparison of the power of attraction of the region, guests appreciate our price/service ratio, DLG certification, personal commitment, quality of the accommodation, guests' activities and service, location/attraction of the farm facility, children and family orientation, advertising (Internet), rural atmosphere, price for value

Source: own calculation

5.5 Discussion

As expected, advertising proved to be one of the greatest success factors of the analysis. Nevertheless, if these findings are compared with the success factors quoted by the respondents, it is remarkable that no operator has recognized advertising as a key factor. Another finding of this research is the importance of guests' activities. Again, this factor appears to be slightly underestimated by the less successful operators (Table 43) compared with the other respondents of the sample.

The other two important success factors which emerge from this analysis are the attraction of the region and the quality of the accommodation. Whereas farm operators have little influence on the former, the importance of the quality of the accommodation, neglected by operators of group three, could better explain the success of farm operators of the first group.

The guests' appreciation of price for value, the last significant success factor, also confirms these findings. In contrast with the results of the variance analysis, personal commitment does not figure significant in the outcome of the regression analysis.

Overall, the data provide an interesting overview of the perceptions that farm hosts have of their guests and of the entire sector. For instance, group one and group two both share a quite similar perception of success factors compared to group three. This is particularly evident for the quality of the accommodation: farm operators are aware that, even at farms, guests are not willing to forego quality-related factors such as comfort, cleanliness and smart furniture.

This is consistent with previous studies, which state that the demand for farm holidays does not ignore quality (Shakur & Holland, 2000; Van Huylenbroeck et al., 2006). Group three, in turn, relies particularly on the attraction of the region and guests' activities.

We can therefore describe the three groups of operators as follows:

- *The most successful operators (Group 1).* They estimate themselves as market's leaders, which is also confirmed by the highest share of farm tourism income and of regular guests. They invest most in advertising (especially through the internet), guests' activities and quality of the accommodation, which have been identified as the success factors for this tourist market. However, they do not identify advertising as an important factor for success when asked directly for their perceived success factors.
- *The least successful operators (Group 3).* This group is aware of lagging behind the other two groups which is also shown by the lowest share of farm tourism income and of repeat guests. They seem to rely predominantly on their personal skills as well as on the attraction of the region; though, it must be stated that their overall performance in the sector is very weak. For this group farm tourism is expected to remain a side-income, unless strong investments take place (especially in the form of internet advertising).
- *The less successful operators (Group 2).* Respondents of this group are the most difficult to portray. They return above-average scores, yet, they lag behind group one in relation to all success factors extrapolated by the regression analysis. Furthermore, they underestimate the importance of advertising and guests' activities as determining factors for success. It seems that their marketing and managerial skills need to be further boosted.

5.6 Conclusions and limitations of the study

The current research focuses on the success factors of farm tourism in Germany in order to detect the degree of professionalism of operators. For this purpose, based on a online survey of 167 farm operators, we built three success groups and searched for relevant differences among them by means of multivariate data analysis (variance analysis and regression).

In the sample, the most successful operators seem to have learnt how to combine the traditional image of farm tourism (perpetuated by repeat guests) with the growing quality standards demanded by guests (service, accommodation). However, this study has shown that for most operators the professionalism process still has a long way to go, as they rely more on their intuitions than on sound market knowledge.

This is consistent with recent studies which recommend training programs organized by local government as a means of reinforcement of the operators' know-how (Roberts & Hall 2001; Veeck, Che & Veeck, 2006).

Mention should also be made of the main limitations of the study. Participants to this study have been approached by sending an e-mail to the Internet account available on their home page. Thus, operators without a Website were excluded from the study.

Nevertheless, the study illustrated in the previous chapter (cf. Italian sample) shows that there are significant differences between operators with own Websites in comparison with the ones without Website. Thus, bias related to an over skilled level of the sample used in this study cannot be excluded.

Further studies may put up two kinds of sample (with and without Website) to comparatively analyze the performance of the leisure farm industry.

In the further chapters of this dissertation the analysis will focus on the demand side in order to highlight opportunities and differences in this type of tourism and thereby deliver new insight as basis to further professionalize farm tourism.

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Chapter 6

6 Individuals’ perceptions of German farm tourism

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the determinants of preference for German farm tourism. The specific objectives to be pursued are twofold.

1. Holiday preferences of both experienced farm guests and inexperienced farm guests for the supply of farm tourism are compared in order to detect possible new positioning possibilities to attract more guests. For instance, the study of the Austrian Government reveals that whereas for current guests of Austrian farm tourism this tourist form is mainly perceived as a holiday for the whole family, the strongest associations of potential guests with this tourist form are with nature and animals (BLFUW, 2007).
2. Preferences for different hypothetical scenarios of farm tourism are tested, in order to estimate their market potential. During the last few years German farm operators have begun to reposition their product according to different orientations e.g. target (children, the handicapped, senior citizens, etc.), the farm type (conventional agriculture and organic agriculture) and the activities (supply of fitness and wellness services, school activities, etc.). In line with this development, five possible scenarios of farm tourism have been designed in order to detect the degree of favor towards them.

To reach the above mentioned objectives, two empirical analyses have been applied. Firstly, to measure the determinants of preference for German farm tourism, a structural equation model (SEM) based on partial least squares (PLS) was used. Secondly, to detect the preference for different farm tourism scenarios, a multinomial logit (MNL) model was estimated. The data of both analyses were derived from a survey conducted in Germany during the summer of 2007.

In the following chapters the literature review and the conceptual framework of the study as well as the methodology will be introduced. The results of the empirical analyses are presented which lead to the conclusions. A final discussion will follow in order to outline the future direction of this research.

6.2 Literature review

The literature on farm tourism is quite extensive, but the applications to farm tourism from the demand side are not as numerous. In his review of European farm tourism, Dernoi (1983) asserts that as they are generally offered at a much lower price than conventional tourism, farm holidays are perceived as vacations at reasonable prices. According to Ingram (2002), the majority of farm tourists see the farming holiday as a panacea for the stresses of a busy lifestyle because of the "uplifting and peaceful countryside". Based on holidays on organic farms, the analysis of McIntosh and Bonnemann (2006) reveals that learning and authenticity are the most appreciated values of the farming experience as declared by customers.

When focusing on the literature on farm tourism in German speaking countries, the perceived features of the farm holidays do not greatly differ from the above mentioned ones. In the 1970s the most frequently stated associations with farm tourism were described by Pevetz (1978) as follows: "relaxing and child-friendly", "natural environment", "personal atmosphere" and "inexpensive". In these years most customers shared a stereotypical image of the farm, whereas the negative associations encompass few leisure activities and the sporadic lack of hygiene and comfort.

During the 1980s some studies highlighted an improvement of the image of German farm tourism, thus establishing itself as safer and more comfortable (Lehle, 1982). Furthermore, guests are still maintaining a stereotypical image both of the farm (typical Bavarian style) and of the farming activities such as "chopping wood for men and gardening for women". According to Wohlmann and Lohmann (1986), farm guests identify farm tourism as a suitable destination to "free" one's own "creativity", whereas Lehle (1982) conducted the first survey to also include potential guests (people who have not experienced farm tourism yet but are in favor of it) and concludes that "there are no significant differences in the perceptions of both segments". In his study, Lender (1997) confirms that the most important determinant for choosing a farm holiday is the appealing price. Furthermore, he states that farm guests still share a stereotypical image of leisure farms without "any significant gender related differences in perception". In his article on farm tourism in southern Germany, Oppermann (1995) suggests that farm guests share a more idealized image of nature rather than of the farm as the latter "seems to take backstage" (ibid: 65). Furthermore, no significant differences could be found between city and non-city dwellers as far as their perceptions were concerned. In the annual survey on German leisure behaviour with a special session dedicated to farm tourism, the above mentioned images establish themselves as a “leit motif” of Germans' perceptions of farm tourism (BMELV, 2006). Focused on Austrian farm tourism, a governative study of 2007 is particularly important in order to gain some insights into the strengths and the challenges of this tourism form based on its customers' perceptions (BLFUW, 2007). Accordingly, Austrian agritourism is more developed than the German one concerning the total turnover and the number of guests. This reflects on customer associations towards this tourist form. In comparison with German farm tourism, two new perceptions - the learning component and the quality of food - offer an idea of the high level of professionalism reached by the Austrian operations. Conversely, among the least mentioned associations are the business oriented accommodations, wellness and sport.

To sum up, the most important features related to the image of German farm tourism displayed in the literature are the following: appealing prices (Oppermann, 1996), the possibility of discovering the original harmony with nature (Nilsson, 2002) and the perception of farm tourism as a family-friendly holiday (Lender, 1997). As far as the negative determinants are concerned, some signals relating to quality deficits have been detected such as the risk of getting bored (Pevetz, 1978) or the overall belief that farm tourism is not attractive to families/individuals without children.

As far as our second research purpose is concerned the literature regarding preference for hypothetical holiday scenarios has been reviewed. According to Frasquet, Gil and Mollá (2001) most models include “subjective measures as explanatory variables (e.g. based on consumer perceptions)” and revealed preference as the explained one. Both perceptions (Andereck et al., 2005; Sladek, Bodmer & Heissenhuber, 2002) and images (Baloglu, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Tasci & Gartner, 2007) are the most employed “subjective measures” of preference, since “the perceived features rather than the characteristics themselves are believed to be the determinants of the buying behaviour” (Frasquet et al., 2001). Furthermore, in many studies the multinomial logit analysis (MNL) has proven robust in explaining the factors influencing stated preferences (Chen & Uysal 2002, Kim, Wong, & Cho, 2007; Morley 1994).

As before mentioned, in this chapter we introduce five possible repositioning suggestions for farm tourism in a multinomial model in order to determine how they are perceived by the respondents of this sample. Adopting a managerially oriented perspective, this paper offers marketers and policymakers useful insights into tourists' preferences for these new types of farm tourism.

6.3 Study 1: preference patterns of the current supply of farm tourism

6.3.1 Conceptual framework

In tourism literature the preference for a destination or holiday type is often measured by means of either its overall image (Beerli & Martín, 2004) or by the individual's attitudes towards it (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Um & Crompton, 1990). Thus, "the relationship between attitude and image is so close that in many studies the two termini have been used interchangeably" (Hunter, 2006). Thus, since the first objective of this research is to measure the preference for farm tourism, attitude will be used in the following section as a predictor of choice.

According to the abc-model (affect, behavior and cognition) (Solomon, Bamossy, & Askegaard, 2000), attitude consists of an affective (what the consumer feels about an object), a cognitive (the beliefs a consumer has about an object) and a behavioral component (e.g. the purchase of an object). For this reason, a theoretical framework was developed in this research based on the assumption that both the affective and the cognitive properties of attitude significantly affect consumers' preference for a farm tourism holiday.

In this model, attitude towards agritourism is considered an antecedent of choice which in its turn measures the degree of preference for farm tourism in comparison with other vacation forms. Thus, the first hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 1: A positive attitude towards farm tourism has a positive influence on choice of this tourist form.

As mentioned above, attitude is split into affective and cognitive properties. Among the former, mental images of farm tourism are included which, according to the current literature (BMELV, 2006; Lemke, 2003; Oppermann, 1996; Wohlmann & Lohmann, 1986), correspond to the following: agritourism is a suitable holiday (1) to rest in a peaceful surrounding (traditional image); (2) to enjoy fitness and wellness services (wellness image); and (3) to experience something new (excitement image). Whereas the first image has been enhancing the historical image of German farm tourism for years, the other two correspond to the marketing efforts of several agritourism associations that have been working hard for some years to reposition this niche market within the tourism sector and access new market segments.

Accordingly, the next hypotheses are:

Hypothesis 2: The traditional image of farm tourism has a positive influence on the overall attitude towards this tourist form.

Hypothesis 3: The wellness image of farm tourism has a positive influence on the overall attitude towards this tourist form.

Hypothesis 4: The excitement image of farm tourism has a positive influence on the overall attitude towards this tourist form.

Among the cognitive properties of attitude, social stimuli, risk perception and experience are included. Whereas the former two constructs have an inhibitory function towards attitude, experience plays a facilitating role (compare Um & Crompton, 1990).

Social stimuli are a well known construct in the literature on consumer behaviour; it corresponds to the influence of social groups (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) who can exercise "pressures towards conformity" (Yu, Dutta & Pysarchik, 2007: 82). According to the German literature, farm tourism has a very stereotypical image (BMELV, 2006; Oppermann, 1996; Wohlmann & Lohmann, 1986). Thus, social groups are assumed to strongly contribute to the transmission of stereotypes related to farm tourism and thus have a negative influence on the preference for this tourist form.

As far as risk perception is concerned, there is general agreement that the choice of a holiday is also an economic activity, where usually the alternative is selected that minimizes risk and maximizes utility (Beerli & Martín, 2004; Um & Crompton, 1990). Thus, all things being equal, the more risky (e.g. with regard to functional or financial risk) persons perceive an activity, the more negative their overall attitude towards this activity become. Experience is assumed to have, on the contrary, a positive influence, as this tourist form is characterized by a high rate of repeat guests (Lemke, 2003; Oppermann, 1996). Accordingly, the next hypotheses are:

Hypothesis 5: Social stimuli have a negative influence on the overall attitude towards farm tourism.

Hypothesis 6: Risk perception has a negative influence on the overall attitude towards farm tourism.

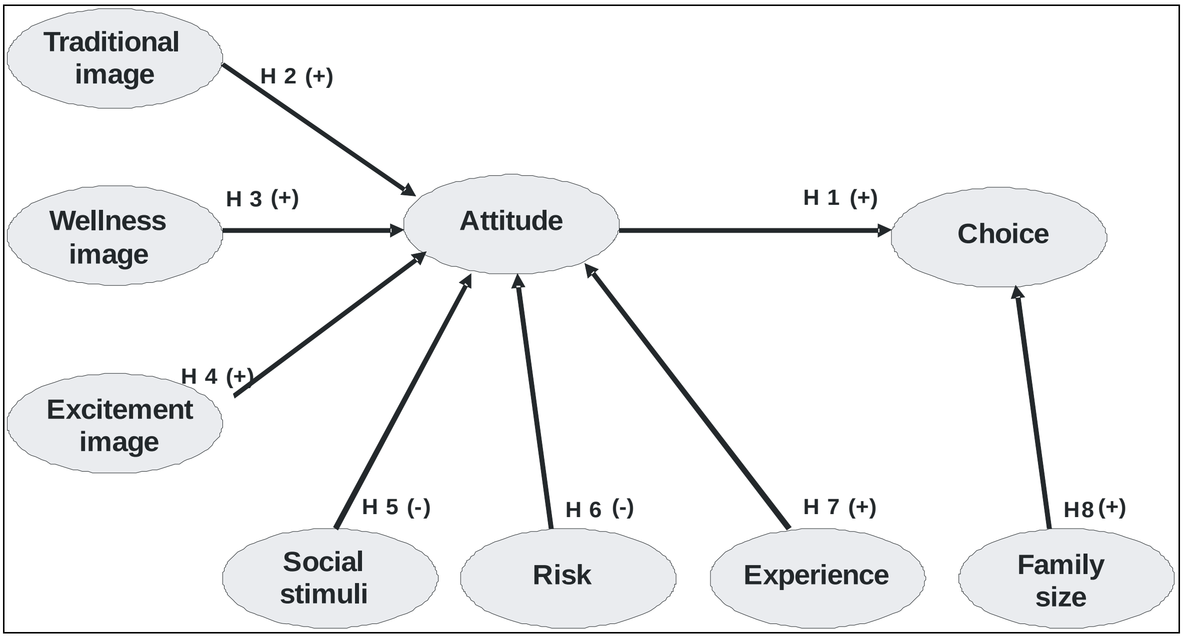
Hypothesis 7: Experience has a positive influence on the overall attitude towards farm tourism.

Finally, this model includes family size as socio-demographic data. As mentioned before, German agritourism has traditionally been the travel destination of large families. Therefore, the following is hypothesized.

Hypothesis 8: The number of family members has a positive influence on choice of farm tourism.

Figure 15 shows the conceptual framework of this analysis.

Figure 15 Theoretical framework



Source: own representation

6.3.2 Research design

Data collection and questionnaire design

Data for this study were gathered via administrated questionnaires during the first two weeks of June 2007 within the frame of an academic “marketing research” course. After a pre-testing phase during which a group of experts was asked to give feedback on the readability of items, each of the students attending the course interviewed 10 people using common demographic criteria as a guideline (gender, profession, age, etc.). Because of time and financial restraints the sample was not intended to be representative. The final number of available responses was 567.

The questionnaire consisted of six parts: a set of items measuring the overall attitude towards farm tourism, a ranking item according to which respondents were asked to sort farm tourism among six other tourist types, an image measurement component for the affective property of attitude, a set of items measuring the cognitive property of attitude, a set of items regarding five scenarios of agritourism and a group of socio-demographic variables.

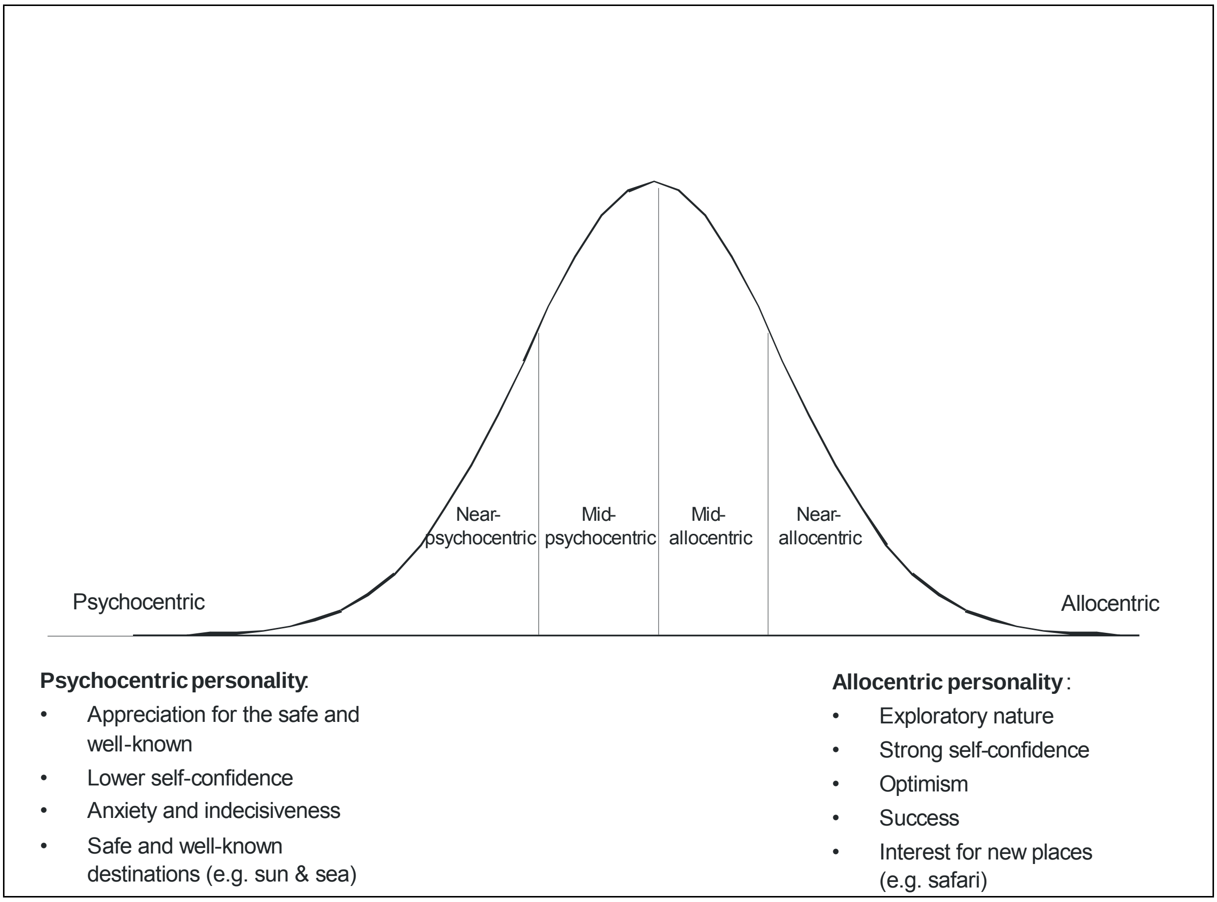
Because of the absence of established scales for determinants of preference for farm tourism, items were constructed to measure each of the proposed constructs. More specifically, attitude towards farm tourism was conceived using items which detected the probability of choosing a farm holiday in the short term and was based on the theory of reasoned action which suggests that the impact of one's attitude on behaviour is mediated by intentions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Hunter, 2006; Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). Based on two items, attitude was measured on a five-point Likert-type scale anchored by "strongly agree" (+2) to "strongly disagree" (-2). Thus, a higher item score indicates a more positive attitude towards farm tourism.

A ranking item was particularly important for the construction of choice of farm tourism. The respondents of the sample were first asked to sort seven holiday types among which were a safari, holiday abroad, city and cultural holiday, holiday in a wellness hotel, holiday in wellness farm tourism, rural tourism, and conventional farm tourism. The conceptualization of the seven alternatives encompassed a set of vacation forms ranging from the most adventurous to the most conventional and was based upon Plog's dimensions of personality types (Plog, 2002).

The latter are normally distributed and have on the one extreme the psychocentric travelers who are "self inhibited and adventure-adverse", and on the other end are the allocentric travelers who are "outgoing and self-confident". Between these two extremes, Plog says that "a large number fit into the near-psychocentric or near-allocentric (about 16% in each case), and the majority of the population […] falls into the middle of the curve" (Plog, 2002: 245). Since, according to the author, destinations, like people, can be plotted along a psychocentric-allocentric continuum, the ranking items were used to segment respondents of the sample.

However, as the choice of tourist types is influenced by the country of the respondents, Plog's psychocentric-allocentric continuum was adapted to German respondents according to the literature. Nature-based tourist forms were assigned to allocentric destinations due to the findings of previous studies which attest the relationship between adventure-friendly vacationers and the decision to spend a nature-based holiday (cf. Park & Yoon, 2008; Tran & Ralston, 2006). Furthermore as 70% of Germans spend their holiday abroad (DTV, 2008; FUR, 2008) this holiday type together with city break were considered the most popular holiday forms.

Figure 16 Plog's psychographic personality types



Source: own representation based on Plog (2002)

Finally, the tourist forms related to the wellness niche were considered the allocentric types of holiday as wellness tourists look for scheduled and well-known program and, in this context, show a low appreciation for venturesomeness (Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001). All told, the set of the seven vacation forms ranging from the most adventurous to the most conventional was structured as follows: safari, farm tourism, rural tourism, holiday abroad, city break, holiday at a wellness hotel and holiday on a wellness farm.

As mentioned, the ranking item was further used to build a choice construct. Thus, this process took place in a two-stage approach. In the above mentioned ranking statement the category of "conventional farm tourism" was used in order to build an index which focuses exclusively on farm tourism. (The category concerning rural tourism was not included in the index in order to avoid confusion, as rural tourism encompasses a much broader range of activities.) The final index was a five-point index where the highest score indicates the strongest agreement of choosing farm tourism as a holiday type. More specifically, the index measures the degree of appreciation of farm tourism using the following scale: very low appreciation (1 = respondents who ranked farm tourism at the last two places), low appreciation (2 = farm tourism ranked not better than fifth place), middle appreciation (3 = farm tourism ranked not better than fourth place), high appreciation (4 = farm tourism ranked not better than third place) and very high appreciation (5 = farm tourism ranked either second or first place).

The constructs regarding both the affective and the cognitive properties of attitude were largely derived from the available literature on German agritourism ranging from the 1970s to the present (BMELV, 2006; Lehle, 1982; Lemke, 2003; Lender, 1997; Oppermann, 1996; Wohlmann & Lohmann, 1986). For the constructs regarding the three agritourism images, both sets of items related to the “typical activities in agritourism” and “perceived images of agritourism” were included. Referring to the latter, the semantic differential measurement was adopted, where each response was located on an evaluative bipolar (negative-to-positive) dimension using a five-point Likert-type scale. Thus, high numbers indicate positive images.

The semantic differential measurement was adopted for the construct’s social stimuli and risk perception as well. However, in this case, each response was located on an evaluative bipolar (positive-to-negative) five-point Likert-type scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. Here, high numbers indicate high stereotypes (perpetuated by social stimuli) as well as high risk perception. Finally, experience was measured on a five-point Likert-type scale anchored by “never” (-2) to “always” (+2).

6.3.3 Analysis of the main findings

6.3.3.1 Profile of respondents

Table 46 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The mean age is 40 years old. As far as the place of residence is concerned, 62% reside in a rural or middle-urban area (villages or cities below 30,000 inhabitants) followed by 25% from a small-to-large city (up to 500,000 inhabitants) and 13% from a very big city (above 500,000 inhabitants).

Table 46 Profile of respondents

Demographic data	n	%
Place of residence		
Village or small city[1]	350	62
Medium size city[2]	141	25
Big city[3]	73	13
Gender		
Female	304	54
Male	259	46
Age		
14-30 years old	197	35
31-54 years old	259	46
More than 54 years old	101	19
Mean: 40 years		
Education		
University degree or more	197	35
Professional degree	135	24
High school	158	28
Other	68	13
Household income and composition		
Below € 1,000	102	18
€ 1,000 – 2,500	195	34
€ 2,501 – 3,500	142	25
over € 3,500	82	14
Did not answer	46	8
Average size: 3 people		
Average number of children: 1		

[1](< 30,000 inhabitants), [2](30,000 - 500,000 inhabitants), [3](more than 500,000 inhabitants)
Source: own calculation

Female respondents encompass 54%. Around 35% are between 14 and 30 years old, 46% between 31 and 54 years and 19% score from 55 years old onwards. On average, the family size is three people. Based on the 227 respondents with children, the average number is only one child per household. Around 35% of respondents have a university degree, followed by 24% who have a professional degree. Respondents with a high school degree are 28%, whereas 13% have other types of education degrees.

Around 34% of respondents declared an income between 1,000 and 2,500 euros per month, followed by 25% who earn between 2,501 and 3,500. At the extreme bottom, 18% have a monthly income below 1,000 euros, whereas at the extreme top 14% declared an income above 3,500 euros. About 8% of respondents did not answer.

6.3.3.2 Travel behavior and preferences for holiday types

As far as tourist behavior (Table 47) is concerned, the average propensity to go on holiday is once to twice yearly; and the average duration is one to two weeks. All in all, the leisure behavior of the sample displays a high similarity with the one taken of the whole population (BMELV, 2006).

Table 47 Travel behavior

Travel behavior	Mean	Standard Deviation
Holiday frequency[1]	1.5	1.1
Holiday duration[2]	3.0	0.8

[1]Five-point Likert-type scale ranging from (0) last year-never to (4) more than three times per year.
[2]Five- point Likert-type scale from (0) up to four days to (4) for more than three weeks.

Source: own calculation

According to the ranking item, the most preferred vacation form is a holiday abroad (43%), followed by rural tourism (19%), city break (15%), safari (12%), holiday in a wellness hotel (5%), wellness holiday on a farm (3%) and conventional farm tourism (3%) (Table 48).

As expected, holiday abroad, rural tourism and city break are chosen by the vast majority of the respondents. Thus, they can be considered midcentric holiday types. Safari scores higher than expected, whereas farm tourism, holiday in a wellness hotel and holiday on a wellness farm are appreciated by a limited number of respondents[16].

Table 48 Ranking among different vacation forms

Type of holiday[1]	Ranking (first scored holiday type in %)
1. Holiday abroad	43%
2. Rural tourism	19%
3. City break	15%
4. Safari	12%
5. Wellness holiday in a hotel	5%
6. Wellness holiday on a farm	3%
7. Farm tourism	3%

[1]Ranking item from (1) most appreciated holiday type to (7) least appreciated holiday type

Source: own representation

As shown in Table 49, all in all, respondents of this sample show a high to very high degree of appreciation for a sun & sea tourist form (76%), followed by city break and holiday abroad (both 67%) and nature (64%). Around 40% of respondents strongly or somewhat appreciate a

[16] In chapter 6.3.3.3. farm tourism will be further analysed to detect if this tourist form is more likely to be appreciated by adventure-friendly respondents or not thus comparing how it is perceived by experienced and non experienced farm guests.

winter holiday. Sport and cultural holidays follow with 38% of respondents. On the other side, only 16% show a high to very high degree of appreciation for amusement parks.

Table 49 Preference for different holiday types

Preferred holiday type[1]	Percent of respondents who strongly or somewhat agree
Sun & sea	76
City break	67
Abroad	67
Nature	64
Winter	40
Culture	38
Sport	38
Amusement park	16
[1] Five-point Likert-type scale ranging from (+2) strongly agree to (-2) strongly disagree	

Source: own calculation

Regarding the type of accommodation, holiday houses and hotels are the most appreciated (86% and 81%, respectively), followed by Bed & Breakfast (66%) facilities. On the other hand, only 33% of respondents of this sample show a very or somewhat high appreciation for camping and 20% for youth hostels (see Table 50).

Table 50 Types of accommodation

Preferred type of accommodation	Percent of respondents who strongly or somewhat agree
Holiday house	86
Hotel	81
Bed & Breakfast	66
Camping	33
Youth hostel	20
[1] Five-point Likert-type scale ranging from (+2) strongly agree to (-2) strongly disagree	

Source: own representation

Among the most quoted reasons for taking a holiday, Table 51 shows that 87% of respondents choose a holiday in order to see new places. Both the reasons “I want to feel free” and “to get new energy” find the favor of 81% of respondents, followed by the reasons “have fun” and “escape day-to-day life” (both 80%). Around 75% of respondents strongly or somewhat agree that they choose a holiday in order to get in contact with unspoiled nature as well as for experiencing a change. Relaxation is the reason which finds favor with around 72% of respondents.

Table 51 Reasons for taking a holiday

Reason for taking a holiday[1]	Percent of respondents who strongly or somewhat agree
New places	87
Feel free	81
Get new energy	81
Have fun	80
Escape day-to-day life	80
Unspoiled nature	75
Change	75
Relaxation	72

[1] Five-point Likert-type scale ranging from (+2) strongly agree to (-2) strongly disagree

Source: own representation

As shown in Table 52, around 73% of respondents are likely to choose the car as means of transport during their holiday, followed by 43% who fly to their destination. The train is chosen by 18% of respondents. Of far lesser significance are the bicycle and the bus (both 8%), followed by 6% who choose the caravan and 4% who score the boat.

Table 52 Holiday organization

Preferred means of transport[1]	Percent of respondents who strongly or somewhat agree
Car	73
Plane	43
Train	18
Bicycle	8
Bus	8
Caravan	6
Boat	4

[1] Five-point Likert-type scale ranging from (+2) strongly agree to (-2) strongly disagree

Source: own representation

Table 53 displays the activities which are more likely to be stated by respondents with a high or very high degree of favor. “City stroll” is stated by 51% of respondents, followed by participating in outdoor sports (46%) and shopping (43%). Around 36% of respondents are likely to spend their holiday in pubs, bars, etc., followed by 34% who organize excursions and 33% who visit museums, art exhibitions, etc.

Table 53 Activities on holiday

Activities on holiday[1]	Percent of respondents who strongly or somewhat agree
City stroll	51
Outdoor sports	46
Shopping	43
Pubs, discos, etc.	36
Excursions	34
Museums, exhibitions	33

[1] Five-point Likert-type scale ranging from (+2) strongly agree to (-2) strongly disagree

Source: own representation

6.3.3.3 Comparison of travel behaviour of experienced farm guests and non farm guests

In the following, respondents are divided into two groups: farm guests, i.e. respondents with past experience of farm tourism (n=235) and non farm guests, i.e. without any previous experience of this tourist form (n=332). Next, the two clusters are compared in order to examine whether significant differences exist in terms of travel behaviour and image of farm tourism. To this end, t-test for independent samples is used. Only significant differences ($p<0.05$) are reported.

Table 54 shows the main differences between farm guests and non farm guests in terms of holiday form and accommodation types. Not surprisingly, farm guests show a higher appreciation for a nature holiday than the non farm guests (mean values are 1.04 and 0.67 respectively),

Table 54 Holiday and accommodation types

Preferred type of holiday/accommodation[1]:	Farm guests (n=235)	Non farm guests (n=332)	Total (n=567)
Nature holiday***	μ= 1.04 (σ =0.98)	μ= 0.67 (σ =1.17)	μ= 0.82 (σ =1.11)
Sun & Sea*	μ= 1.04 (σ =1.01)	μ= 1.24 (σ =0.95)	μ= 1.16 (σ =0.98)
Hotel*	μ= 0.97 (σ =0.94)	μ= 1.16 (σ =0.87)	μ= 1.09 (σ =0.90)
Youth Hostel**	μ= -0.40 (σ =1.13)	μ= -0.67 (σ =1.15)	μ= -0.55 (σ =1.15)

[1] Five-point Likert-type scale ranging from (+2) I like very much to (-2) do not like at all, * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$, μ=mean value, σ =standard deviation

Source: own representation

On the contrary, the highest degree of appreciation of the tourist form of sun & sea is shown in non farm guests (mean value of farm guests = 1.04 versus non farm guests = 1.24). Significant differences are also displayed concerning the type of accommodation: hotel is generally more strongly preferred by non farm guests (mean=1.16) than farm guests (mean= 0.97). On the other hand, youth hostels scores higher among farm guests (mean=-0.40) than non farm guests (mean=-0.67), although the overall level of appreciation towards this type of accommodation is albeit low.

Table 55 displays the reasons for taking a holiday. Farm guests show a significantly lower need for comfort on holiday than non farm guests (mean values -0.42 versus -0.13 respectively). Furthermore, the former express the need of remaining active by participating in some type of sport during their holiday than non farm guests (mean values 0.26 versus -0.02 respectively). In the same way, farm guests are more likely to feel the need of expressing their own creativity on holiday than non farm guests (mean values 0.19 versus -0.16 respectively). Also, the need of taking a holiday in order to escape day-to-day life is more accentuated by non farm guests (mean value = 1.27) than by farm guests (mean value =1.04).

Table 55 Reasons for taking a holiday

Reason[1]:	**Farm guests (n=235)**	**Non farm guests (n=332)**	**Total (n=567)**
To remain active and to practice some sport**	μ= 0.26 (σ =1.06)	μ= -0.02 (σ =1.07)	μ= 0.10 (σ =1.08)
To free my creativity***	μ= 0.19 (σ =1.02)	μ= -0.16 (σ =1.06)	μ= -0.02 (σ =1.06)
Comfort[2] **	μ= -0.42 (σ =1.10)	μ= -0.13 (σ =1.18)	μ= -0.25 (σ =1.16)
Escape day-to-day life**	μ= 1.04 (σ =0.99)	μ= 1.27 (σ =0.84)	μ= 1.17 (σ =0.91)

[1] Five-point Likert-type scale ranging from (+2) strongly agree to (-2) strongly disagree, [2]Item: I do not want to bother about anything; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$, μ=mean value, σ =standard deviation

Source: own representation

Table 56 shows the activities on holiday. In line with the previously stated reasons for taking a holiday, farm guests are more likely to go to festivals in the countryside than non farm guests (mean scores -0.21 versus -0.42 respectively), whereas on holiday the latter are more likely to go out to pubs, bars, etc., than farm guests (mean scores 0.11 versus -0.17 respectively). Finally, farm guests seem to have more social contacts than the other group of respondents, since they are more likely to visit relatives and friends when they are on holiday than non farm guests (mean scores -0.11 versus -0.34 respectively).

Table 56 Holiday activities

Degree of agreement[1]:	Farm guests (n=235)	Non farm guests (n=332)	Total (n=567)
I go to festivals in the countryside*	μ= -0.21 (σ =1.03)	μ= -0.42 (σ =0.96)	μ= -0.33 (σ =0.99)
I visit relatives/friends*	μ= -0.11 (σ =1.03)	μ= -0.34 (σ =1.08)	μ= -0.25 (σ =1.07)
Go out (bars, pubs etc.)**	μ= -0.17 (σ =1.23)	μ= 0.11 (σ =1.12)	μ= 0.01 (σ =1.20)
[1] Five-point Likert-type scale ranging from (+2) strongly agree to (-2) strongly disagree, * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$, μ=mean value, σ =standard deviation			

Source: own representation

Focusing on the travel organization, farm guests use the train more frequently to reach their holiday resorts than the others (mean values 1.52 versus 1.30 respectively). Furthermore, farm guests are less likely to book a holiday through a travel agency than non farm guests (mean values -0.32 versus -0.13). Moreover, when booking a holiday, farm guests tend more frequently to book at small-sized facilities than the others (mean scores 0.40 versus 0.00) (see Table 57).

Table 57 Travel organization

Degree of agreement[1]:	Farm guests (n=235)	Non farm guests (n=332)	Total (n=567)
Train*	μ= 1.52 (σ =1.19)	μ= 1.30 (σ =1.20)	μ= 1.39 (σ =1.20)
Travel booking through a travel agency [a]	μ= -0.32 (σ =1.12)	μ= -0.13 (σ =1.13)	μ= -0.21 (σ =1.13)
I book my holiday at small-sized facilities***	μ= 0.40 (σ =0.98)	μ= 0.00 (σ =1.01)	μ= 0.15 (σ =1.02)
[1] Five-point Likert-type scale from (+2) I use it very often for my holiday to (-2) I use it very rarely for my holiday, [a] = $p < 0.10$, * = $p < 0.05$, *** = $p < 0.001$, μ=mean value, σ =standard deviation			

Source: own representation

Table 58 shows the main differences between farm guests and non farm guests in terms of life and travel style. The latter is measured by the statements related to activities, interests and opinions known in the literature as AIO model (see Solomon et al., 2000). Wherever they spend a holiday, farm guests are more likely to enjoy being taken for locals than non farm guests (mean scores -0.27 versus -0.49 respectively). They are also “innovative” in their daily consumption patterns, since they are more likely to choose niche products such as organic foods than non farm guests (mean values 0.07 and -0.17 respectively). As a consequence, farm guests are less likely to buy in discount stores than non farm guests (mean scores 0.27 versus 0.43 respectively).

They seem to be driven by authentic values which they are less likely to ignore than non farm guests: for instance, also by booking a holiday, farm guests show a higher concern for environmental issues than the others (mean scores -0.26 versus -0.54 respectively) and healthy nutrition (mean values farm guests = 1.24 versus non farm guests = 1.09).

Table 58 Main differences in lifestyle patterns among farm guests and non farm guests

Lifestyle items[1]:	Farm guests (n=235)	Non farm guests (n=332)	Total (n=567)
Activities			
On holiday I enjoy being taken as a local*	μ= -0.27 (σ =1.10)	μ= -0.49 (σ =0.99)	μ= -0.41 (σ =1.05)
I eat a lot of organic products**	μ= 0.07 (σ =0.97)	μ= -0.17 (σ =0.94)	μ= -0.08 (σ =0.96)
I usually buy in discount stores*	μ= 0.27 (σ =0.95)	μ= 0.43 (σ =0.91)	μ= 0.37 (σ =0.93)
Interests			
Environmental issues by travel booking**	μ=- 0.26 (σ =1.07)	μ= -0.54 (σ =0.97)	μ= -0.43 (σ =1.02)
A healthy nutrition is very important to me*	μ= 1.24 (σ =0.69)	μ= 1.09 (σ =0.74)	μ= 1.15 (σ =0.72)
Opinions			
I am very successful[a]	μ= 0.69 (σ =0.67)	μ= 0.58 (σ =0.63)	μ= 0.63 (σ =0.65)
I am very optimistic*	μ= 0.81 (σ =0.82)	μ= 0.67 (σ =0.78)	μ= 0.73 (σ =0.80)
I know agriculture very well*	μ= 0.47 (σ =1.00)	μ= 0.26 (σ =1.12)	μ= 0.34 (σ =1.15)
[1] Five-point Likert-type scale from (+2) strongly agree to (-2) strongly disagree, [a] = p < 0.10, * = p < 0.05, ** = p < 0.01, *** = p < 0.001, μ=mean value, σ =standard deviation			

Source: own representation

Not surprisingly, farm guests have a deeper knowledge of agriculture than non guests (0.47 and 0.26 respectively). Finally, they consider themselves as more successful and optimistic than non farm guests (mean scores farm guests = 0.69 and 0.81 respectively versus non farm guests 0.58 and 0.67 respectively). Overall, it seems that farm guests resemble the personality type called by Plog near-allocentric than the others.

As displayed in Table 59, overall, farm guests are more likely to consider farm tourism more relaxing (mean farm guests = 1.10 versus mean non farm guests= 0.81) and easy going (mean farm guests= 1.25 and non farm guests = 0.93 respectively) than non farm guests.

Furthermore, farm tourism is more appreciated by farm guests for its exciting features than by the others (mean farm guests = 0.45 versus non farm guests = 0.02). For farm guests farm tourism is more authentic (mean value = 1.31) than for non farm guests (mean value = 1.13).

Table 59 Image of German farm tourism among farm guests and non farm guests

Image attribute	Farm guests (n=235)	Non farm guests (n=332)	Total (n=567)
Relaxing***	μ=1.10 (σ =0.84)	μ=0.81 (σ =0.85)	μ=0.92 (σ =0.86)
Easy-going***	μ=1.25 (σ =0.79)	μ=0.93 (σ =0.85)	μ=1.06 (σ =0.96)
Exciting***	μ=0.45 (σ =0.95)	μ=0.02 (σ =1.03)	μ=0.20 (σ =1.02)
Comfortable**	μ=0.15 (σ =0.86)	μ=-0.09 (σ =0.89)	μ=0.0 (σ =0.89)
Authentic*	μ=1.31 (σ =0.82)	μ=1.13 (σ =0.87)	μ=1.20 (σ =0.86)

[1] Five-point Likert-type scale ranging from (2) always to (-2) never * = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$ μ=mean value σ=standard deviation

Source: own calculation

6.3.3.4 Results of the causal model

Prior to the performing of the causal model, the hypothesized constructs of affective and cognitive properties of attitude towards farm tourism were tested by means of a confirmatory analysis (CA). Results are depicted in Table 60.

Table 60 Operationalization of constructs of the CA

Construct	Indicator[1]	t-test	IR
Traditional image	Farm tourism is: - Relaxing	17.74	0.81
	- Easy-going	9.52	0.76
	- Comfortable	9.79	0.72
	- Convenient	9.16	0.67
Wellness image	On a farm: - I can get new energy	9.65	0.83
	- I can practice some sports	5.56	0.76
	- I can do something for my health	4.99	0.66
Exciting image	Farm tourism is: - challenging	26.00	0.86
	- daring	26.29	0.87
	- a unique experience	6.61	0.65
Choice[2]	Index	-	1.00
Attitude	I would take farm tourism into account for my next holiday	91.25	0.93
	Farm tourism is appealing to me because of a good value for money	29.93	0.89
Social stimuli	How is agritourism evaluated by your friends/familiars/work colleagues…? - Strange	9.57	0.74
	- Funny	6.79	0.66
	- Not cool	12.82	0.77
	- Not interesting	17.39	0.81
	- Boring	12.25	0.70
Risk perception	A farm tourism holiday might be: - Noisy	8.06	0.72
	- Dirty	10.30	0.79
	- Stinky	13.17	0.79
	A farm tourism holiday might not offer a good value for money	11.38	0.77
Experience[3]	Experience of farm tourism	-	1.00
Family-size[2]	Number of family members	-	1.00

[1] If not otherwise indicated all items have a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly agree" (+2) to strongly disagree (-2), [2]five-point index from (1) very low appreciation of farm tourism to (5) very high appreciation of farm tourism, [3] five-point Likert-type scale ranging from "never" (-2) to "always" (+2), IR= Item reliability

Source: own calculation

Only items with factor loadings of at least 0.40 were retained. The final number of factors was eight: three images of farm tourism, three cognitive factors, attitude towards farm tourism and family size. The results of the confirmatory analysis were kept for the SEM whose ultimate dependent variable was the construct of choice of farm tourism.

In the following the results of the model testing are presented. This includes the test of: (1) the measurement model and (2) the structural model. The former measures the relationships among (exogenous and endogenous) latent and observed variables; the latter explains the relationships among the exogenous latent variables and the endogenous latent ones.

Measurement model. In order to measure the degree by which indicators reflect each construct, tests for convergent validity were performed. Regarding the indicator reliability, construct loadings were examined. All loadings were significant, which led to the next step. Following the approach of Dibbern and Chin (2005), significance tests were conducted using the bootstrap routine with 500 resamples. In order to measure the construct reliability and validity, two indices were employed, respectively: (1) the composite reliability (CR) and (2) the average variance extracted (AVE).

Whereas for the former the current literature estimates a threshold of either 0.7 (Dibbern & Chin, 2005; Götz & Gobbers, 2004) or 0.6 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988), it is expected that the AVE should not be lower than 0.5 (Homburg & Giering, 1996), thus meaning that at least 50 percent of measurement variance is captured by the construct (Chin, 1998). All blocks of indicators for each construct are displayed in Table 61.

Table 61 Overview and operationalization of constructs

Construct	AVE	CR	α
Attitude	0.84	0.91	0.81
Choice	1.00	1.00	1.00
Traditional image	0.55	0.83	0.72
Wellness image	0.57	0.80	0.64
Exciting image	0.64	0.84	0.72
Social stimuli	0.56	0.86	0.81
Risk perception	0.59	0.85	0.77
Experience	1.00	1.00	1.00
Family size	1.00	1.00	1.00
AVE=Average Variance Explained, CR=Composite Reliability α=Cronbach's Alpha			

Source: own calculation

Structural model To detect the determinants of preference for agritourism, the total variances explained by the construct choice - the ultimate dependent variable of this model - as well as by attitude - the mediating one - were examined by evaluating the magnitude of the R^2 as well as by observing sign and significance of the path coefficients. The latter are analogue to the standardized beta weights in regression analysis (Dibbern & Chin, 2005) and are t tested using the bootstrapping method with 500 resamples. In this model 41% (R^2) of the variance of the construct choice is explained by two variables (attitude and family size), whereas 58% of the variance of the construct attitude by six independent variables referring to the affective and cognitive properties of attitude (see Table 62).

Table 62 PLS results of the structural model

Hypothesis		Path	t-value
H1:	attitude -> choice	0.549***	12.001
H2:	traditional image -> attitude	0.151**	2.680
H3:	wellness image -> attitude	0.038 NS	0.767
H4:	excitement image -> attitude	0.343***	5.821
H5:	social stimuli -> attitude	-0.281***	4.449
H6:	risk perception-> attitude	-0.122*	2.136
H7:	experience -> attitude	0.180***	3.696
H8:	family size -> choice	0.263***	5.704
***= Significant at 0.001 level (2-tailed test – t > 3.291); **= Significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed test – t > 2.576); *= Significant at 0.05 level; (2-tailed test – t > 1.960). NS= non significant; Variance explained (R^2): choice (41%) attitude (58%).			

Source: own calculation

More specifically, hypothesis 1 can be accepted as attitude displays a significant and positive influence on choice (path value = 0.549). Since a traditional image positively affects attitude (path value = 0.151), hypothesis 2 can be accepted as well.

Regarding the wellness image, this displays a non significant influence on attitude (path value = 0.038) which leads to the rejection of hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 4 is accepted as the excitement image (path value = 0.343) displays a positive influence on attitude. As expected, both social stimuli (path value = -0.281) and risk perception (path value = -0.122) have a negative influence on attitude which leads to the acceptance of hypotheses 5 and 6 respectively. With a path value of 0.180, experience has a positive influence on attitude (hypothesis 7 accepted). Finally, family size displays a positive influence on choice (path value = 0.263) which leads to the acceptance of hypothesis 8.

6.3.3.5 Discussion

The findings of the descriptive statistics shed some light on the main traits of farm tourism vacationers. As mentioned, it seems that they resemble the personality type called by Plog (2002) near-allocentric. In fact, they show a high level of venturesomeness, since, in comparison to non farm guests, they prefer less adequate accommodations and means of transportation rather than typical hotels or car trips. Furthermore, they gladly adapt to the local. Eventually, their sense of optimism leads them to feel themselves as more successful than non farm guests.

The other side of the coin is that if, as it seems by the results of the descriptive statistics, German farm tourism is a near-allocentric vacation form, there are some problems related to this. Firstly, despite the near-allocentric traits displayed here by farm guests, such as optimism and success in life, this does not necessarily mean higher income levels, since individuals with this personality type pursue "careers that interest them rather those that pay the most" (Plog, 2002). Secondly, the majority of individuals have a mid-centric personality. This is also reflected in the sample, as the cluster of farm guests is less numerous than that of non farm guests.

As a consequence, since mid-centric travelers tend to choose mid-centric vacation forms, the image of "farm tourism" should be repositioned in order to appear "less adventurous" and attract, in this way, the majority of individuals. This implies a "patient advertising approach" (Litvin, 2006) in order to convert farm tourism into a better known vacation form.

The picture given by the descriptive statistics is endorsed by the follow up of this research. As before mentioned, the first objective stated in this chapter is to identify the factors influencing the preference for agritourism in Germany. For this purpose we included in this path model a choice factor, which measures the preference for German agritourism in comparison with other holiday types as well as attitude which is assumed to be a mediating variable.

As confirmed by previous studies (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975; Trommsdorff, 2003; Um & Crompton, 1990), the findings of this model also show that this approach has been proven robust to identify attitude as a significant predictor of choice. More specifically, we have further analyzed both the affective and the cognitive factors which significantly influence attitude.

In this analysis, the excitement image of farm tourism is the factor with the strongest impact on attitude. This is an interesting result especially if compared with the traditional image factor, which, although still significant, only displays a weaker influence on attitude. Thus, it seems that the repositioning efforts of farm operators to display a new perception of this tourist market can be observed as financially sound. In fact, respondents who displayed a high preference for agritourism perceive it more as an exciting vacation with unusual and unique experiences than as a place to relax and enjoy the tranquility and closeness to nature. Thus, the traditional image of farm tourism has been replaced by a more dynamic one. This image-transition is probably motivated by the fact that “what farmers everyday do has become a variety of mystery to others” (Adams, 2008:24). Accordingly, the major challenge for practitioners is to take advantage of the novelty features of the farm in order to appeal to the individual’ sense of fulfillment by avoiding, at the same time, to convey the image of a too adventurous tourist form (Litvin, 2006).

On the contrary, the wellness image of farm tourism does not significantly influence attitude. A possible explanation could be that farm vacationers do not appreciate wellness oriented farms, because they perceive them as lacking in authenticity. Further research could analyze whether for typical wellness tourists a wellness image of farm tourism might impact on destination choice and thus would be helpful in identifying new target segments for rural destinations.

As far as the cognitive factors are concerned, the findings of this model show that social stimuli have a significant and negative impact on attitude towards farm tourism. Also, risk perception negatively affects attitude although by a lesser magnitude. Thus, German farm tourism appears to still be anchored on stereotypes perpetuated by negative word of mouth. This suggests that promotional correction techniques should be urgently taken into consideration.

For instance, one of the most commonly suggested strategies is to create a first contact with the farm. Direct exposure by means of “special offers” or “open days on the farm” might have a positive impact on attitude. This is also confirmed by the findings of this model which display a significant positive influence of experience on attitude towards farm tourism.

Also, investments in a sound and targeted promotion of farm tourism appear to be necessary. If focusing on the items related to risk perception, for instance, it is evident that most of them concern quality issues (i.e. noise, lack of hygiene). Farm operators should advertise their attraction by putting appealing pictures of their lodgings on the Web, thus directing people’s attention to modern furniture which conveys the idea of comfort, hygiene, etc.

Finally, these findings display a positive and significant influence of family size on choice. This indicates that farm tourism is still perceived as a suitable holiday by numerous families. Although this is positive, farm operators should not rely only on this target segment, since the future trend of the German population is constantly decreasing.

6.4 Study 2: preference patterns of scenarios of farm tourism

Previously in this chapter the main strengths and deficits related to the image of German farm tourism has been empirically measured. The following pages are dedicated to provide some insights into possible development patterns of farm tourism. As already mentioned, in Germany the majority of farm operators have tried to reposition their supply in order to access new tourist segments. These reposition efforts have been addressed according to different orientations: the target (children, the handicapped, senior citizens), the farm type (conventional agriculture, organic agriculture) and the activities (supply of fitness and wellness services, school laboratories).

6.4.1 Conceptual framework

As previously calculated, attitude will be used in the following model as an explanatory variable of farm holiday preference as well. More specifically, we will further analyze the perceptions among respondents of the sample towards five possible scenarios of farm tourism. The aim is to discover whether some of the suggested scenarios could be of any interest not only for the respondents who have previously disclosed a positive attitude towards current farm tourism, but especially for those who have only partially (potential guests) shown it or not at all (non farm guests).

Hence, the following variables have been included in the model:

- five variations of farm tourism which represent the affective property of attitude, and
- a set of farm tourism related beliefs (both positive notions and stereotypes) to be used as cognitive explanatory variables

Whereas the importance of the latter have been already discussed in the first study, the five scenarios of farm tourism have been theoretically developed following the newest tendencies of the German farm tourism market and can be described as follows:

- *Farm tourism in manor houses and "wild-west style" farm tourism*: the main assumption for these two scenarios relies on the construct of rurality, which, according to Robert and Hall (2001), may be perceived either as an idyll of nature (e.g. the Tuscany region in Italy or the Provence region in France) or as an ancestral wildness (such as the Mazuria region in Poland). The first scenario, *"farm tourism in manor houses"* has been introduced in this study in order to capture a gourmet segment. The "*wild-west style" farm tourism* chiefly addresses adventure-friendly respondents who, according to Trans and Ralston (2006), share an unconscious need to challenge their skills in a natural environment.

- *Organic farm tourism*: holidays on organic farms constitute a niche inside the niche-market of farm tourism. In the last decades the associations of farmers who offer leisure vacations on their organic farms have grown. At a European level they are organized in the European Centre for Ecological Agriculture and Tourism (ECEAT), whereas the Willing Workers on Organic Farms association (WWOOF) offers working holidays in organic farming accommodations. Due to the increasing interest of the German population in the organic food market, this variation of farm tourism was included in this model to approach this segment.
- *Beauty farm tourism*: this originates from the construct of "wellness" which according to Mueller and Kaufmann (2001) indicates mind-and-body-health and in commercial terms "requires the professional provision of service packages for healthy people, whose prime aim is the preservation of their well-being". In Germany not only hotels but also farm tourist operations have begun to specialize in wellness tourism such as the leisure farms' association "Einfach gesund – auf bayerischen Höfen" (simply, healthy at Bavarian farms) which has developed a multidimensional wellness service for mind (creativity/education/concerts), body (physical fitness/beauty care), health (nutrition/gourmet/fasting) and relaxation (rest/yoga/alternative medicine).
- *Child-orientated farms*: this is the only alternative which would exploit at most the families-with-children segment which already exists; its aim is to offer tailor-made farms for children. At present in Germany there are some farms which define themselves as "(Kleine)Kinder Bauernhöfe" - (small) children farms - and they differ from the conventional ones by having a greater number and/or variety of animals (petting zoo) and/or children's facilities. Based on this, we further developed the description of child-orientated farms which offer various child tailored services such as around-the-clock babysitting and organic learning activities. Table 63 outlines the five scenarios of farm tourism suggested to the respondents of this analysis.

Table 63 Description of the five scenarios

Scenario	Lodging	Location	Architecture	Activities	Food
Manor House	Magnificent heritage houses	Scenic parks	Classical style	Horse riding, hunting	Gourmet dishes
Wild-West	Bungalows in farm's garden	Wide landscape	Wild-West Style	Rodeo, horse riding, a high level of freedom	Dining at campfires
Organic	Multifunc-tional farm	Nature	Solid wood architecture	Learning from farming activities	Organic food and regional specialties
Beauty-Farm	Romantic farm	Classical gardens	Bright and wooden	Wellness, fasting, yoga, natural remedies	Healthy food, vitamins, light
Child-orientated farm	Farm with animals	Nature and amusement areas	Children-tailored architecture	Baby sitting, pedagogic activities	Organic food, separated children-parents dining-rooms

Source: own representation

The purpose of this study is to examine whether there are significant differences in the perceptions of the five offered scenarios among the previously mentioned groups of respondents.

6.4.2 Research design

Regarding measurement of the variables in the multinomial logit model (MNL), the independent variables were factor analyzed, whereas the dependent variable was obtained by creating three groups of respondents (guests, potential guests and non guests) from the before mentioned index. As far as the latter is concerned, respondents have been condensed into three nominal categories as follows:

- Group 1: respondents who disclose a high preference for agritourism (n=147)
- Group 2: respondents with a neutral attitude towards farm tourism (n=118)
- Group 3: respondents with no preference for agritourism (n=299)

In order to obtain the cognitive properties of attitude as well as the five scenarios of farm tourism, a principal component analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation was performed. Based on Eigenvalue-greater-than-1 criterion, three cognitive factors and five scenario factors were generated. Each item was considered to fall within a factor based on factor loading of .40 or higher. Items with factor loadings of less than .40 and items that loaded on two factors were eliminated from the analysis (Table 64). The factors derived by the PCA were finally saved in order to be used as independent variables in MNL, whereas the three groups mentioned above correspond to the MNL dependent variable.

The conceptual meaning of the factors was analyzed by observing the items that integrate each of them. The results of the factor analysis of the cognitive property of attitude were three factor groupings: factor 1 labeled “stereotypes” included four items (strange, funny, trivial and not in fashion). The second factor, labeled “risk perception”, included three items (stinky, noisy and dirty), whereas “experience” was condensed in factor 3 and included three items (degree of experience, degree of information, known/unknown). Finally, the five scenario factors were generated.

Table 64 Results of the PCA

Cognitive properties of attitude[1]	r	Eigenvalue	Reliability[d]
Stereotypes (farm tourism is) [a]		3.39	0.85
Strange	0.82		
Funny	0.81		
Not interesting	0.81		
Out	0.77		
Risk perception (farm tourism is) [a]		2.39	0.72
Stinky	0.78		
Noisy	0.76		
Dirty	0.70		
Experience		1.56	0.61
Have you ever experienced farm tourism?[b]	0.90		
Degree of information about current farm tourism[c]	0.88		
Farm tourism is well-known [b]	0.41		
Scenarios of farm tourism[1]			
Organic farm tourism		2.15	0.78
I would take into account an organic tourism farm for my next holiday	0.83		
Tourism on an organic farm suits me.	0.83		
I enjoy nature based holidays	0.64		
Beauty farm tourism		1.80	0.69
I would take beauty farm tourism into account for my next holiday	0.93		
Beauty farm tourism suits me	0.91		
I enjoy nature tourism in rural areas	0.48		
Wild west farm tourism		1.40	0.91
I would take wild-west tourism into account for my next holiday	0.91		
Wild west tourism suits me	0.90		
Farm tourism in a manor house		1.34	0.88
I would to take into account tourism in a manor house for my next holiday	0.90		
Tourism in a manor house suits me	0.90		
Children orientated farm tourism		1.10	0.77
I would take children orientated tourism into account for my next holiday	0.84		
Children orientated tourism suits me	0.84		

[1]If not otherwise indicated five-point Likert-type scale (+2) I totally agree to (-2) I totally disagree [a] Five-point semantic differential [b] Five-point Likert-type scale (+2) always to (-2) never [c] Five-point Likert-type scale (+2) very much informed to (-2) very little informed [d] Cronbach's Alpha r = factor loading

Source: own calculations

6.4.3 Analysis of the main findings

With the SPSS 15 for Windows procedure on logit modeling, each of the three groups of respondents was compared in relation to the others: (group 1 / group 3; group 2 / group 3 and group 2 / group 1).

A positive sign on the sum of the intercept and the estimate of a specific attribute indicates that the attribute is more likely to fall into the nominator group. Conversely, a negative sign implies it is likely to belong to the reference group (denominator). According to this rule, the factor having the highest probability of falling into group 1, 2 or 3 could be identified.

Table 65 Maximum Likelihood Estimation of the MNL

Attribute	Coefficient	Standard Error	Wald
Segm 1 / Segm 3			
intercept***	-.89	.16	32.10
experience***	.73	.14	27.83
stereotypes***	-.62	.14	18.03
risk perception**	-.38	.14	6.91
organic***	1.13	.16	49.75
beauty***	-.98	.15	41.56
wild west*	.29	.14	4.36
child-orientated***	.48	.14	11.03
Segm 2 / Segm 3			
intercept**	-.33	.12	7.37
experience***	. 40	.12	10.34
stereotypes**	-.36	.12	8.46
organic***	.82	.13	37.38
beauty***	-.39	.12	10.19
child-orientated*	.30	.12	5.78
Segm 2 / Segm 1			
intercept***	.99	.21	22.62
experience**	-.40	.14	8.68
stereotypes**	.41	.15	7.77
beauty***	.66	.15	18.81
organic**	-.52	.17	9.2
Log likelihood function=645.547 p=0.000 Cox-Snell=0.32; Nagelkerke=0.36 (pseudo R^2); McFadden=0.18, *** = $p<0.001$, ** = $p<0.01$, *=$p<0.05$; σ = standard deviation, segment 1= high preference; Segment 2= lower preference; Segment 3= lowest preference. DF= 1			

Source: own representation

The Wald value is based on the chi-square statistic and tests the null hypothesis that the estimate equals zero. The results displayed in Table 65 confirm that the independent variables selected were useful in explaining the different levels of preference for current farm tourism. Respondents of group 1, who shared the highest preference for farm tourism, tended to be significantly less affected by "stereotypes" and "risk perception" ($p<0.001$ and $p<0.01$ respectively) than group 3, as the coefficients of these two factors shared a negative sign. Furthermore, most of the members of group 1 had already experienced farm tourism at least once ("experience", $p<0.001$), as the value of the respective coefficient, compared to group 3, was positive.

Except for "risk perception", the above factors also significantly split respondents of group 2 from those of group 3 ("experience" $p<0.001$ and "stereotypes" <0.01). Group 2 diverged significantly from group 1 on almost the same factors, although with lower coefficients ("experience" and "stereotypes" $p<0.01$). In the case of "stereotypes" the direction of the coefficients also changed, as group 2 was more affected by this factor than group 1.

Finally, it should be noted that the study found no significant differences between the sociodemographic variables and the three preference groups.

With regard to the preference for scenarios of farm tourism, the findings of the MNL were the following:

- *Organic agritourism*: among the first and the second segment, there was the greatest number of potential guests of organic agritourism. In fact both differentiated significantly from segment 3 ($p<0.001$); however, respondents of segment 2 did not seem to appreciate organic tourism as much as those of segment 1 ($p<0.01$).
- *Beauty farm*: participants of both segment one and segment 2 did not seem to be very attracted by beauty farm agritourism. This conversely was considered more attractive by the last segment of participants who generally do not take the classic agritourism into account for their holidays. Compared with group 1, respondents of group 2 seemed to appreciate this agritourist alternative ($p<0.001$).
- *Wild west*: the idea of an agritourism in an American style could be an interesting variant for the respondents of segment 1 who displayed the highest scores in comparison with segment 3 ($p<0.05$). Any significant difference was detected among the other segments.
- *Child-orientated*: agritourism tailored towards children's needs significantly split participants of group 1 and group 2 who were both in favor of it, and those of group 3 who rejected it: $p<0.001$ (group 1 / group 3) and $p<0.01$ (group 2 / group 3

respectively). No significant differences were observed among the first and the second segment.

- *Manor house*: this possibility did not present any significant difference among the groups. This is confirmed by the fact that there is a general acceptance for this scenario among the three groups.

6.4.4 Discussion

The findings of the logit model showed that a significant relationship exists between the perceived features of current farm tourism that were measured by the cognitive properties of attitude and the levels of preference for this tourist form.

From a short-term perspective, group 1 is the most attractive segment, as it displayed the highest preference for farm tourism; hence, promotional campaigns should be strongly directed to these respondents. As expected, the lower the preference (group 2 and group 3) the higher the scores of risk perception and stereotypes and the lower the experience. This is also confirmed by the Wald value.

As mentioned, this suggests that promotional correction techniques should take stereotypes and risk perception into consideration. To this end, as a long-term strategy, an aggressive promotional campaign aimed at decreasing stereotypes concerning farm tourism should be enhanced.

Regarding experience, a comparison of group 1 with the other two groups reveals interesting findings. Respondents of segment 1, who expressed the highest preference for farm tourism, are at the same time also the individuals who had experienced this vacation the most. Thus, it might be that the members of the other two groups lack awareness of farm tourism as a vacation type. Here, creating awareness of the attraction of this tourist form as an ongoing information process can provide major opportunities for this tourist form in generating increased travel in the future. The organization of events such as “open day at the farm” or the inclusion of farm guest’s lodgings in an “all-inclusive” travel package could help to this end.

Scenarios of farm tourism: based on the different degree of preference for farm tourism, the study detected significant variations in the respondents’ perception of five different scenarios of farm tourism.

Above all, organic farm tourism meets the favor of respondents of the first group. If confirmed by further studies, this is important information especially for those farm operators who are thinking about converting their farm into an organic one. This further specialization would not cause a decrease in the demand for agritourism, but on the contrary it could boost customers' loyalty and satisfaction. Although to a lesser extent, some of the members belonging to segment 2 seem to also appreciate this alternative. This could be explained by the high degree of favor that organic products have gained in recent years in Germany (Siderer, Maquet, & Anklam, 2005) which could have acted as a cross-promotion factor for this tourist form. The results of this model seem to confirm this trend.

As already mentioned, "wild-west" farm tourism significantly splits the first from the third segment. It appears that among respondents from the first group there is the highest need for challenging their skills in a natural environment. However, due to the smaller coefficient of this factor, it may be assumed that only a reduced group of respondents do really advocate this tourist option.

The grade of favor towards "beauty farm tourism" constitutes an unexpected result. The higher the preference for current farm tourism, the lower is the acceptance of this scenario. It seems that respondents of this first group not only are already satisfied with the current supply of farm tourism, but could perceive an integration of the latter with wellness services as a lack of authenticity. On the other hand, such an option seems to be attractive for respondents of segment 3 and, to a lesser extent, of segment 2.

Farm operators who are thinking about or have already invested in wellness facilities are facing a trade off. If they prefer to retain their customers, the investment in wellness facilities should not be undertaken at the detriment of the traditional features of farm tourism such as nature, romantics and stress reliever. On the other hand and adopting a middle-to-long term perspective, they should consider the possibility of repositioning themselves to a totally different, more numerous segment of customers, which, in this sample, is represented by respondents of group 3.

However, due to the rejection of the latter of the traditional form of agritourism, wellness farm operations should try, in this case, to differentiate themselves at most from the conventional leisure farms. As far as promotion is concerned, for example, they should better underline the "natural landscape" which surrounds the leisure facility and not the "farming environment" in which the operation is set (which would force the problematic of stereotypes). Promoting the opportunity to meet other people at the beauty farm could be a sound strategy.

The acceptance of a "child-orientated farm" significantly splits respondents of the first two groups from group 3 which is another encouraging signal for farm operators who have turned their farm into a child-tailored operation and do not want to loose customers. However, farm operators who want to invest in this area should take into account high investments such as security criteria and ad hoc formation programs for the operators.

6.5 Limitations and suggestions for future research

Of course, this study suffers from some limitations. First of all, the convenience sample which has been employed. Furthermore, although based on a classical approach, the causal model does not include further factors which could have an impact on attitude such as motivations or lifestyles. Similar considerations also concern the constructs of social stimuli and risk perception whose items have been tailored on the specific reality of German farm tourism, but, despite this, they are conceptually much broader than the proposed measurement. Hence, the attitudinal properties identified here should be treated as possible areas that need maintenance and/or improvement. Further studies could attempt to replicate these results by also modifying such variables.

Nevertheless, this chapter serves as a starting point for several future research streams. Farm tourism has been studied in several countries with different approaches. Yet, at present, there are no studies which have applied a standardized attitude measurement tool in this field in order to state the determinants of preference for this tourist form both among guests and non-guests.

Both the structural equation model as well as the multinomial logit model conducted in this chapter have proven to be robust in capturing the variation in the attitudinal properties of individuals with different degrees of preference for farm tourism. As a consequence, both the strengths and the main weaknesses of this particular tourist form have been detected and discussed.

By means of a causal model the determinants of preference for farm tourism have been analyzed. In this model, a choice construct has been employed as the ultimate dependent variable whereas attitude as predictor of choice. While this research identified two images and three cognitive dimensions as determinants of the preference for farm tourism, subsequent assessment might seek to replicate this finding and explore potential additional dimensions.

The second part of the study focused on respondents' perceptions towards five possible scenarios of farm tourism and had mainly a practical purpose. The results seem to confirm that the endeavors of farm operations to diversify their supply could be successful at least for organic and child-orientated farm operations. This study also reveals that operations investing in wellness facilities could meet, in the long term, the favor of a larger set of individuals, if they decide to reposition their supply to a different target segment rather than large families with children. To this end, it could be interesting to analyze the grade of favor towards wellness oriented farm tourism among elderly people, since the aging rate is rapidly increasing in Germany.

All in all, the findings of this research confirm the fact that German farm tourism is a sector still in evolution. The current debate on sustainable vacation forms as well as the increasing number of people over the age of 60 among the German population could suggest new repositioning forms for farm operators. Thus, the potential of German farm tourism does not seem to have been fully exploited yet. Further studies also in these directions could highlight new opportunities for this tourist sector.

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Chapter 7

7 The market of organic farm tourism in Germany

7.1 Introduction

The awareness of farm tourism as an alternative form of holiday destination has been gaining momentum in the whole Europe. This chapter deals with the market of organic farm tourism in Germany which is a subset of farm tourism. Whereas farm or agritourism refers to guests' accommodation at (various types of) overnight accommodations on a farm, organic farm tourism requires guests' lodging at only those farms which apply organic farming techniques such as restriction of the use of artificial fertilizers, high standards of animal welfare and husbandry, etc. (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006). Both concepts are, in turn, segments of rural tourism (Wilson et al., 2001) which includes additional forms of tourism such as eco-tourism, rural adventure tourism, etc. (Roberts & Hall 2001).

Although there has been increasing awareness of organic tourism as a form of holiday destination, to the best of our knowledge, there is no reported research on market segmentation of the organic farm tourists in Germany. This implies that holiday marketers do not have adequate knowledge about this form of tourism and their customers in order to enable them to design appropriate marketing strategies based on the needs and wants of the various tourist groups who embark on organic farm tourism in Germany. The aim of this contribution is therefore to segment the potential organic farm holiday makers in Germany in order to identify consumer groups with high interest in specific goods and services. This will enable travel marketers and farm operators to understand the needs and wants of different potential travel groups and to efficiently communicate with them in order to satisfy their needs (Jan, Morrison & O'Leary, 2002).

The remaining sections of this chapter are organized as follows: first, we provide background information about organic farm tourism in Germany and identify factors which influence the choice of organic farm tourism as a holiday destination. Following, we discuss how the data were collected and statistical methods used to analyze them. Next, the results of the study are presented and discussed. The final part of the chapter highlights the limitations of the study and delineates areas for further research.

7.2 Literature review

7.2.1 History and background of organic tourism in Germany

Although the origin of agritourism in Germany goes back almost 150 years (Nilsson, 2002), it is in the 1990s that the sector experienced a rapid growth. The increase may be attributed partly to the new priorities set by the European agricultural policy such as the environmental compatibility of agricultural activities and the development of rural areas (Calabrò, 2004). At present, the conventional agritourism sector is made up of about 25,000 operators with a yearly turnover of 930 million euros (BMELV, 2006).

In contrast to the conventional farm tourism market, organic agritourism, which is a subset of farm tourism, scores more modest figures. At present, there are around 18,703 organic farms in Germany (Oekolandbau, 2008) which belong to several organic farming associations (ECEAT, Bioland, Demeter, etc.). Out of these, only 400 farms offer farm tourist services.

Nevertheless, this number is estimated to further increase (Eghbal, 2008) in line with the growing appreciation towards organic products displayed by Germans. In fact, in the past years, the market of certified organic products has been constantly increasing.

In 2008 the total turnover of the organic market was about 5.8 billion euros thus showing a percentage variation of 9.6% with respect to the previous year (Braun & Lösch, 2009). As in other European countries and also in Germany, consumers show an increasing appreciation for healthy and certified foods which can be explained, in part, as a reaction to the recurrent food scandals which have taken place in the last years (Albersmeier, Schulze & Spiller, 2007).

Table 66 Organic market in Germany

	Germany	Italy	Europe	World
Tot. no. operators	18,703 [c]	45,115 [e]	170,000 [b]	500,000 [b]
Tot. no. ha	865,336 [c]	1,100,000 [e]	6,000,000 [b]	26,000,000 [b]
Turnover (billions €)	5.8 [a]	1.6 [e]	14.5 [d]	30 [b]

Source: Braun & Lösch, 2009 [a]; INNOREF, 2006[b]; Oekolandbau, 2008[c]; Greenplanet.net, 2009[d] (www.greenplanet.net/biologico-a-biodinamico/19958-biologico-in-germania-oom.html [February, 14 2009]); Sinab, 2007[e] (www.sinab.it programmi/ biostatistiche .php ?tp=sit [February, 14 2009]),

With regard to organic farm tourism, the notably smaller number of farm operators is the result of the high level of fragmentation in the sector. As a matter of fact, only recently organic farm operators have started to design common marketing strategies as is shown by the creation in 2007 of the online platform bio.de which is a forum encompassing the organic community.

Overall, it seems that organic farm operators display a low level of self-confidence in their management skills. Thus, although pursuing the goal of expanding and diversifying their operations, "marketing is [still] the major worry and the need for new marketing strategies affects 74% of the organic producers" (Santucci & Pignataro, 2002)

7.2.2 Needs and motivations for farm tourism

The process between the needs, motivations and visits to destinations is quite complex (Holloway & Plant, 1988). Fodness (1994) has argued that although there are many reasons why people choose a particular holiday destination, motivation is a critical variable, because it is the driving force behind all behaviour. Furthermore, he integrated tourist motivation literature into a functional framework including six reasons for travel. These he labeled as the ego-defensive function, the knowledge function, the utilitarian function/reward maximization, the utilitarian function/punishment avoidance, the value-expression function, and the social adjustive function. Middleton (1990) argued that motivation for the choice of travel destination differs among people, since it is related to the needs and personal goals of the individual.

The above therefore indicates that there may be many reasons why individuals will choose farm tourism as a form of holiday destination. These range from the most usual ones such as the possibility to relax and "recollect memories of the past" (Ingram, 2002), the low prices, the learning component, the opportunity to experience something new (Sidali & Spiller, 2008) and the possibility of bringing house-pets (BLFUW, 2007). The qualitative analysis performed by McIntosh and Bonnemann (2006) reveals that the main motivations for staying at organic farms are the rural setting, the learning component of organic activities, the personal meaningfulness and authenticity of the holiday farming experience. These results are partially confirmed by a survey performed in 1998 by the German ECEAT network which reveals that the most stated motivations of tourists of organic farms coincide with their healthy lifestyle, their sensitivity for environmental issues (especially animals' welfare) and the attraction component that animals exercise upon children (Agöl, 2001).

7.3 Theoretical framework

As mentioned, the main purpose of this study is to perform an a-priori-segmentation of the market for organic farm tourism based on stated interest in this tourist form, among both guests and non farm guests. To this end, we adopted a two step approach. As a first step, we identified the factors which influence the interest in an organic farm vacation. As explanatory variables we chose travel and lifestyles, which, according to Dolnicar and Leisch (2003), permit the creation of consumer segments which reflect a number of integrated personal and behavioral characteristics. People's interest in an organic farm vacation was the dependent variable. This is considered as an indirect influence on travel choice. In the second stage of the analysis, we used the important factors as a basis for segmenting the market. The resulting groups, among which both farm guests and non farm guests are represented, were further analyzed on the basis of their interest in an organic farm vacation and other variables related to travel behaviour, activities, interests and opinions.

7.4 Research design

During the summer of 2007, about 600 people were interviewed concerning their attitude towards organic farm tourism using personal interviews. All respondents were intercepted in public places in various towns and cities in Germany by the enumerators. The interviewers were recruited and trained in order to ensure that all questions were understood and interpreted in the same way by the respondents. The questionnaire consisted of the following sections: a set of travel style items (vacation motives and activities based on Dolnicar & Leisch, 2003), a set of lifestyle items (activities, interest and opinion items based both on authors' measurements and Chandler & Costello, 2000); a (conventional) agritourism image component (based on Sidali & Spiller, 2008), two conceived items to build an interest factor (stated interest and propensity to travel to organic farms on holiday in the future), and a set of demographic variables. For the pretesting phase a group of students (n=60) were asked to provide feedback on readability, which led to the modification of some statements. Whereas most of the items were operationalized using a five-point Likert-type scale (2=strongly agree to -2 strongly disagree), the image items were operationalized with a five-point semantic differential scale. The items were selected based on the current literature on demand of farm tourism in German speaking countries (BLFUW, 2007; Embacher, 1994; Lender, 1997; Oppermann, 1995; Pevetz, 1991; Wohlmann & Lohmann, 1986) and because these countries are similar in many respects.

7.5 Methods

The empirical analysis was done in multiple phases. In the first step, descriptive statistics using the SPSS 15 was used to describe the demographic characteristics of the sample. In the next step, we performed a principal components analysis (PCA) using Varimax rotation on the 72 items representing travel motives, activities and lifestyle items. The 20 factors obtained were kept to be used as independent variables in a regression model in order to determine which factors had high and significant influence on interest in organic farm tourism. The latter was also derived from the PCA and constituted the dependent variable of the regression analysis. The reliability of the factors which exerted the strongest impact on choice was tested according to the Cronbach's Alpha (see Table 67) before including them in a two stage cluster analysis.

With regard to the latter, the goal of this multivariate statistical method is to establish groups which are internally as homogenous as possible and externally (i.e. in comparison to each other) preferably heterogeneous (Gough & Sazou, 2005). An important question is how many clusters are to be used. In particular, two main aspects should be taken into account: by increasing the number of clusters we reduce the dissimilarity within each cluster. This works at detriment of the description of the data which have more degrees of freedom and are therefore less parsimonious (Everitt, 2001; Gough & Sazou, 2005). The question of the optimal number of clusters to use remains an active research topic (Sugar & James, 2003).

For this study, we recognize that it is not likely that there will be an absolute, correct number of clusters. This still leaves the question of how many clusters is sensible to use. In order to determine the optimal number of clusters, we used a combination of hierarchical and non-hierarchical cluster analysis methods as suggested by Punj and Stewart (1983) and Hair et al. (1998). Using the standard form of the statistical package SPSS, we first carried out hierarchical cluster analysis. By examining the dendrogram from the hierarchical cluster analysis, scree test and plausibility considerations, the optimal number of clusters was identified. This number of clusters was then fed into the k-means cluster analysis to obtain the final cluster solution. Finally, the Chi Square test of association and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to determine if there were differences among the clusters.

7.6 Analysis of results

7.6.1 Results of the regression analysis and validation of the cluster solution

In order to determine the factors which influence the interest in organic farm tourism in Germany, the statements used have been factor-analyzed using the PCA with Varimax rotation. Based on Kaiser's-eigenvalue-greater-than-one-criterion, 20 factor groupings have been extracted and the resulting factor solution accounts for 59% of the variance with a KMO value of 0.776.

Most factors display a loading value above 0.5 and satisfactory reliability values[17] and are therefore employed as explanatory variables in a multi-linear regression analysis (cf. Gyau & Spiller, 2007; Leisen, 2001 and Nunnally, 1978) whose dependent variable is the factor "interest in a vacation on organic farms" (see Table 67 and Table 68).

The output of the regression analysis shows that eight out of the fourteen factors have a significant influence on the factor "interest". These are "environmental awareness", "holiday comfort", "sport and wellness", "proximity to the region", "fun", "culture", "nature" and "freedom".

The first four factors display the highest influence on "interest" ($p<0.001$); among these "environmental awareness" has the strongest relationship as shown by the Beta value. Besides, both "holiday comfort" and "fun" display a negative influence which means that the higher the need for a highly organized vacation and the stronger the motivation to have fun on holidays, the lower the interest for a holiday on organic farms.

Since "environmental awareness", "holiday comfort", "proximity to the region" and "sport and wellness" show the strongest relationship towards the factor "interest", we have further selected these as active factors for the cluster analysis (see Table 67).

[17] Since the exploratory nature of the present study the factor "proximity to the region" is further retained despite a lower reliability value (Cronbach's Alpha < 0.5).

Table 67 Results of the PCA

Factor	Item[1]	r	Reliability[2]
Environmental awareness	I eat organic products whenever I can	0.695	0.707
	When choosing a holiday destination, environment protection also plays a role to me	0.653	
	I am absolutely against genetically modified produce	0.611	
	My environmental commitment is very high	0.596	
	Healthy nutrition is very important to me	0.495	
	In future, technology will reduce individuals' freedom	0.454	
Holiday comfort	On holiday it is important that everything is organized and I do not have to care about anything	0.709	0.684
	On holiday I want to be sure that the weather is good (enough sun/enough snow)	0.663	
	On holiday I look for comfort	0.590	
	I usually book my holiday with a travel agency	0.550	
	On holiday, I want to feel safe	0.541	
	I am always looking for trendy destinations	0.437	
Sport and wellness	On holiday, I want to do something for the health and beauty of my body	0.745	0.687
	On holiday, I want to exert myself physically and I practice sports	0.741	
	On holiday, I practice outdoor sports	0.612	
	On holiday, I dedicate the time to wellness and fitness activities	0.567	
	On holiday, I practice water sports	0.451	
	On holiday, I practice winter sports	0.427	
Proximity to the region	I usually spend my spare time at home	0.639	0.461
	On holiday, I want to see familiar places	0.600	
	On holiday, I choose near-home destinations	0.599	
	On holiday I do nothing	0.372	
Interest in organic farming holiday	Organic farm tourism is an interesting tourist form for me.	0.961	0.92
	I will consider organic farm tourism for my next holiday.	0.961	

[1] 5-point Likert-type scale from (+2) strongly agree to (-2) strongly disagree, [2]= Cronbach's Alpha r=factor loading
Source: own calculations

The conceptual meaning of the four active factors is analyzed by observing the items that underlie each of them (see Table 67).

Factor 1, labeled “environmental awareness” contains mainly items referring to commitment to the environment, refusing genetically modified produce, high favor for organic produce, etc. It explains 5.0 percent of the total variance and has a reliability coefficient of 0.71.

Factor 2 is labeled “holiday comfort” and includes items concerning the preference for an all-organized holiday, the need for comfort on holiday, the use of a travel agency for booking a holiday, etc. This factor explains 3.9 percent of the total variance and has a reliability coefficient of 0.68.

“Sport and wellness” is referred to as *Factor 3* and consists of both sport items such as the preference for sport and active holidays, the possibility of performing water sports on holidays and also wellness items such as the need to do something for one’s own body, health, etc. Factor 3 explains 3.5 percent of the total variance with a reliability coefficient of 0.69.

Factor 4, named “proximity to region”, is made up of items referring to preference for staying at home in spare time, the motivation to spend holidays in familiar places, the preference for near-home travel destinations, etc. With a reliability coefficient of 0.46, this factor explains 2.7 percent of the total variance.

Table 68 Regression analysis

Active factors[1]	Beta	t-value	Sig.
(intercept)		.000	1.000
environmental awareness	.430	12.057	0.000
holiday comfort	-.182	-5.104	0.000
sport and wellness	.130	3.632	0.000
proximity to the region	.126	3.539	0.000
fun	-.116	-3.261	0.001
culture	.114	3.183	0.002
freedom and creativity	.106	2.835	0.005

[1]= Five-point Likert-type scale from (+2) strongly agree to (-2) strongly disagree), ***=p<0.001, **=p<0.01, dependent variable: interest in organic farm tourism, R^2=0.288

Source: own calculations

In the next stage (validation of the cluster solution) we have determined four clusters and, by means of an ANOVA test, it is analyzed whether the clusters differ significantly (Table 69a). As shown in the table, the results are significant (p>0.001) and indicate that "holiday comfort" and "proximity to the region" are the factors which contributed most to differentiating the groups. The "environmental awareness" factor contributes the least. The eta value of 57.2% shows the extent by which the means of the active factors differ among the groups.

In order to strengthen the validity of the cluster solution, in the next step the groups are linked to the factor "interest in holiday on organic farms". Table 69b shows that members of cluster 1 share the highest interest followed by respondents of cluster 2 and 3 respectively. Respondents in cluster 4 have the lowest interest in spending a holiday on organic farms. The results of the ANOVA test are highly significant (p < 0.001) as well.

Table 69 Characterization of the clusters based on the clustering variables

a) Active factors	**Cluster 1 n=128**	**Cluster 2 n=119**	**Cluster 3 n=131**	**Cluster 4 n=182**	**Total n=560**
Environmental awareness[1] ***	μ= 0.41 σ =1.09	μ= 0.06 σ =0.91	μ= -0.13 σ =0.96	μ= -0.25 σ =0.87	μ= 0.00 σ =0.99
Holiday comfort[1] ***	μ= -1.05 σ =0.62	μ= 0.35 σ =0.71	μ= -0.32 σ =0.79	μ= 0.77 σ =0.63	μ= 0.01 σ =0.98
Sport and wellness[1]***	μ= 0.40 σ =0.76	μ= 0.57 σ =0.83	μ= -1.12 σ =0.63	μ= 0.17 σ =0.82	μ= 0.01 σ =1.00
Regional proximity[1]***	μ= -0.49 σ =0.76	μ= 1.08 σ =0.69	μ= 0.26 σ =0.81	μ= -0.55 σ =0.63	μ= 0.00 σ =0.97
b) Passive factor "interest"					
Interest in holiday on organic farms[1]***	μ= 0.44 σ =0.94	μ= 0.16 σ =0.92	μ= -0.11 σ =0.94	μ= -0.35 σ =0.97	μ= -0.01 σ =0.99

[1] = 5-point Likert-type scale from (+2) strongly agree to (-2) strongly disagree, ***=p<0.001, F-value "environment awareness" =13.04, F-value "holiday comfort" =197.45, F-value "sport and wellness" =128.80, F-value "proximity to the region"=152.32, eta = 57.2 μ= mean σ = standard deviation

Source: own calculations

7.6.2 Description of clusters

By observing the means of the active variables, in the next section the four clusters are further described as follows:

Cluster 1 (Environmental conscious): It represents 22.8% of the respondents. The cluster members express the highest environmental awareness. Respondents who fall in this cluster display the lowest need for comfort on holiday. Compared to other clusters, this group displays a middle-to-low interest for sport and wellness. Respondents in this cluster also share a middle-to-low proximity to the region.

Cluster 2 (Non-adventurous): People in this group represent 21.2% of the sample. Among all segments, this group expresses the highest favor for regional proximity implying that they usually choose familiar places and destinations which are near to their homes. Compared to the first group, respondents of this cluster display lower environmental awareness but higher need for comfort on holiday. This group is labeled as the “non-adventurous” group based on their dominant display of proximity.

Cluster 3 (Health benefit opponents): This cluster objects strongest to the use of holidays for sports and health, and middle-to-low environmental awareness. The need for holiday comfort is also rejected by members of this group. In comparison to the other clusters, respondents of this group display a high favor of regional proximity next to the “non adventurous”.

Cluster 4 (Comfort seekers): this group constitutes the most numerous group, containing approximately 32.5% of the respondents. This group displays the highest favor for holiday comfort. As far as sport and wellness are concerned, this group expresses a middle-to-low score. Among all segments, this group expresses the lowest in proximity to the region.

Since the main objective of the present study is to reach a few meaningful groups for marketing decisions, we restrict further follow-up of the analysis only to those groups which appear to be approachable for gaining more interest in a vacation on organic farms.

Group 4, characterized by both the lowest interest in organic farm holidays and environmental awareness as well as by the highest score of holiday comfort, is not further included in the analysis.

7.6.3 Evaluation of clusters on behavioral and demographic variables

The three remaining clusters are further described and characterized based on general attitude concerning travel behaviour, favorite vacation accommodation forms, influence from external agents and previous experience of a holiday on a (conventional) farm as well as some demographic variables.

The results as displayed in Table 70 showed highly significant differences on the following variables: holiday in nature, favorite accommodations and holiday motivation of relaxation ($p<0.001$).

Moderately significant differences were observed on previous holidays that are included in conventional agritourism ($p<0.01$). The role of external agents in one's own holiday decision and holiday motivation of experiencing a change were also significantly different (both $p<0.05$). Respondents in cluster 1 had the highest preference for holiday in nature, followed by group 2 and group 3. They also shared a strong motivation of experiencing a change in holiday. Respondents in this group also showed the highest appreciation for camping as an accommodation type. Respondents in group 2 rated camping as the least appreciated lodging's type.

Table 70 Attitude towards organic farm tourism

Passive variables	Cluster 1 n=128	Cluster 2 n=119	Cluster 3 n=131	Total n=376
Holiday in nature (trekking, bicycling) [1]***	μ= 1.36 σ = 0.79	μ= 1.04 σ = 1.05	μ= 0.57 σ = 1.18	μ= 0.99 σ = 1.07
On holiday I look for a change in my usual surroundings[1]**	μ= 1.11 σ = 0.76	μ= 0.88 σ = 0.78	μ= 0.82 σ = 0.78	μ= 0.94 σ = 0.78
Camping[1]**	μ= 0.16 σ = 1.41	μ= -0.40 σ = 1.31	μ= -0.30 σ = 1.46	μ= -0.18 σ = 1.42
Hotel[1]***	μ= 0.59 σ = 0.93	μ= 1.19 σ = 0.73	μ= 0.95 σ = 0.95	μ= 0.91 σ = 0.91
Role of the family in the decision process concerning holiday[1]*	μ= -0.12 σ = 1.43	μ= 0.26 σ = 1.36	μ= -0.17 σ = 1.98	μ= -0.02 σ = 1.40
Role of the partner in the decision process concerning holiday[1]*	μ= 0.58 σ = 1.45	μ= 1.08 σ = 1.25	μ= 0.73 σ = 1.27	μ= 0.79 σ = 1.34
On holiday I want rest and relaxation[1]***	μ= 0.92 σ = 0.95	μ= 1.09 σ = 0.88	μ= 1.58 σ = 0.66	μ= 1.19 σ = 0.88
On holiday I look for nature and scenic landscapes[1]***	μ= 1.32 σ = 0.76	μ= 1.36 σ = 0.72	μ= 0.85 σ = 0.86	μ= 1.17 σ = 0.82
Previous agritourism holidays[2]**	μ= 0.56 σ = 0.50	μ= 0.40 σ = 0.49	μ= 0.33 σ = 0.47	μ= 0.43 σ = 0.50
(conv.) agritourism is: comfortable-uncomfortable[1]*	μ= 1.16 σ = 0.817	μ= 1.42 σ = 0.820	μ= 0.98 σ = 0.815	μ= 1.12 σ = 0.822
(conv.) agritourism is: cheap-expensive[1]**	μ= 0.97 σ = 0.67	μ= 1.05 σ = 0.74	μ= 0.73 σ = 0.77	μ= 0.92 σ = 0.74

[1] = 5-point Likert-type scale from (+2) strongly agree to (-2) strongly disagree [2] = 5-point Likert-type scale from (+2) always to (-2) never ***=p<0.001, **=p<0.01, *=p<0.05, F = "Holiday in nature" =19.75, F = "Camping" =5.6, F = "Hotel" =15.10, F = "Role of family" =3.5, F = "Role of partner" =4.5, F = "Previous agritourism holidays" =7.5, F = "Relax"=19.669, F = "a change" =4.815, F = "nature and scenic landscapes"=16.346, μ= mean, σ = standard deviation

Source: own calculations

Somewhere in between the two clusters positioned respondents of group 3. Hotel accommodation was the most favorite accommodation type for group 2 followed by group 3 and group 1.

As far as the roles of the family and of the partner in the vacation decision process are concerned, respondents of group 1 and 3 showed to be more autonomous than group 2.

Dealing with holiday motivations, group 3 displayed the highest score for relaxing on holiday followed by group 2 and 1. Group 2 assigned to "seeking nature and scenic landscape" scored the highest, followed by members of group 1 and group 3. Concerning conventional agritourism, respondents of group 1 expressed the highest score referring to previous holidays at conventional agritourism facilities, followed by cluster 2 and cluster 3. However, concerning agritourism images of "comfortable" and "cheap", the highest score was displayed by group 2, followed by group 1 and group 3

To examine if significant demographic differences existed between the members of cluster 1, cluster 2 and cluster 3, contingency tables were computed. As shown in Table 71, the only significant differences concerned education ($p<0.01$) and frequency of vacations in the previous year ($p<0.05$). Respondents of cluster 1 showed a higher education level, followed by group 2 and group 3. In regard to frequency of vacations in the previous year, group 1 scored the highest frequency both for 2 and 3 times yearly, whereas group 3 recorded the highest score in regard to 1 vacation in the previous year. Group 2 showed the least frequency of vacations.

Table 71 Demographic profile of respondents by cluster and total sample

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Total sample
Education				
Less than high school	0	0	1.5	0.5
Some high school	43.75	68.1	56.9	55.9
High school graduate	53.1	28.4	39.2	40.6
Miscellanea	3.13	3.4	2.3	2.9
$x^2 = 19.760$, $p<0.01$				
Travel intensity				
Never, last year	14.96	29.41	19.23	21.0
Once	32.28	29.41	44.62	36.6
Twice	33.07	26.89	23.85	27.9
Three times	13.39	8.40	7.69	9.8
More than three times	6.30	5.88	4.62	5.6
$x^2 = 15.901$, $p<0.05$				

Source: own calculations

7.7 Discussion and managerial implications

Since respondents of the first cluster had already experienced a holiday at conventional agritourism farms and since they expressed the highest interest in a vacation at organic farms, we can assume that members of this cluster have the highest number of current guests interested in conventional agritourism and, thus, represent potential guests for the organic variant. This, therefore, implies that marketers' efforts should be directed to increasing customers' loyalty to this tourist form among members of this cluster. In addition, due to the low value assigned by the first group to comfort during holidays, the attention of organic farm operators should be directed more specifically to activities such as bicycle tours or other outdoor sports than to indoor investments such as furniture. Furthermore, organic farm operators could also offer camping possibilities on their farms, as there is evidence that this accommodation type has been gathering momentum in the last few years (AgE, 2007).

Moreover, the middle-to-low score on the regional proximity factor by respondents in cluster 1 compared to other segments implies the need to maximize efforts to keep long-term relationships, since visitors in this group did not indicate that they would want to visit familiar places. This can be done by promoting, on a regular basis, appealing "come-back" offers.

In addition, since respondents of this group also share a high environmental awareness together with high educational levels, organic agritourism can be explicitly promoted by linking it to ethical issues such as sustainable tourism and nature. The role of tourists as active participants who contribute to protecting the landscape could be underlined when promoting this vacation form.

The most unexpected result of this study was the second cluster. Members of this group constitute a new approachable segment of organic agritourism. This is confirmed by the interest that they expressed towards vacations at organic farms which, although lower than group 1, is still positive and higher than group 3. Since members of this cluster display the lowest grade of autonomy when deciding about their travel destination, promoting a wide range of activities for the whole family should be an effective option to attract this group. A family program which is made up of activities for adult males and females as well as children should be packaged for this group. Furthermore, since group 2 showed the lowest travel intensity but the highest proximity to region implies that short term packages such as "weekend at the organic farm" should be promoted. It does not appear very meaningful to explicitly promote the sustainable nature of organic agritourism as environmental awareness in this group is not very high.

The interest in an organic farm vacation is lowest for the respondents in cluster 3. However, since members of this cluster also display the lowest score of previous experience of conventional agritourism, might suggest that members of this cluster have inadequate awareness and knowledge of this form of tourism. It seems to be necessary to promote organic agritourism intensively through different forms of educational and promotional campaigns such as “open day at the farm” in order to create initial contact with this group. A “night at the farm” included in a travel package by tour operators could reveal itself as a sound strategy.

Finally, since these respondents do not appreciate adventurous vacations, it seems appropriate to promote organic farm tourism as a relaxing holiday. This group showed the lowest educational level as well as the lowest environmental awareness. For these reasons the sustainability nature of this tourist form should not be explicitly promoted.

7.8 Limitations and directions for future research

In this contribution, we provided a market segmentation of potential customers of organic farm tourism in Germany based on the stated interest of respondents. The study identified three main nonhomogenous forms of tourist groups (Environmental conscious group, Non adventurous group and Health benefit opponents group). The application of differentiated marketing strategies was recommended in order to be able to effectively appeal to each of these groups of potential customers.

This chapter contributes to tourism literature by identifying three groups of potential customers of organic farm tourism, which is a form of sustainable tourism (Agöl, 2001). Members of the first group were receptive to environmental issues and appreciated nature on their holidays the most. The second segment constituted a new group of potential guests of organic agritourism. Although not so deeply involved in environmental issues compared to the former, members of this group expressed a certain interest in organic agritourism as well as nature-oriented travel styles. It is essential that those two (potential) guest segments are recognized as two separate segments, although both can be hosted on the same farm.

Another contribution of this study relies on its marketing implications. Based on the findings of this study we suggest collaborative actions among tourist operators. Organic farms as well as tourism service providers have a mutual interest in promoting sustainable farm tourism. For farmers this is of paramount importance to assure hospitality during all seasons; for tourism providers it is important to fulfill the new environmental awareness of individuals as well as increasing best practices in sustainable tourism. A sound strategy for the organic farmers could be to invest in traditional, ecologically produced food which allows tourists to rediscover the delight of "eating locally, seasonally and enjoying the process of the food's creation" (Adams, 2008:110). This channel has displayed great success in Italy (above all in the regions of Tuscany and Umbria), where organic farm operations are not only chosen for the farm tourism experience that they provide but also because of the added value that the organic emphasis of the farm exerts on the food component. Hence, organic farm operators are considered trustworthy partners in the food chain.

A recent study of the Italian region of Umbria (INNOREF, 2006), witnesses "the tendency of organic products to penetrate to the niche PDO and PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) chains more than better known products […] confirming the existence of a strong tie between organic products, local area and traditions".

Hence, "it is only by crediting the farmers with the added value of organic products that it will be possible to consolidate farms that apply the organic farming method" (ibid.).

This study has certain limitations that should be considered. Being part of a more comprehensive study on conventional agritourism, the behavioral data used as a dependent variable was restricted to a set of general interest items. A choice modeling approach could have provided a better differentiation among factors influencing favor for organic agritourism. Secondly, due to the convenience sample used in data collection, the segment dimensions identified here should be treated as possible areas that need maintenance and/or improvement.

Another weakness is that the sample consists of both people who have experienced farm tourism and those who have not, implying that most respondents based their answers on imagination. Future research should therefore consider the views of only those who have experienced this form of tourism in order to be able to better segment the market.

In addition, although the variable (expected interest) used for clustering the respondents is an effective way to design a marketing strategy, there are a number of other factors that can be used to differentiate potential travelers. Future research should therefore incorporate other variables such as expected benefits (Jan et al., 2002), geographic characteristics (Reid & Reid, 1997) and expenditure (Mok & Iverson, 2000; Spotts & Mahoney 1991). Finally, the respondents were all German nationals implying that the views expressed represent that of only domestic tourists. Future research should also include foreign travelers in order to determine and incorporate their views and enable the design of a more effective marketing strategy.

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Chapter 8

8 *Tradition* and *Web 2.0.* Is German farm tourism able to face the new challenges?

8.1 Introduction

With the advancement of the Internet consumer behavior has dramatically changed, moving from a passive role, i.e. observer of Websites, to a more active role as in the case of online banking, chatting, participation in online boycott forums, etc. Thus, the Internet nowadays offers new communication possibilities to consumers, and this “online revolution” has lead many scholars to define this “new era” with the term “Web 2.0” which, according to Jones (1998) means computer-mediated communication, which is based on new communication tools such as blogs, wikis, chats, etc. (the so-called Web 2.0 tools).

This “new era” could not avoid affecting tourist marketing science as well as the sector of farm tourism. With regard to the latter, the repercussions for farm operators are both positive and challenging at the same time. So, for instance, Internet-based technologies offer very small sized operators the possibility to gain world-wide visibility. On the other hand, they represent a challenge for many operators who, especially in the agricultural sector, are not “tech-savvy” at all. So, for example, the decision to host consumer reviews on the Website, as has been established in the hotel sector, could be particularly difficult for farmers to accept.

Henceforth, the general objective of the next section is to analyze whether it is worthwhile for farm tourism associations/operations to integrate their online offers with Web 2.0 tools, which imply an active participation of both farmers and consumers on the Web. In Chapter 4 we have empirically shown the positive economic repercussions for farmers related to the ownership of a Website. In the following study we go beyond this “first generation” technology and we investigate the process by which the traditional management of farm tourism operations can be influenced by the use of “second generation” technologiy such as the over mentioned Web 2.0 tools.

This study focuses on e-reviews which are online consumers’ product-related articulations. According to many authors, e-reviews have high information content. However, an issue which has not yet received enough attention in the literature is whether they have a predominant or a complementary role on consumers' behavior in comparison with other information sources.

The research questions addressed in this analysis are the following:

- Are e-reviews, ceteris paribus, more frequently chosen as a quality criterion for choosing an accommodation than other information sources such as hotel rating system, reviews in travel guides and travel agency recommendations?
- Further, the second research question concerns the structure of e-reviews. Specifically: what turns e-reviews into a trustworthy information source?
- Finally, the third research question is dedicated to the influence of e-reviews on other online travelers: what impact have the former on the decision of booking an accommodation?

An important question also is whether experienced farm guests show a different behavior towards Web 2.0. tools than other consumers, and what might be the possible implications for farm tourism promotion. To this end, the following questions are analyzed as well:

- Do farm guests and non farm guests significantly differ in terms of Internet use with particular emphasis on Web 2.0 tools (i.e. reading and posting of online reviews), general online searching activities, Internet affinity, etc.?
- Closely related to the former is the question concerning what are the significant differences between farm guests and non farm guests in online travel booking behavior?
- Which risks and opportunities for farmers could be related to the decision of online travelers' reviews for their farm tourism product?

8.2 Literature review and development of hypotheses

According to Litvin, Goldsmith, and Pan (2008), increasing numbers of travelers are using the Internet to seek destination information. As time passes, consumers are more likely to rely on the information provided by other peers than on that coming from business companies (ibid.). Each time consumers articulate themselves on the Web their output is referred to as electronic word of mouth (e-WOM). Many authors agree that e-WOM "has empowered the consumers" (Niininen, Buhalis, & March, 2007) by allowing them to access objective, more accurate and up-to-date information about products (Kucuk & Krishnamurthy, 2007). Thus, e-WOM has entered into the array of quality information sources.

Nevertheless, research on the impact of e-WOM on consumer behavior has only recently begun. An important contribution is the study of Hennig-Thurau (2005) who points out that behavioral relevance of customer articulations very much depends on the motives of readers. Furthermore, Nikolaeva and Sriram (2006) state that the influence of e-WOM on behavior varies according to the purchased product as well as to the number of available alternatives. The impact of e-WOM is shown by Litvin, Goldsmith and Pan (2008) on the creation of destination images; whereas, the study of Harris Interactive & Fleishman demonstrates that for the purchase of electronic flight tickets, other online information sources (i.e. search engines for price comparison) display the strongest influence (www.harrisinteractive.de [July 5, 2008]).

Information asymmetries

The first aim of this study is to empirically determine which information sources are preferred by consumers in order to book an accommodation in an environment with multiple sources of quality information. In order to develop an appropriate experimental design, the information theories have been reviewed. These are generally developed to better understand and explain information flows on the market as well as to detect asymmetric information. The latter implies that customers cannot precisely assess a product's quality before purchasing it (Clerides, Nearchou, & Pashardes, 2003), which causes market inefficiencies (Akerlof, 1970).

Since holidays are experience goods, the tourism industry is characterized by a large degree of asymmetric information. Henceforth, many scholars have explored ways in which the market environments can sustain equilibria. Clerides et al. (2003) studied the case of tour operators who attempt to signal quality by providing a self-developed hotel rating scale. In this way, customers are provided with the possibility of comparing the conventional hotel rating with the one constructed by tour operators. Other mechanisms which rectify information asymmetries on the market embrace the screening of consumers towards other consumers' activities, i.e. suggestions by friends/relatives or reading e-reviews are extremely useful benchmark for information search and purchase of products (Kucuk & Krishnamurthy, 2007).

There is general consensus that the more reliable sources of information are advice from friends and relatives, tourist guides, professional or specialized consultants, radio, television, etc. Recent studies point out that e-reviews are considered reliable sources of information by consumers (Hennig-Thurau, 2005), although their impact on behavior has not as yet been acutely analyzed. Studies have shown that while individuals acquire information from multiple sources, the number of sources actually referred to in the product selection process is limited (Hato et al., 1999). Furthermore, since different quality information sources convey different vacation expectations, it is important for marketers to know which mode of processing is dominant in the decisions of choice of target groups (Molina & Esteban, 2006).

These conceptual and empirical perspectives lead us to test within an experimental design which sources of information among the following are preferred by consumers for the booking of an accommodation: e-reviews, hotel rating system, recommendation by travel agents, and travel guides. Furthermore, the low level of awareness shown in the pre-test by respondents towards farm-based accommodations forced us to include also other, more conventional types of accommodations such as hotel and holiday houses. Accordingly, the first hypothesis is the following:

Hypothesis 1: For booking an accommodation in an environment with multiple sources of information, e-reviews are chosen more frequently than a hotel rating system, recommendation by travel agents and travel guides.

Trust in e-reviews

As stated above, many scholars affirm that e-reviews are considered trustworthy information by consumers (Gretzel, 2007, www.tripadvisor.com/ [May 2, 2008]; Hennig-Thurau, 2005). In situations of asymmetric information, trust is considered as an important mechanism to sustain equilibrium, because it reduces risk perception and transactional costs (Ebert, 2006). The second purpose of this study is to detect the determinants of trust in e-reviews. Therefore, trust theories have been explored and are presented in the following.

In their reviews on the literature concerning trust, Raimondo (2000) and Ebert (2006) agree that the most used dimensions for defining trust are competence (also referred to as expertness and dynamism), benevolence (goodwill, responsiveness) and integrity (credibility, morality, reliability), although they are not always combined together (compare Ganesan, 1994; McKnight, Choudhury & Kacmar, 2002). Whereas the competence dimension of trust describes a consumer's belief that his/her counterpart has the required expertise, benevolence is based on a consumer's perception that the other person acts at his/her best and in the interest of the consumer. Finally, integrity refers to the common values between trustor and trustee (compare Raimondo, 2005).

The current literature on e-reviews seems to endorse these dimensions. In her study on impact of online travel reviews, Gretzel (2007, www.tripadvisor.com [May 2, 2008]) identifies perceived expertness and a friendly communicative style as important dimensions of e-reviews. However, in their study on the impact of WOM on brand evaluations, Sundaram and Webster (1999) discovered that evaluation of a familiar brand is less susceptible to be influenced by opinions of other consumers. Furthermore, e-reviews do not stand alone on the Web, but they are generated by different media which can be company controlled (such as guest books or consumer chat rooms), consumer controlled (such as boycott sites) or third party controlled (such as newsgroups or virtual opinion platforms) (compare Hennig-Thurau, 2005). It is therefore important that the source of the e-review is also perceived as credible. Based on these findings, the following hypotheses are formulated:

Hypothesis 2: The perceived expertness of e-reviews positively influences trust in e-reviews.

Hypothesis 3: A friendly style of e-review positively influences trust in e-reviews.

Hypothesis 4: Consumer's familiarity with a hotel brand negatively influences trust in e-reviews.

Hypothesis 5: The perceived credibility of the source of e-reviews positively influences trust in e-reviews.

As mentioned above, the third purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of trust in e-reviews on the decision of booking an accommodation. Thus, in the same way as offline WOM is supposed to affect the purchase behavior of consumers (Arndt, 1967) we hypothesize that e-reviews influence consumers' behavior. Accordingly, the next hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 6: Trust in e-reviews positively influences human behavior.

8.3 Study design

Data for this study were collected in several German cities via administrated questionnaires during the first two weeks of May 2008. The data collection took place within the frame of an academic marketing research course during which each student interviewed 10 people using common demographic criteria as a guideline (gender, profession, age, etc.). Because of time and financial restraints, the sample was not intended to be representative. The final number of available responses was 216.

The questionnaire embraced a set of items regarding information searching behavior, two measurement components concerning "trust in e-reviews" and "trust in the source of e-reviews", a set of socio demographic data and an experimental design.

Based on the review by Molina et al. (2008) on the literature concerning information sources, the following sources of information were included in the set of items concerning information searching behavior: advice given by relatives/friends, reviews in travel guides and recommendations by travel agents. To these, e-reviews and the hotel rating system were added because of their accessibility to a greater percentage of consumers (Engel, Kollat & Backwell, 1978; Molina & Esteban, 2006).

Trust in e-reviews referred to perceived trustworthiness of consumers' articulations on the Web. It was based on the three dimensions of trust reviewed by Raimondo (2000) of ability, benevolence and integrity to which the construct of a product's familiarity was added as a control variable with a disincentive function.

Since we were not conscious of any established scales for trust in e-reviews, we constructed items based on the findings of Gretzel (2007) (perceived expertness and style), Brown, Broderick and Lee (2007) (credibility of e-review source) and Sundaram and Webster (1999) (brand familiarity). We then discussed the items with a pool of experts who gave us feedback on their readability and their collocation in the categories discussed above (expert validity). A pretest was provided by marketing students which led to the modification of some statements. Similar processes of item generation for new constructs are not uncommon in the literature and can be seen as an indicator of criterion validity (compare Hennig-Thurau, 2005). An overview of the items can be inferred by Table 72.

Table 72 Representation of the items developed for each construct

Construct	Indicator[1]
Trust in e-reviews	Before booking a hotel I read other e-users‘ experiences
	E-reviews help me to make the right buying decision
	In comparison to catalogues I trust e-reviews more
	I think that e-reviews are trustworthy
	If a hotel is promoted by tourists, I am more willing to book it
	To me positive e-reviews are very important
Expertness	The number of posted e-reviews is very important to me
	I trust e-reviews written by people who travel a lot
	The more detailed an e-review the more I trust it
	I only trust e-reviews which have received high ratings
Style	I trust more e-reviews written in a friendly manner
	I especially trust e-reviews posted by people similar to me
Brand familiarity	If a hotel is well known, reviews by others are not very important
	If a hotel has a high rating, reviews by others are not very important
Credibility of e-platform	e-opinion platforms are trustworthy to me

[1]Five-point Likert-type scale (-2) = totally disagree to +(2) =totally agree

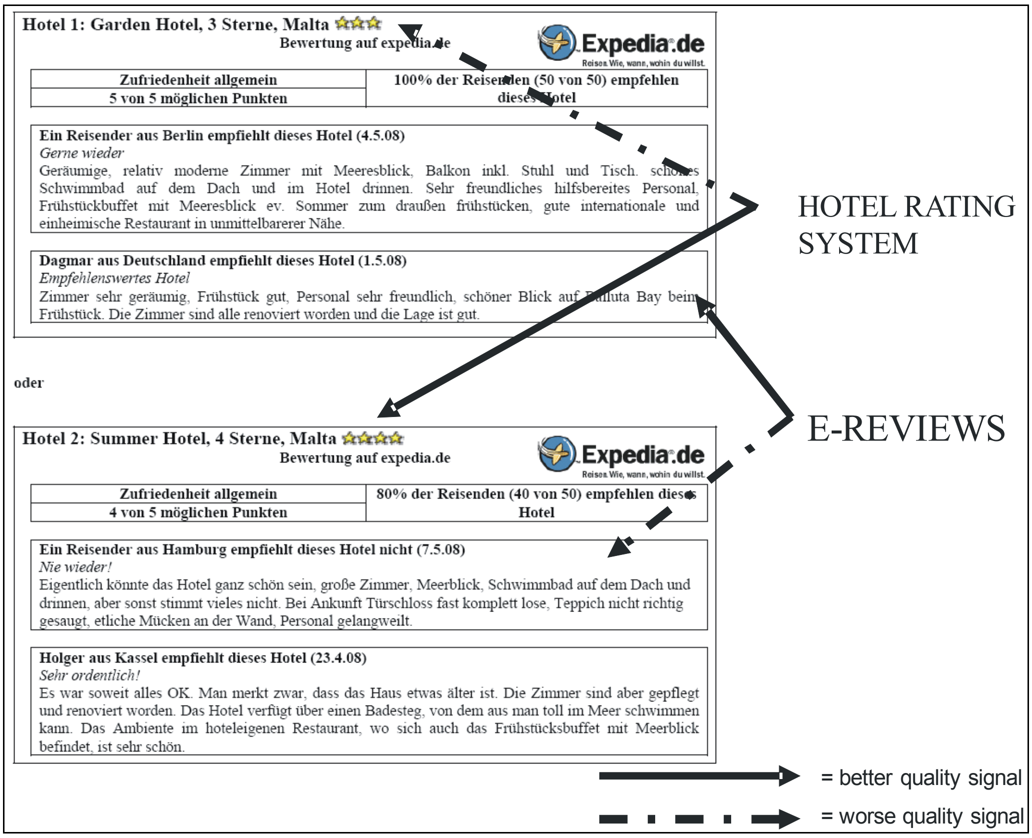
Source: own representation

8.4 Experimental design

For the choice experiment, information sheets were designed similar to existing online travel platform such as Holidaychek, Tripadvisor, etc. (see Figure 17). The logo of a travel opinion platform was placed in the background of each experiment in order to truly replicate an Internet based environment. According to Hennig-Thurau (2005) such platforms can be seen as objective quality assessors which interact with companies (here: accommodation providers) on behalf of consumers. This design aimed to replicate a real life situation, where ordinary individuals have the capability to choose among different online and offline information sources available at the same time. Furthermore, the high degree of similarity with the Web environment permitted attraction of the opinion of potential respondents (who had not read e-reviews yet).

At the beginning, respondents could read a text about definition and function of online travel platforms and e-reviews. Afterwards, four dichotomous statements concerning the choice of different types of accommodation were introduced. Respondents were asked to choose either the accommodation promoted by more positive e-reviews (option 1) or the one promoted by a better quality criterion (conventional hotel rating system, review in a travel guide, recommendation by a travel agent) (option 0).

Figure 17 Experimental design



Source: own representation

8.5 Analysis of the main findings

8.5.1 Descriptive statistics

In the following, respondents will be analyzed by means of descriptive statistics. Firstly, the socio-demographic features will be presented. Next, respondents of the sample will be described according to both their offline tourist behavior and to the tourist behavior in relation to Web 2.0 tools. To this end, respondents will be separated according to their farm tourism experience. Hence, two groups will be compared, those of “farm guests” and those of “non farm guests”. In order to detect any discrepancies between the offline and the online tourist behavior of respondents, the results of the statements will be compared next with the findings of the experiment. Finally, the results of the structural equation model will be presented and some conclusions will be drafted.

In the sample, female respondents are slightly overrepresented (54% versus 46% of males) so as the respondents aged between 21 and 30 years old who are the majority (40.4%), followed by those between 31 and 50 years of age (35.2%) and the ones over 50 years (22.8%). Very young (up to 20 years) respondents are the least represented (1.6%). The mean age is 39 years old. Education patterns display some bias as well. So, the respondents with university or similar degrees are overrepresented (56.4), followed by the share of respondents with high school education (39%). Only a limited proportion of respondents display a lower education level (4.6%).

As far as the household structure is concerned, most respondents live in households with up to two people (64%), followed by households with up to four (30.5%) and up to seven (5.5%) persons (see Table 73).

Table 73 Demographic profile of respondents

Place of residence	**n**	**%**
Village (< 5,000 citizens)	82	38
City (5,000 < 30,000 citizens)	32	15
Big city (from 30,000 citizens upwards)	101	47
Gender		
Female	116	54
Male	99	46
Age		
14-20 years old	3	1.6
21-30 years old	87	40.4
31-50 years old	76	35.2
More than 50 years old	49	22.8
Mean: 39 years		
Education		
University degree or more	121	56.4
High school	86	39
Lower than high school	10	4.6
Household structure		
Up to 2 persons	138	64
3 - 4 persons	66	30.5
5 - 7 persons	12	5.5
Children		
Households with children[1]	53	24.7
Previous experience with farm tourism		
Only as child.	42	19.4
Once.	5	2.3
More than once.	18	9.3
Several times.	25	11.6
Never, but somewhat interested in.	61	28.2
Never and not interested in.	63	29.2
[1]Under 18 years		

Source: own calculation

The majority of respondents (47%) come from a medium or big city (from 30,000 inhabitants upwards), followed by 38% who come from a village (up to 5000 inhabitants) and 15% who come from a small city (below 30,000 inhabitants). As far as previous experience of farm tourism is concerned, the questionnaire surveys, by means of an ad hoc statement, whether respondents have experienced this form of tourism only in their childhood.

In this way it is possible to avoid any bias in the category "previous experience of farm tourism", as it is assumed that the choice of this item indicates a low probability to repeat this experience as an "adult" or "as long as the individual does not have own children". All told, the large majority of the respondents of the sample have either not experienced farm tourism (almost 60%) or exclusively as a child (19.4%). Among the ones with no experience at all, 28.2% ventilate some interest in this tourism form; whereas 29.2% deny it categorically. Among respondents who have already taken part in agritourism, 11.6% of respondents have experienced it once to twice in their lives, followed by other 11.6% who are probably repeat guests, since they have experienced it more than three times.

Table 74 presents the features related to holiday patterns of the sample. The average propensity to go on holiday is twice yearly; and the average duration is one to two weeks.

Table 74 Holiday patterns of respondents

	Mean	Standard deviation
Holiday frequency[1]	2.0	1.2
Holiday duration[2]	1.8	0.8
[1]Five-point Likert-type scale ranging from (0) last year never to (4) more than three times per year, [2] Five- point Likert-type scale from (0) up to four days to (4) more than three weeks		

Source: own calculation

In the following, holiday planning is analyzed (see Table 75). Most respondents typically become very involved in holiday planning, as they devote a lot of effort to this activity (43.5%). Almost half of respondents feel trip planning is a process which takes up much of their time (46.9%).

As far as the Internet is concerned, it is interesting to note that 63.5% of respondents use it as a source for holiday planning. Furthermore, 56.6% of respondents state having already used the Internet for booking a holiday.

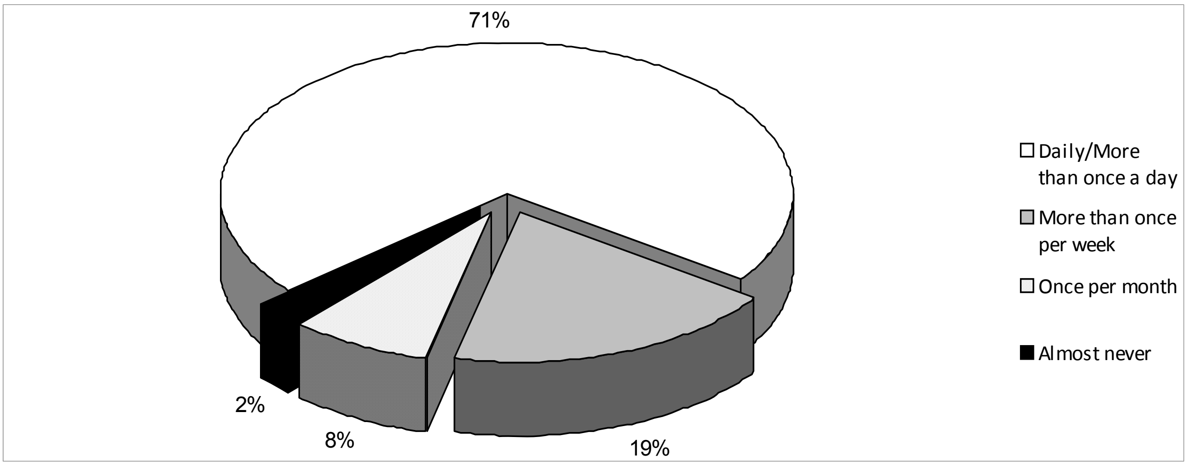
Table 75 Holiday planning behavior

Holiday planning behavior[1]	Percent of respondents who totally or somewhat agree
I devote a lot of efforts to holiday planning	43.5
I use Internet for holiday planning	63.5
I have already used Internet for holiday booking	56.6
Holiday planning takes up much of my time	46.9
[1] Five- point Likert-type scale ranging from (2) totally agree to (-2) totally disagree	

Source: own calculation

As shown in Figure 18, the Internet has become a day-to-day activity: 71% of respondents use it daily or more than once per day, followed by 19% who use it more than once per week. Fewer respondents use it once per month (8%) and only 2% state that they almost never use it.

Figure 18 Respondents' grade of exposure to the Internet



Source: own representation

Although it seems that the vast majority of the respondents are very skilled at using the Internet, which could be indicative of the mentioned age bias, the reasons for using the Web appear surprisingly limited (see Table 76): in fact, the exchange of e-mails has the highest mean value (1.32), followed by general search for information (1.23) and online banking (0.03). Other activities such as online shopping, hotel reservation, participation in forums, entertainment activities and participation in chats rank as negative mean values (-0.32, -0.42, -0.76, -0.94 and -1.03 respectively), thus showing that these uses are only sporadically attained (from sometimes to never). However, the high standard deviation values indicate a wide sample variety in the use of Internet.

Table 76 Web 2.0 tools

For what purpose do you use Internet?[1]	Mean	Standard deviation
E-Mail	1.32	1.08
General information	1.23	0.93
Online banking	0.03	1.68
Online shopping	-0.32	1.24
Hotel reservation	-0.42	1.02
Participation in forums	-0.76	1.40
Entertainment, e.g. music download	-0.94	1.26
Participation in chats	-1.03	1.24
[1]Five- point Likert-type scale ranging from (2) always to (-2) never		

Source: own calculation

As shown in Table 77, in the sample more than half of respondents (51%) have not used other online reviews yet. The remaining respondents are called "passive users" because they have read online reviews at least once. More specifically, around 23% sometimes read the reviews posted in the Web by their peers, followed by others who rather rarely do so (16%). Finally, around 10% often or very often read them.

Table 77 Passive use of online reviews

Use	n	%
Never	109	51
Rarely	34	16
Sometimes	49	23
Often	14	6
Very often	9	4

Source: own calculation

In the next step, respondents were shown a brief description of e-reviews as well as an experiment which simulated the Web environment (see Figure 17). This was necessary in order to gain an overview of the evaluation patterns of all respondents of the sample concerning e-reviews. Table 78 shows the results.

Most of the respondents perceive e-reviews as useful or very useful (61%). Accordingly, 55% of respondents would avoid booking a hotel with negative e-reviews and even 75% are likely to pay more for an accommodation with positive e-reviews.

Table 78 Evaluation of other travelers' online review

Holiday planning behavior[1]	Percent of respondents who totally or somewhat agree
I would pay more for an accommodation with positive e-reviews	75
I think e-reviews are very useful	61
I would never book a hotel with negative e-reviews	55
[1] Five- point Likert-type scale from (2) totally agree to (-2) totally disagree	

Source: own calculation

Table 79 provides the information regarding respondents' evaluation of several cues for considering a travel review as trustful. The majority of respondents rate the following types of information as being important or very important in order to trust an online review: detailed description (67%), high travel experience of the writer (64%), friendly writing style (33%), perceived similarity between the active and the passive user (33%) and finally number of reviews posted on the Web (30%).

All in all, respondents of this sample show a high degree of trust in other online reviews, had they already read them on the Web (passive users) or not. Hence, due to the low percentage of respondents who had already read online reviews (Table 77) most answers rely on the evaluation of the reviews administrated during the experiment.

Table 79 Cues for evaluating a travel review as trustful

Evaluation of travel reviews as trustful[1]	Percent of respondents who totally or somewhat agree
Detailed description	67
High travel experience of the writer	64
Friendly writing style	33
Perceived as a similar person	33
Number of reviews	30
[1] Five- point Likert-type scale from (2) totally agree to (-2) totally disagree	

Source: own calculation

However, the situation changes with regard to the e-opinion platforms that is the virtual place where e-reviews are generally posted: only 30% of respondents strongly or somewhat agree that they are trustful (data not shown).

This is due to the fact that opinion platform are not familiar to the mainstream yet. This is confirmed by Table 80 where it is shown that there is a positive relationship between the frequency of using travel opinion platforms and the degree of trust respondents have towards them (see Table 80).

Table 80 Relationship between use of e-opinion platforms and degree of trust

	I think that e-opinion platforms are **Very trustworthy**				**Not at all trustworthy**
Frequency of visit	**2**	**1**	**0**	**-1**	**-2**
Never	1	13	63	27	1
Rarely	0	7	18	9	0
Sometimes	1	6	28	12	2
Often	0	0	1	6	2
Very often	0	0	1	6	2

Source: own calculation

The higher the frequency of visit e-opinion platforms, the higher the trust of respondents in such sources of information, however the high concentration of responses in the "neither/nor" score confirms the still high uncertainty towards the trustworthiness of such platforms due to the general low experience of the sample to read online reviews and, consequently, to visit such Websites.

As far as information cues for evaluating an opinion platform are concerned (see Table 81), the majority of respondents rate the following types of information as being important or very important in order to trust an online opinion platform: independency from any accommodation providers (82%), up-to-date information (68%), level of popularity of the Website hosting the platform (61%), high level of customization of the platform (59%), quality certification label (58%), level of popularity of the platform (53%) and high number of searching functions of the platform (51%).

On the other side, neither external publicity hosted on the opinion platform nor economic incentives are identified as trust motivators, since less than one-quarter of respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the related items (12% and 15% respectively). With regard to the latter, these findings are confirmed by Gretzel (2007) as well as Hennig-Thurau and Walsh (2004).

Table 81 Cues for evaluating an online opinion platform as trustful

Evaluation of travel platforms as trustful[1]	Percent of respondents who totally or somewhat agree
Website is independent from the accommodation provider	82
Up-to-date information	68
Level of popularity of Website hosting the platform	61
Platform is highly customized	59
Platform has a certification label of an external quality provider	58
Level of popularity of the platform	53
High number of information searching criteria	51
Incentives	15
Low amount of external publicity	12
[1] Five- point Likert-type scale from (2) totally agree to (-2) totally disagree	

Source: own calculation

The findings displayed in Table 82 concern respondents' experience of posting reviews on the Web (active users). As expected, experience in posting e-reviews is rather low: only 1% of respondents articulate themselves on the Web on a regular basis, followed by 7% who sometimes do it and 6% who have posted e-reviews once. Almost 56% have not yet done so but are interested in. Finally, 30% of respondents neither do it nor indicate any interest in doing so.

Table 82 Experience of respondents in posting e-reviews

Posting of e-reviews	N	%
Never and not interested in	121	30
Never and somewhat interested in	65	56
Yes, sometimes	15	7
Yes, once	13	6
Very often	2	1

Source: own calculation

Focusing on those respondents who have posted e-reviews at least once, the reasons for articulating on the Web have been surveyed (Table 83).

Table 83 Reasons for posting an online review

Reasons for posting e-reviews[1]	Percent of respondents who totally or somewhat agree
To warn others of poor services	67
To free my frustration	63
Help others by sharing my experiences	46
Help the companies which offer good services	32
Share with others my own experience	28
Take vengeance upon a company which offered bad services	13
Feel good when exchanging information	7
[1] Five- point Likert-type scale from (2) totally agree to (-2) totally disagree	

Source: own calculation

The majority of respondents want to warn other consumers of poor services (67%). Venting negative feelings is a motivation which affects the majority of respondents as well, since they want to “free their own frustration” (63%). Helping others by sharing one’s own experience is chosen by 46% of respondents, followed by supporting companies which provide good services (32%). Some respondents (28%) seem to have a “speculative” motivation, since they want to share their experiences with others. Finally, the motivations of taking vengeance on companies which gave bad services as well as the self-enhancement provided by the exchange of experiences within a community concern only few respondents (13% and 7% respectively).

8.5.2 Comparison of online travel behavior of farm guests and non farm guests

As mentioned previously, this study aims at examining farm guests and non farm guests in terms of Internet use with particular emphasis on Web 2.0 tools (i.e. reading and posting of online reviews). To this end, the sample has been divided into two groups: the first one represents the group of farm guests (n=48) and includes those respondents who have experienced farm tourism at least once.

The second group is called “non farm guests” (n=168) and includes both potential guests (respondents who have never had farm tourism vacation but are interested) as well as others (respondents who have never had farm tourism vacation and are not interested). Furthermore, this cluster also includes those respondents who have already experienced farm tourism in their childhood but are assumed to reject this vacation form as adults[18]. In order to detect

[18] Historical reasons which explain the current imagery of farm tourism in Germany have been discussed in chapter 6

differences among respondents of the two groups, t-test for independent samples was performed.

Table 84 shows significant differences among farm guests and non farm guests concerning the frequency of taking a holiday: as displayed by the mean values, the former traveled more frequently in the past 12 months prior to the study than non farm guests (2.38 versus 1.89 respectively). Respondents belonging to the group of farm guests take probably this type of vacation as a second or third holiday per year.

Respondents of the two groups also differ significantly in their evaluation of online reviews With regard to the statement “I trust other online reviews more than brochures”, farm guests are more likely to disagree than non farm guests (-0.27 and 0.08 respectively). In line with the above, farm guests are more suspicious than non farm guests concerning e-opinion platforms since they are more likely to agree to the statement “these Internet Websites are all cheat” than non farm guests to the statement than non farm guests (farm guests’ mean value: -0.29 versus sample mean: -0.61). Overall, farm guests seem more sceptical with regards to Web 2.0 tools than the other group.

Table 84 Offline and online travel behavior among farm guests and non farm guests

	Farm guests (n=48)	**Non farm guests (n=168)**	**Total (n=216)**
How often did you take a holiday last year?[1]*	μ= 2.38 (σ =1.16)	μ= 1.89 (σ =1.19)	μ= 2.00 (σ =1.20)
I have more trust in online travelers’ reviews than brochures[2]*	μ= -0.27 (σ =0.91)	μ= 0.08 (σ =0.95)	μ= 0.00 (σ =0.95)
These Internet Websites [opinion platforms] are all cheat[2]*	μ= -0.29 (σ = 0.87)	μ= -0.61 (σ =0.79	μ= -0.53 (σ =0.81)

[1] Five-point Likert-type scale from (0) last year never to (4) more than three times [2]five-point Likert-type scale from (+2) I totally agree to (-2) I totally disagree, * = $p < 0.05$, μ=mean value, σ =standard deviation, holiday = from 2 nights upwards;

Source: own calculation

However, the output of the experimental design shows a high level of trust in online reviews also among farm guests although not as high as among the other group.

Hence, the score of the index displayed in Table 85 is an indicator of the use of e-reviews in comparison to other more traditional quality signals (hotel star system, brochure, recommendation of travel agency, etc.). The higher is the value of the index, the more trustworthy is considered the online review.

As displayed in Table 85, although farm guests score a lower mean than non farm guests, among the former the index value is also closer to four (highest level of trust in e-reviews) than zero (lowest level of trust in e-reviews), thus showing that both groups of respondents tend to more frequently choose booking accommodations promoted by e-reviews than those promoted by other quality signals.

Table 85 Online travel behavior among farm guests and non farm guests

Online travel behavior	Farm guests (n=48)	Non farm guests (n=168)	Total (n=216)
Booking of accommodation with better e-reviews than other quality signals (output of the experiment).[1]**	μ= 2.52 (σ =0.99)	μ= 2.99 (σ =0.92)	μ= 2.89 (σ =0.95)
[1] Five-point index ranging from 0 =only accommodations with better quality signals than e-reviews and 4= only accommodations with better e-reviews than other quality signals, ** = $p < 0.01$, μ=mean value, σ =standard deviation			

Source: own calculation

Finally, Table 86 stresses a significant difference among farm guests and non farm guests with regard to the use of Web 2.0 tools.

Table 86 Experience of posting e-reviews among farm guests and non farm guests

Posting of e-reviews	Farm guests (n=48)	Non farm guests (n=168)	Total (n=216)
Previous experience of posting e-reviews[1]*	μ= -1.75 (σ =1.12)	μ= -2.14 (σ =0.77)	μ= -2.06 (σ =0.87)
[1] Five-point Likert-type scale ranging from (2) always to (-2) never * = $p < 0.05$ μ=mean value σ=standard deviation			

Source: own calculation

Farm guests score higher in experience of posting e-reviews than non farm guests (-1.75 and -2.14 respectively), showing an even higher propensity to post e-reviews than the sample average (-2.06). Hence, if on the one hand farm guests are more suspicious than the other group regarding Web 2.0 tools, on the other hand they are more likely to articulate opinions on the Web due, probably, to their high travel frequency.

8.5.3 Output of the experimental design

In order to detect which information sources are more frequently chosen by the respondents of this sample, it was necessary to focus on the output of the experiment mentioned above; all in all, 82% of respondents chose accommodation promoted by e-reviews two or three times, followed by 14% who chose it once and 4% who never chose it.

Hence, e-reviews were the most *used* sources of information followed by travel guides, travel agents' recommendations and the hotel rating system (see Table 87). Based on the previous results, we can therefore accept hypothesis 1, as, in the experimental design, e-reviews were the most frequently chosen information sources by respondents in comparison to travel guides, travel agents' recommendations and hotel rating system.

Table 87 Stated importance of information sources and output of the experiment

Most important information sources (stated by respondents)		Most used information sources (experiment's output)	
1	Advice of friends/relatives	1	e-review
2	Hotel rating system	2	Travel guides
3	e-reviews	3	Travel agents' recommendation
4	Travel agents' recommendations	4	Hotel rating system

Source: own calculation

8.5.4 Findings of the structural equation model

In order to examine the dimensionality of the entire set of items, a principal component analysis (PCA) using Varimax rotation and Kaiser's eigenvalue-greater-than-one criterion was performed. Only items with factor loadings of at least 0.40 were retained. Based on the results of the PCA, a confirmatory analysis was then performed. The final number of factors with eigenvalue greater than one was nine. As expected there were no discrepancies between the output of the PCA and those of the confirmatory analysis. The results of the confirmatory analysis were maintained for the structural equation model (SEM) to which a behavioral variable (choice of accommodation) was added. The latter was derived by the results of the experimental design which was conveyed in an index. The final index was a five-point index where the highest score indicates the highest level of trust in e-review.

As already mentioned, the index measures the likelihood of choosing an accommodation promoted by e-reviews in comparison with accommodations promoted by other quality signals. The index scale is explained as follows: 0= very low trust in e-reviews (respondents never choose the accommodation promoted by more positive e-reviews), 1= low level of trust (respondents have chosen once the accommodation promoted by more positive e-reviews), 2= middle level of trust (respondents have chosen the accommodation promoted by more positive e-reviews twice), 3= high level of trust (respondents have chosen the accommodation promoted by more positive e-reviews three times) and 4= very high level of trust (respondents have chosen all four times the accommodations promoted by more positive e-reviews). The data were analyzed using the SmartPLS 2.01 software for the structural equation model based on the Partial Least Squares.

Table 88 shows the operationalization of constructs. In order to detect the determinants of trust in e-reviews (second research purpose) as well as its impact on behavior (third research purpose), a SEM was developed, whose reliability and validity were ensured through the application of a set of second generation tests (Homburg & Giering, 1996).

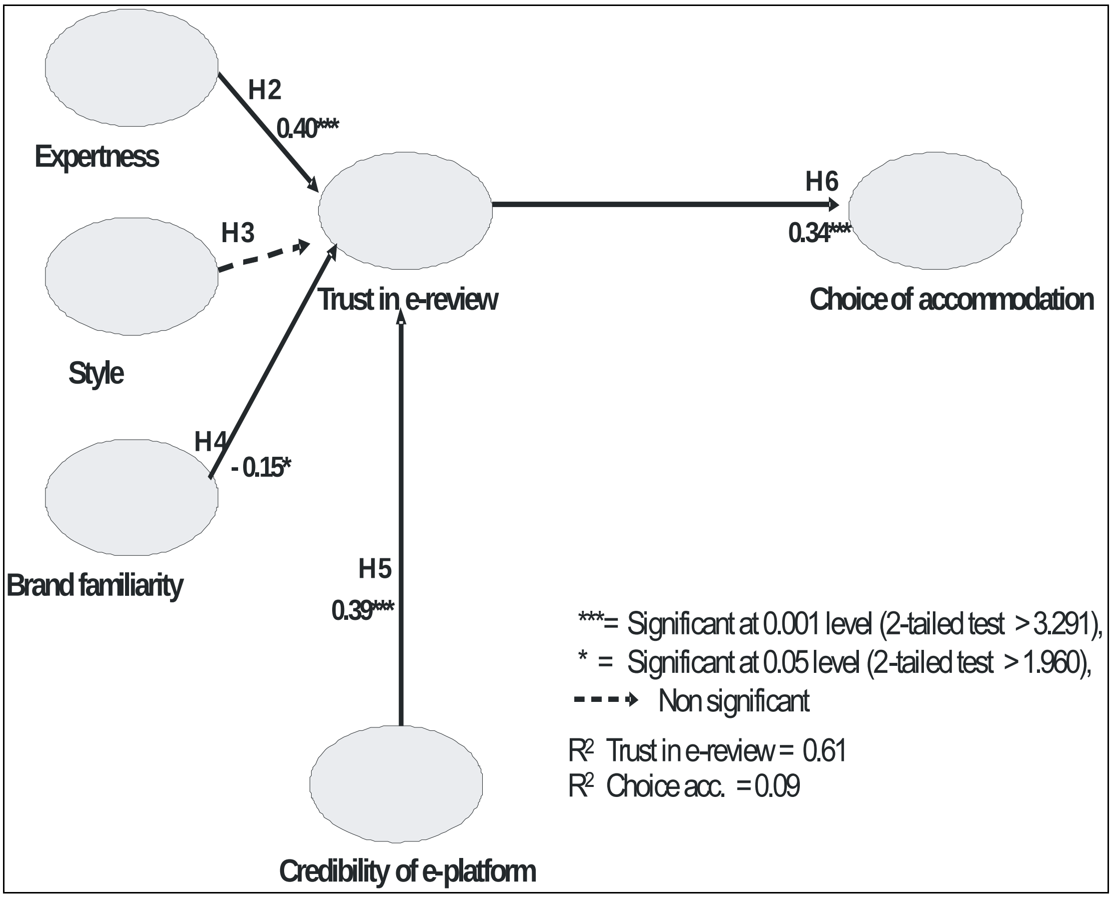
Table 88 Operationalization of constructs

Construct	Items[1]	T-Value	IR	AVE	CR
Trust in e-reviews	Before booking a hotel I read other e-users‘ experiences	15.36	0.78	0.49	0.87
	E-reviews help me to make the right buying decision	23.62	0.81		
	In comparison to catalogues I trust e-reviews more	7.73	0.58		
	I think that e-reviews are trustworthy	7.01	0.60		
	If a hotel is promoted by tourists, I am more willing to book it	9.42	0.64		
	To me positive e-reviews are very important	10.13	0.67		
Expertness	The number of posted e-reviews is very important to me	16.23	0.80	0.52	0.81
	I trust e-reviews written by people who travel a lot	15.87	0.80		
	The more detailed an e-review the more I trust it	5.64	0.67		
	I only trust e-reviews which have received high ratings	9.18	0.80		
Style	I trust more e-reviews written in a friendly manner	4.76	0.84	0.70	0.83
	I especially trust e-reviews posted by people similar to me	6.15	0.83		
Brand familiarity	If a hotel is well known, reviews by others are not very important	3.03	0.70	0.66	0.79
	If a hotel has a high rating, reviews by others are not very important	5.96	0.91		
Trust in platform[2]	e-opinion platforms are trustworthy to me	-	-	-	-
Choice[2]	Before booking a hotel I read other e-users‘ experiences	-	-	-	-
[1] Five point Likert-type scale, IR = Indicator Reliability, AVE = Average Variance Extracted, CR = Composite Reliability [2]= tests not possible for one-item constructs					
Source: own calculation					

Regarding the indicator reliability, construct loadings were examined by using t-test. In order to measure the construct reliability and validity, the composite reliability (CR) and the average variance extracted (AVE) were respectively employed. Whereas for the former, the current literature estimates a threshold of 0.7 (Dibbern & Chin, 2005; Götz & Gobbers 2004), it is expected that the AVE should not be lower than 0.5 (Homburg & Giering, 1996) meaning that at least 50 percent of measurement variance is captured by the construct (Chin, 1998).

As mentioned, the choice variable (index) reflects the frequency of choosing an accommodation promoted by online reviews in comparison with accommodations promoted by other quality signals. In this model all constructs show values greater than or nearly approaching the thresholds suggested by the literature which leads to the next step. The results of the SEM allow us to test the remaining hypotheses (see Figure 19).

Figure 19 Results of structural equation model



Source: own representation

Perceived expertness is the strongest component of trust in e-review, twice as strong as familiarity with hotel brands, which, as expected, displays a negative influence towards trust in e-reviews. Friendly style exerts no significant influence on attitude towards online reviews. As a consequence, both H2 and H4 can be accepted, whereas H3 is rejected. Trust in an online opinion platform, which is the information source of e-reviews, has also a highly significant influence towards trust in online review. As a consequence, H5 can be accepted. All in all, three out of four variables explain 61% of trust in online reviews of which a considerable part can be attributed to expertness and credibility of an e-platform. Next, the impact of trust in e-reviews on choice is presented. As expected, trust in e-reviews displays a significant and positive influence on the choice of the accommodation (H6= accepted). However, only 9% of the behavioral variable can be explained by trust in e-reviews, which leads to the conclusion that other factors should also be included in the model in order to explain what influences choice of accommodation with positive online reviews.

8.6 Conclusions

8.6.1 Scientific relevance of the study

The objective of this study is to investigate whether and to what extent the Web-based technologies (Web 2.0) can be suited to small scale farm operators. The first purpose of this research was to analyze which sources of information individuals choose in an environment with multiple information cues. Within an experimental design, it has been shown that more than 80% of respondents opted for the accommodations promoted by e-reviews although almost 40% had never read e-reviews before.

It seems that e-reviews have a greater potential to "persuade" consumers than other information sources. A possible explanation is that e-reviews, as well as offline WOM, are affective sources of information (Molina & Esteban, 2006; Ratchford, Talukdar & Lee, 2001). Thus, they convey more attractive vacation expectations than others - more objective - information sources (such as the hotel rating system).

The second purpose of this study was to detect the determinants of "trust" in e-reviews. The findings of the causal model have shown that an e-review must be perceived as "expert" in order to be trusted. This can be explained by individuals' "social orientation" (Hennig-Thurau & Walsh, 2004) or even by their need of "some kind of authority" (Brown, Broderick, & Lee 2007). Furthermore, there should not be any discrepancies between the perceived trustworthiness of e-reviews and its source. Finally, brand familiarity can be considered a competitor of e-reviews among other product related quality signals. These variables can explain 61% of trust in e-reviews.

Even though the majority of e-reviews are anonymously posted (Hennig-Thurau, 2005), consumers consider this source of information as highly reliable. This can be explained in different ways. First of all, the more people have access to a source of information, the more important the source is perceived (Engel et al., 1978). Furthermore, except in their anonymous nature, e-reviews resemble offline WOM. As the latter is considered a reliable source of information, it is plausible to maintain that e-WOM also enjoys a similar level of trustworthiness.

The third objective of this study was to measure the impact of trust in e-reviews on behavior. The findings of the causal model have shown that trust in e-reviews displays a significant and positive influence on the choice of an accommodation.

Hence, e-WOM conveyed through e-reviews should be taken into account when promoting products on the Web. However, due to the reduced quantity of variance explained, also other factors such as Internet literacy and consumer involvement are supposed to influence behavior. Further studies could replicate the model by including a greater variety of exogenous variables.

All in all, these findings confirm that consumers seek to gain more bargaining power in the market both by screening product-based information and by signaling it to others. However, as far as Germany is concerned, this study shows that such measures have only recently begun to be adopted by consumers, as neither e-reviews nor travel platforms were known by the majority of the respondents of this sample.

8.6.2 Relevance for the market of farm tourism

The results of this study have shown a significant impact of "trust in e-reviews" on the "choice of a set of accommodations". The latter are experience goods whose choice is considered in the literature as highly risky. Thus, hospitality businesses which deal with this sort of commodity could offer their Web visitors the ability to access other consumers' opinions on their Websites (i.e. by hosting a product review site). From a managerial point of view, such a strategy would offer opportunities as well as risks (Hennig-Thurau & Walsh, 2004). Among the former, the harvested information gives the company important feedback about its visitors, which otherwise would be very costly to achieve with standardized market screening procedures (Kaas, 1991). Furthermore, the introduction of such a review site would clearly signal consumers of the company's willingness to reduce information asymmetries which would increase its reputation.

On the other hand, if an operator decides to host e-reviews, negative feedback also has to be taken into account; otherwise, the information will not be perceived as authentic (Reinecke, 2008). In the case of negative online reviews, these would be spread to a "virtually unlimited number of people" (Hennig-Thurau & Walsh, 2004) for an unlimited period of time, as information disseminated on the Internet cannot be cancelled. To face such problems, it is important to create “a true dialogue” between the hospitality business and its Web visitors (Reinecke, 2008), which could be achieved in different ways such as through the integration of consumer opinions with company comments (Hennig-Thurau & Walsh 2004) or by providing extra options to potential visitors (travel suggestions, free travel related services, etc.).

In the farm tourism sector all this means that the close relationship between farmers and farm guests, which is one of the strength of this tourist type, can and should be further expanded on the Web. Information technologies offer new management and business opportunities, which is advantageous to farm operators in allowing them to have a direct link of communication with customers. The opportunities of online marketing can be ordered strategically in at least three different ways.

Linkage of the farm with platform of other tour operators (such as Expedia or Holidaycheck)

A tourist platform would provide a high number of customers because of the great number of contacts it generates. A problem that could arise is connected with the limited time farmers have for tracking the Web. Thus, although such platforms are externally managed, the farmers should find the time to answer to online customers, as well as to monitor guests’ needs by tracking online reviews related to their farms on a regular basis. This is also a sound way to monitor competitors. Another problem is related to the particular nature of the farm holiday. If a farm is promoted on the same Website as other accommodations such as hotels located at amusement parks etc., the idea conveyed to customers could be that the farm hosted on the same platform is not an authentic one.

Platform designed for farm operators and related businesses

The idea of placing the farm's address on a platform designed only for the farm tourism sector could be very useful for setting up farm tourism communities. On such platforms, customers could post comments and read other peers’ reviews, whilst other shared interest groups (such as the Slow Food Movement, Fair Trade Associations, NGOs, etc.) could cross promote their activities. In order to increase trust in such new but as yet unfamiliar platforms, practitioners have proposed many practical tools in order to increase their use, for instance, using a secure online transaction label, ordering the reviews according to the market segments (reviews of single parent travelers, of wellness tourists etc.), or allowing operators to respond to negative reviews etc.

Furthermore, since the maintenance of these platforms is possible through the contributions of its participants, there is a possibility of enriching it with professional pictures, weekly offers, and other personalizing tools. With respect to farm tourism in Italy, there are already few platforms exclusively dedicated to farm tourism. On the contrary in Germany, such platforms are still in their early stage, since many of these functions are more likely to be offered by the Websites of the main farm tourism associations.

Enrichment of the own homepage with Web 2.0 tools

This last online marketing scheme is a powerful and cheap method in cutting traditional promotional costs and improving the competitive advantage. Farmers have many ways to add value to this channel; for instance, by means of an electronic newsletter. According to Adams (2008), it may contain different types of information (harvest festival, price changes), but it is also valuable in relaying information regarding new activities, etc.

Other tools of Web 2.0 suitable for a farm are blogs. These programs share as common features the interaction with customers and, according to Adams (2008: 85), are very powerful in order to draw traffic on the farm's Website.

Overall, the most important aspect to take into consideration is the customization of the Website, for example, through the insertion of the most stunning pictures of the region, personalization with how-tos on planting seeds, bulbs, etc., "grandmother's" recipes, and others (Adams, 2008; Lüdke, 2001).

In contrast to the previous online marketing options, the placing of e-reviews on the farmer's homepage could raise the question of credibility and impartiality of their content.

As an alternative, Adams (2008) suggests the creation of a "farm journal" which would fulfill a very different role to that of the e-newsletter (ibid.: 95). Whereas the latter contains news of interest for the reader as a current or potential "customer" (e.g. price changes), a farm journal resembles a "farm diary". Henceforth, its content should fulfill the "voyeuristic" desires of individuals to hear more about behind the scenes farm life.

8.6.3 Limitations and directions for future research

The first objective of this study was to test how often e-reviews are chosen for the booking of an accommodation in comparison with other sources of information. For this purpose an experiment was designed which replicated the Web environment. Although expected, the respondents of the sample showed scarce knowledge of both e-reviews and travel platforms which could lead to a distortion in the evaluation of this source (Brown et al., 2007). Another limitation concerns the third purpose of this study. In fact, the reduced variance of choice of the causal model indicates that other variables should also have been included in the model in order to better explain the behavioral variable. Finally, due to the convenience sample, the findings of this study should be treated as possible areas that need maintenance and/or improvement. Thus, further studies could attempt to replicate these results by a broader and more representative group of respondents in order to better highlight the real potential of e-WOM and farm tourism.

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Chapter 9

9 Conclusions

The focus of this dissertation is the farm tourism market, a topic that has attracted increasing attention by marketers and academics alike.

Despite growing interest in this form of tourism and its economic importance in a period characterized by more and more volatile agricultural profits, little systematic research has been done on this issue from a marketing viewpoint. This dissertation seeks to fill the gap.

To this aim, the first part (Chapters 2 and 3) is dedicated to an extensive theoretical analysis of supply and demand of farm tourism in Germany and Italy. Here, the current knowledge about marketing strategies as well as customer expectations and characteristics is presented for both countries.

Based on this overall view of the state of the art of the sector, the second part of the dissertation consists of five empirical studies (Chapters 4 to 8) which have been conducted in the timeframe 2006-2009 in both Germany and Italy. Data collection took place in manifold ways. For the first study, we analyzed the farm operators' catalogues of Italian and German farm tourism made available by the publisher "Landselection". For the second study, we contacted farm operators throughout Germany by means of an online survey. Both the third and fourth analyses are based on a large scale customer survey; whereas, the data for the fifth study were gathered through face-to-face interviews via administrated questionnaires. Several methods of multivariate analysis have been applied according to the sample's characteristics and research goals.

In the following, the main results of the studies are summarized. Next, findings are placed into a contextual landscape which proposes ideas for further research.

9.1 Summary of the main findings

The purpose of this section is to present the main findings of the dissertation. Hence, a brief description of Chapters 2 to 8 is provided as follows:

State of the art of German farm tourism. The overall structure of German farm tourism and criteria for its classification are presented. Among the strengths of farm tourism are the social (such as gender related benefits, self-employment of farmers' next generation, etc.) and environmental benefits (biodiversity, embellishment of rural areas, etc.) which explain governmental support as well as the high commitment by farmers in this sector. Main weaknesses are identified, above all, in the low degree of professionalism of farm operators, high dependency on large-sized families and low attraction power, which represent a marketing constraint on the acquisition of new target segments. The lack of ad hoc legislation at the institutional level leads to problems in acquiring reliable statistics and evaluating market competition. Social changes in society, such as the increasing rate of aging, are seen as factors that can open the door to new market segments, if the latter is able to customize its supply. In adapting Ansoff's differentiation grid (1957) to German farm tourism, some specialization patterns appear particularly successful such as organic farm tourism, child-orientated farm tourism and farm tourism with romantic overtones on farms renovated in a classical style. The most important aspects related to the marketing mix of German farm tourism have been found in the inextricable relation of price and quality certification labels; the latter are a *sine qua non* in order to set higher prices. The major challenge for German farm tourism concerns distribution channels, since collaboration with wholesale tour operators is still less developed, and the differences among Federal States are huge.

State of the art of Italian farm tourism. The overall structure of Italian farm tourism and criteria for its classification are presented. Among the strengths of Italian farm tourism are its legal framework (clear distinction between farm and rural tourism) and the attendant fiscal advantages. Other strengths include its younger and more varied target market (nationally and internationally) and the successful linking of farm and food tourism at least in some regions. Among the main weaknesses, the country's regional differences with regard to the legal system and the fragmented quality certification system are important issues. Due to high competition in the rural sector, the elaboration of marketing strategies is of paramount importance; among these diversification patterns such as in the case of organic farm tourism or farm tourism with a camping specialization appear particularly successful. Furthermore, several aspects of the "marketing mix" of farm tourism have been underlined. Among these are: the diffusion of innovative fares such as "last minute" offers, the standard interpretation of farm tourism according to a common quality certification system (product and service policy), the inclusion of tour operators committed to sustainable tourism in the distribution channels and the increasing networking with shared interest groups (Fair Trade Organizations, Slow Food Movements, etc.) in order to take advantage of economies of scope. Closely related to the latter is the adoption of Internet based technologies (linkage with online farm tourism platforms, Web 2.0 tools on farmers' Websites, etc.) in order to set up creative and experiential exchange groups with multiplying effects.

Comparative study of the supply of German and Italian agritourism. This study compares German and Italian farm tourism using a hedonic price model in order to investigate the influence of several supply related variables on the willingness to pay for this form of tourism. To this end, the catalogues of Italian (n=365) and German (n=1,445) farm operators have been analyzed. The results of the Italian hedonic price model are listed as follows: above all, catering, the provision of wellness related infrastructure (such as the availability of a swimming pool) and specialization as a horseback riding farm have a positive influence. Furthermore, the possession of a Website is essential, as its positive influence on price is significant. The presence of apartments on a farm can, however, impact negatively on the rental price. With regard to the German model, both accommodation-related features (above all the lodging in holiday houses), and positioning attributes such as a winemaking farm as well as child-orientated farms exert a positive influence on price. Among niche differentiation patterns, fishing justifies higher prices as well. Italian farm tourism appears to be avidly pursuing peak experiences in food consumption, whereas German farm tourism focuses more on both supporting and peak experiential attributes.

Study of operators' perceptions of German farm tourism. This study deals with the supply of German farm tourism and is based on operators' perceptions of the success factors involved in this form of tourism. It is based on an online survey of 167 respondents. This study systematically investigates which factors are associated with the perceived success of farm tourism, thereby utilizing existing theories of success factor analysis to test how these theories can be extended to the traditional agrarian context of farm tourism. The study investigates both the quantitative variables related to the success construct and the qualitative ones by using a two-stage approach. With regard to the former, the results of the regression analysis show that publicity, guest activities, quality of accommodation, the attraction power of the region and price-value ratio are the most important success factors in German farm tourism. Concerning the qualitative determinants of success, we directly asked the operators to state which factors relate to their success. Rather surprisingly, the findings show that operators' perceptions of success differ significantly from the empirically-derived findings, relying more on their commitment than on the importance of publicity or guest activities. Implications for the practitioners are drawn.

Study of individuals' perceptions of German farm tourism. This study is based on a sample of 567 respondents which is the outcome of a large scale customer survey carried out in Germany in summer 2007. The aim is to illustrate positive and negative images of German farm tourism in order to suggest marketing lessons. The specific research objectives are two.

Firstly, to track the individuals' preference determinants as well as their negative beliefs, such as prejudices and stereotypes, towards farm tourism. Secondly, to explore respondents' preference patterns towards five farm tourism scenarios, in order to look ahead and offer concrete recommendations for promoting the sector based on its findings.

In order to reach the first purpose of the study we have employed a structural equation model based on partial least squares. The study shows that appreciation of the current supply of farm tourism can be explained by the adventurous image that this form of tourism evokes. However, a cognitive analysis of attitudes towards various traditional features of the farm environment reveals a significant negative impact of stereotypes on the preference for farm tourism, which is only countervailed by previous farm experience. Therefore, image adjustment and correction strategies are proposed. Such strategies should include planning events to create an enjoyable initial farm contact for potential guests.

The second research purpose is attained by means of a multinomial logit model. Both the organic and the child-orientated farm scenarios are welcomed by current consumers of farm tourism, whilst among non-guests wellness facilities are more appreciated. Based on the findings, managerial implications for farm operators are discussed.

Study of the German organic farm tourism market. This study is based on the dataset of the previous study and analyzes the German organic farm tourism market. The cluster analysis employed in this study permits to construct a typology of potential customers, providing a more thorough understanding of individuals likely to be interested in farm holidays and of underlying lifestyle factors. Each customer type is profiled according to additional variables relating to travel behaviour and sociodemographic data. In detail, four main farm customer groups with varying demographic and attitudinal characteristics towards organic farm tourism were differentiated: the *environmentally conscious*, the *non-adventurous*, the *health-benefit opponents* and the *comfort seekers*. The study recommends the use of a differentiated product mix and promotional activities for the various groups of potential organic farm tourists as a means of promoting the growth of the organic farm tourism sector in Germany.

Tradition and Web 2.0: is German farm tourism ready to face today's challenges? This study is based on a sample of 216 respondents which is the outcome of a customer survey carried out in Germany in summer 2008. It begins by examining the dramatic changes in the tourist market caused by the "digital" revolution. It explores the implications for a traditional sector such as farm tourism. To this end, it analyzes the main differences in terms of travel and online behaviour between individuals who choose to spend their holidays on a farm and those who choose other tourist destinations. Using an experimental design and a causal model, the study uncovers interesting insights into the relationship between consumer behaviour patterns and online consumer-generated content. Significant differences are detected among farm guests and non farm guests in terms of online behaviour: The former are more active in the creation of online consumer-generated content. An example is online reviews, which represent the best referential source among the quality signals examined in the study. Trust in online reviews has been identified in perceived expertness of e-reviews, credibility of the e-platform and brand familiarity. Trust in online reviews is shown to have a significant positive influence on the decision to book various types of accommodation, including farm-based lodging.

9.2 German *Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof* and Italian *agriturismo*

This dissertation adopted a cross-country perspective in order to examine the multidimensional nature of farm tourism. The empirical studies introduces shed some light on the core structure of farm tourism in both Germany and Italy.

The first conclusion that can be drawn concerns the legal framework for farm tourism. In Italy national law has been advantageous for farm tourism, and this could provide a good lesson for German agritourism associations, which would like to capitalize on the currently favorable political climate (Press release, German Government, September 24, 2008) and take their lobbying in a similar direction. On the other hand, the mere political will - or even the legal framing - are not sufficient to stimulate real development in the sector. For this reason, many German farm tourism associations express the need for greater commitment on the part of state tourism bodies. A similar issue is addressed in the Italian literature on farm tourism as well since the "commitment of the state institutions is quite low" (Naspetti, Segale & Zanoli, 1999).

Thus, it seems that the great strength of this tourist sector lies in the strong support of the agricultural bodies, which are also responsible for political lobbying. In Italy the creation of

Anagritur can be considered a best practice model, not only for political action but also for its great contribution to the dissemination of research on this sector.

Hence, this association aims to become a scientific observatory and the referential partner for issues related to Italian agritourism. In this way the sector would gain a corporate identity.

The second conclusion is that the attraction of farm tourism is coupled with the feeling of uncertainty caused by ever-increasing globalization. On this subject, Brunori (2003) indicates that globalization implies not only a standardization of tastes, but also a threat to traditions (such as food traditions), which he dubs the "de-traditionalization process".

The growing success of farm tourism can thus be explained by the reassurance it provides. Furthermore, as farm tourism can be integrated into the region as a whole through such community-based activities as cultural routes and village preservation programs, like the German "REGIONEN AKTIV – Land gestaltet Zukunft" (www.nova - institut.de / model regionen [January 28, 2009]) or the Italian "distretti culturali di qualità", it can actively contribute to the development of rural areas.

So, if, on the one hand, concepts like "dynaxity" (dynamics + complexity; cf. Roosen, 2008) tend to shape our society, farm tourism, with a new development model, can counterbalance that tendency. The intersection of farm tourism with similar models, such as the "Slow Food Movement", attests its success among the population. Thus, for German farm operators and associations, it seems imperative that a coherent body of action be developed in order to resustain a traditionalization process by means, for instance, of a stronger commitment in the field of regional food certification.

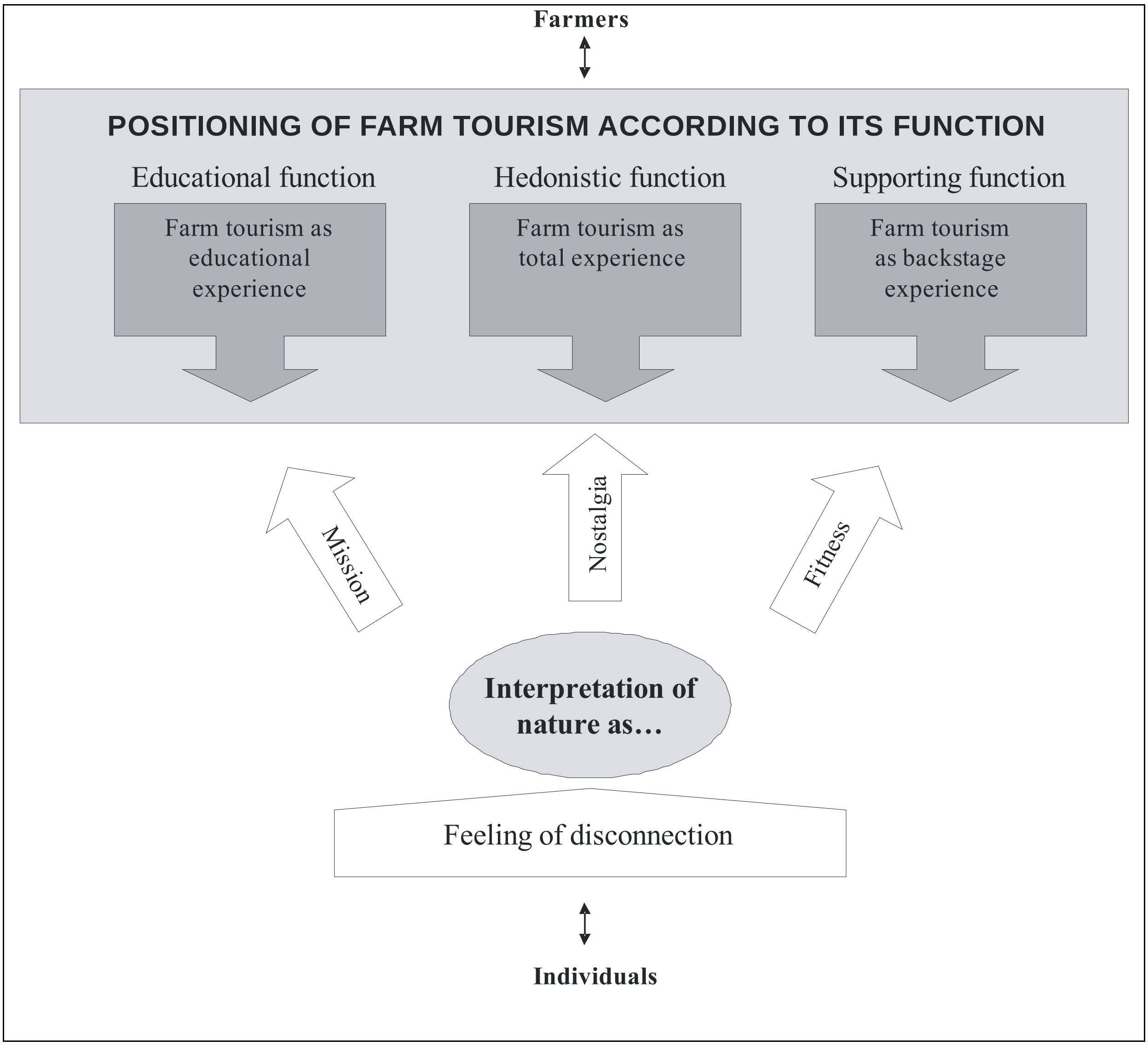
9.3 Conceptual framework

The present chapter expands on the main findings of the dissertation, placing them in a contextual landscape to enhance further empirical research. The conceptual framework that we are going to introduce focuses on individuals' consumption patterns and shows how these shape the nature of farm tourism (see Figure 20). At first glance the relationship between farmers and tourists, which is the core of farm tourism, appears to be based largely on contrasts. For instance, Getz, Carlsen and Morrison (2004) stress that farming is "supply-driven", whereas tourism is "market-led". Furthermore, farmers travel the least, rural tourists on the contrary travel very frequently. Henceforth, market and consumer orientation is a difficult goal to reach.

According to many scholars (Hill & Busby, 2002; Roberts & Hall, 2004), in order to understand this relationship, research should concentrate on the sense of "disconnection" from the natural world and agriculture that many people feel. As Adams (2008) observes, "the more humans become removed from nature, the more they try to reconnect to it".

This "reconnection" process passes through individuals' interpretation of nature which is, first of all, a dynamic process.

Figure 20 The functions of farm tourism as reconnection to nature



Source: own representation

Knudsen and Greer (2008) point out that, before the romantic movement of the second half of the 18th century, mainstream Western aesthetics was shaped by the classical concept of beauty. As a consequence, nature was considered "too imperfect" because it was "lacking in symmetry" (Kwa, 2005). Common tourist destinations of the 21st century, such as the seaside and wooded areas, were considered wild and somewhat frightening, and it is only since industrialization that they have become interesting (Romeiß-Stracke, 1998). Furthermore, people's perception is influenced by the image of nature common in their country. Thus, for example, Germans are much fonder of rambling than Italians (ibid.).

A number of scholars have tried to identify common interpretations of nature. The mystique associated with rural areas is a recurrent topic in the literature (Hjalager, 1996; Wilson et al., 2001). Thus, nature is filtered through a feeling of nostalgia, which, according to Romeiß-Stracke (1998), is an indefinable quest for a real or imaginary place where a person feels protected. Thus, according to the literature, consuming the countryside (Roberts & Hall, 2004) should be seen as a response to the individual's need to "immerse oneself in the emotion of nostalgia" (Hjalager, 1996).

Farm tourism associations and other, related businesses are conscious that this type of tourism is attractive because it provides "what urban life cannot give" (Nilsson, 2002). As a consequence, farm tourism should fulfill a hedonistic function; after all, even on a farm holiday, tourists expect not only basic requirements but also memorable experiences (Hill & Busby, 2002).

However, Hjalager (1996) stresses that the "modern agricultural community is not immediately capable of providing the facilities enabling tourists to experience or re-experience even the very near past [of agrarian life]."

Hence, farm tourism associations, as well as tour operators and farmers, have the essential task of clustering a variety of products and activities in order to "reinvent tradition" (ibid.) and, in this way, engrave the farming environment on the consciousness of farm guests. The latter is particularly important because, nowadays, it is not the holiday product *per se* but human recollections that guests are willing to pay for. The quality labels "Erlebnis Bauernhof" ("Adventure Farm") in Germany and "agriturismo ospitalità" ("Hospitality Farm") in Italy are indicative of this attempt to court the favor and fulfill the emotional needs of farm guests (Hill & Busby, 2002).

In her list of suggested agritourism activities, Adams (2008: 26) clearly conveys this idea:

> "Guests become farm hands or even members of a farm family for a weekend, or perhaps a week, and harvest the crops. They are paying for the experience, not the product. Make sure the labor you're receiving and being paid for gives them some bonuses, as the harvest farm stay is different than internships, where more serious

> labor is expected in trade for more serious farm training. Make sure they finish something tangible to give them the satisfaction of completion, such as picking apples or lavender and then seeing it pressed into cider or distilled into essential oil. Give them one of the finished products they helped harvest, if possible: a bag of heirloom potatoes, a bottle of essential oil, a gallon of cider. Before they leave, give them a few photos of themselves on the job, with an attractively illuminated list of the activities they successfully participated in, signed by the farm or ranch owner, and a thank-you card”

If, on the one hand, many people have a romantic vision of nature and want to be part of it, on the other hand, others share a more mechanistic approach and want to “utilize” nature for reasons such as its positive repercussions for physical and psychological well being. This is the case for many tourists who choose rural areas for practicing outdoor sports and other health-related activities. This perception of nature as the “fitness center of the human being” (Romeiß-Stracke, 1998) has been sensed by the farm holiday sector, where the idea of “adding healing arts (bodywork, day spas etc.) to the farm’s agritourism package has been emerging” (Adams, 2008).

In practice, farms with this specialization could host health-related activities, such as yoga lessons, training in the creation of home spa and cosmetic recipes and sport-themed workshops led by members of local sporting associations. Furthermore, in such cases the farm setting plays a supporting role, as the guest is more interested in relaxing than in the agrarian features of the farming environment.

Similar considerations apply to the interpretation of nature as thrilling. Individuals’ appreciation of nature’s “wildness” can be described as a continuum construct. At one extreme, the thrilling aesthetics of nature is venerated, as shown by the increasing number of enrichment projects in protected national parks throughout Europe (Knudsen & Greer, 2008). At the other extreme, wildness is perceived as a dare; this is exemplified by the practice of extreme sports. In both cases, people choose farm accommodation for its location and because it fits with their consumption patterns, but the farm itself is less relevant than the activity and sometimes almost irrelevant (cf. Roberts & Hall, 2004).

In this context, whether alone or in collaboration with external businesses, farmers make their natural surroundings available to adventure seekers by providing a variety of services, such as camping facilities and short-term accommodation during extreme sports tours.

Finally, nature can be perceived as a "mission" as in the case of individuals characterized by high environmental awareness. This, according to Romeiß-Stracke (1998), originated in the ecological movement of the 1970s and 1980s. Given the high priority such guests place on nature issues, they hope to have a close relationship with the farmer. These individuals are aware of the farm. Moreover, they are interested in being connected with agrarian life through an educational approach and not through a quest for peak experiences.

On the practical level, whereas the pleasure-seeker (Schulze, 1992) can be interested in experiencing outdoor fires or participating in workshops, such as picnic preparation or gift-making on the farm (cf. Adams, 2008), the education-seeking farm guest looks for other types of activities, such as the opportunity to work on the farm, to learn organic farming techniques (adults) or to take care of the animals (children).

The different interpretations of nature correspond to different needs of individuals; accordingly, farmers should try to fulfill these needs by positioning their facility to meet these objectives. For instance, the need of humans to merge with nature implies that farm operators should design a bundle of activities which fulfill these necessities. In doing so the farm acquires a hedonistic function. There are manifold ways that farmers could achieve this goal. Italian farmers, for instance, have accomplished the objective of addressing human needs through the provision of high valued oeno-gastronomic specialties which reflect deeply-rooted traditions in the rural area. In the same way, German farm operations located in highly valuable wine regions (above all Rhinland-Palatinate, followed by Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria) could position their farm towards the regional landscape. As confirmed by our study in Chapter 4, although only 5% of German farm operations are winemaking farms, this specialization allows them to set higher prices in relation to other farmers. Farm operations with other specializations should invest in other hedonistic functions; for instance, horseback riding that is considered a highly desirable experience by guests. In fact, these specialization patterns permit farmers to acquire higher returns in both Italy and Germany.

As seen before, experiencing nature can be interpreted as a mission. In this case, the profound respect of individuals for nature leads them in search of a close relationship with the farmer, from whom they can learn. Thus, the farm has an educational function. The most evident case is the school orientated farms where school students can actively experience farm life. This specialization is very successful in both Germany and Italy. Another way for farmers to specialize in order to provide an educational function is by organic farm tourism. Here the aspiration of individuals to get acquainted with natural agrarian systems, sources of food, etc., enhances the farmer's commitment to achieve a stable balance in the agricultural ecosystem.

The growth perspective for organic farm tourism is expected to increase in both Italy and Germany.

In Italy where organic farming is practiced by more than 45,000 operators, organic farm tourism operations are already 2,000-3,000[19]. Organic farm tourism could take advantage of the increasing preference of consumers for organic products. This is confirmed by Santucci and Pignataro (2002). They report an ongoing growth in demand for organic food as a result of, on the one hand, repeat food scandals and, on the other hand, of the healthier lifestyle of humans. Furthermore, there is a strong ongoing penetration of organic food in community catering such as schools' canteens, companies' canteens, etc. This of course also affects the market of organic farm tourism by increasing the demand for properly organized organic ingredients.

Similar considerations affect also the German farm tourism market. In this country, although the number of organic farm tourism operations is still very limited (around 400 units), the growing demand for organic produce is constantly increasing as well. In 2008, the total revenue from the organic market was about 5.8 billion € (Braun & Lösch, 2009). This has of course positive repercussions on organic farm tourism.

As confirmed in the findings of our study on organic farm tourism (Chapter 7), individuals interested in organic farm tourism are characterized as being particularly health-conscious, environmentally aware and have a higher education. In order to enhance this form of agritourism, the organic emphasis of the farm should be accompanied by the provision of organic food or food sampling. As stated in the literature, "the perception of farm guests will necessarily be strengthened if they eat food at the place of production, consolidating, in this way the organic farming method" (INNOREF, 2006).

Another educational function is fulfilled by the child-orientated farm. In Italy this specialization does not seem to be noticeably differentiated as yet, maybe due to the fact that many pedagogical functions are already fulfilled by the school-orientated farms. Regarding the German sector, on the contrary, the influence of children-related services in our study (Chapter 4) has shown positive repercussions on the final price of farm-based accommodations.

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[19] The available statistics with regard to organic farm tourism is discordant (see chapter 3.7)

Finally, as aforementioned, individuals may wish to "utilize" nature. In this case, the farmer takes advantage of the nature-based setting of the farm in order to provide stop-over accommodation or the provision of services which are totally dislocated with the agrarian tradition (such as spa treatment, management seminars, etc.). In Italy, for example, the provision of swimming pools has positive repercussions on accommodation prices (Chapter 4). In Germany, in contrast, the image related to wellness farm tourism seems particularly difficult to catch the attention of individuals. Our findings show that farm operators with this specialization have more difficulties in differentiating their offer from other competitors. Nevertheless some best practices of this differentiation patterns already exist as in the case of Bavarian farmers who jointly formed a common pool of wellness farm operators. Accordingly, more research is needed in order to improve the knowledge of this niche sector within the niche of farm tourism.

The positioning suggestions introduced above are just some of the array of possibilities farmers can exploit in order to differentiate their supply in the eyes of customers. It is the task of farm tourism associations and practitioners as well as scientists to provide the necessary marketing knowledge in order to help farm operators to explore the market and find the right solution to efficiently allocate their own resources.

This dissertation is meant to be a contribution to the structuring of empirical research on agritourism focusing on the complexity of the farm tourism market with particular reference to changing demand.

The studies described and discussed in this dissertation indicate an advanced knowledge about the structure of farm tourism and, in this way, has contributed to the development of a better approach to understanding the marketing of agritourism.

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Riassunto

La presente tesi di dottorato ha per oggetto di studio l'agriturismo, che é un mercato di nicchia all'interno del turismo rurale. A livello europeo l'agriturismo ha registrato nel corso degli ultimi anni un consistente incremento al punto da essere stato inglobato nelle politiche dell'Unione Europea quale una delle componenti fondamentali di sviluppo economico e sociale delle aree rurali.

La maggior parte dei contributi scientifici dedicati al fenomeno assume pertanto un taglio socio-economico in cui l'agriturismo viene esaminato come strumento di supporto all'agricoltura e alla ricchezza culturale delle comunità rurali. Inoltre, notevoli sono gli studi con carattere multidisciplinare che dimostrano la complessa natura del fenomeno e la conseguente necessità di usare una ricchezza di approcci per meglio analizzarlo.

Tuttavia dal punto di vista del marketing, cioè di quel processo atto ad individuare, creare e fornire valore per soddisfare le esigenze di consumatori sempre meno prevedibili nelle loro scelte, la letteratura è alquanto carente. Eppure ciò è fondamentale se si pensa che i pochi studi finora condotti in questo campo indicano una situazione tutt'altro che rosea: la maggior parte degli operatori agrituristici appare priva delle necessarie conoscenze sull'evoluzione della domanda, sulle preferenze dei consumatori e sulle tendenze di sviluppo del settore.

Lo scopo della presente dissertazione è quindi quello di analizzare la struttura del mercato agrituristico, sia dal lato della domanda sia dal lato dell'offerta, con l'obiettivo di individuare le caratteristiche che valorizzano tale attività agli occhi dei consumatori. L'appropriarsi di tale conoscenze (skills) da parte degli operatori agrituristici è alla base del processo di innovazione che l'agriturismo necessita, sia a livello nazionale sia a livello internazionale, per diventare un fenomeno di maggiori dimensioni e quindi, maggiore incisività sulle politiche territoriali che riguardano spesso gli agricoltori ma poche volte li coinvolgono veramente.

Nell'ottica di tale prospettiva è stato deciso di dare un taglio internazionale alla ricerca focalizzando lo studio sul mercato agrituristico italiano e tedesco. Questi due Paesi sono stati scelti per la complementarietà del mercato agrituristico che presentano.

In Italia per esempio l'agriturismo gode di un'immagine raffinata. Infatti, essendo indissolubilmente legato all'offerta enogastronomica il target di mercato è costituito dalla

fascia medio-alta della popolazione. Pur partendo da queste premesse, l'agriturismo italiano rimane un mercato di nicchia anche perché l'elaborazione di piani di organizzazione strategica da parte degli agenti del settore è abbastanza recente.

Anche in Germania il settore agrituristico riguarda solo un' esigua fascia della popolazione, tuttavia la sua immagine è più modesta. Questa forma di turismo, infatti, deriva dalla tradizione social-popolare che lo rende interessante soprattutto per la fasce meno abbienti. A differenza del mercato italiano, tuttavia, l'agriturismo tedesco è riuscito a creare un sistema di certificazione di qualità molto avanzato.

Mentre dal punto di vista scientifico questo studio vuole contribuire a migliorare le conoscenze di marketing in questo settore, la valenza manageriale è invece quella di servire da base teorica per future sinergie tra gli operatori agrituristici italiani e tedeschi. Questo del resto è anche l'obiettivo dichiarato dall'OECD nel suo rapporto annuale sul turismo (2008) che afferma come i governi abbiano riconosciuto i vantaggi derivanti da forme di turismo sostenibile e si adoprino per la creazione di collaborazioni transfrontaliere nel campo della promozione turistica.

Per raggiungere gli obiettivi sopra indicati la tesi è stata strutturata in una parte teorica e in una parte empirica. Nella prima viene tracciato lo stato dell'arte dell'agriturismo sulla base di una metaanalisi dei principali studi scientifici e governativi del settore. Nella seconda, vengono esposti i risultati di cinque indagini empiriche, focalizzate sia sull'offerta sia sulla domanda agrituristiche.

Per la raccolta dei dati dei cinque studi sono stati utilizzati diversi canali, dalla realizzazione di un sondaggio online allo studio di cataloghi digitalizzati. Inoltre le cinque indagini sono state condotte con l'ausilio dei principali metodi di statistica multivariata.

Nella fattispecie lo studio è strutturato nella seguente maniera:

Dopo una breve introduzione (capitolo 1) riguardante il quadro teorico e metodologico della dissertazione il mercato agrituristico tedesco e quello italiano sono esaminati rispettivamente nei capitoli 2 e 3. Nel capitolo 4 le teorie econometriche di trasmissione dei prezzi vengono utlizzate per effettuare uno studio comparato della domanda agrituristica nei due Paesi. In particolare si studia l'influenza degli attributi tipici dell'offerta agrituristica sul prezzo di locazione dei locali agrituristici nei rispettivi Paesi determinando in tal modo in cosa differiscono maggiormente le esigenze degli ospiti di un agriturismo in Germania e in Italia. Nel capitolo 5 viene esposto lo stato dell'arte sulle teorie riguardanti la determinazione dei fattori di successo che, nella fase seguente, viene applicata all'agriturismo. L'indagine empirica si focalizza sull'offerta agrituristica in base alla percezione degli imprenditori agrituristici e permette quindi di individuare il grado di conoscenza di questa attività da parte di questi ultimi. Nel capitolo 6 l'immaginario collettivo relativo al mercato agrituristico attuale viene analizzato avvalendosi delle principali teorie di creazione dell'immagine turistica integrata dal modello degli stili di vita AIO (Activities Interests Opinions). In questa sede viene misurato altresì il grado di preferenza verso alcune proposte di sviluppo dell'agriturismo. Il capitolo 7 offre una tipologia di consumatori potenziali del bioagriturismo basata sulle principali teorie del comportamento del consumatore. Infine nel capitolo 8 i risultati di un modello sperimentale servono come punto di riflessione sul rapporto tra agriturismo e nuove tecnologie. Infine le principali conclusioni vengono presentate e discusse nel capitolo 9. In questa sede i risultati dell'intera ricerca vengono inseriti in un quadro concettuale che viene proposto come base d'appoggio per future analisi.

Oltre alle implicazioni manageriali presentate alla fine di ogni capitolo il principale merito di tale ricerca risiede nel dimostrare le fasi del processo di adattamento dell'offerta agrituristica alle nuove esigenze del consumatore odierno.

Viene altresì dimostrato come una organizzazione strategica delle risorse permetta all'operatore agrituristico di innovare l'agriturismo riuscendo a combinare modernizzazione agricola e tradizione nel rispetto della natura e all'individuo di fare un salto di qualità passando dal consumare la vacanza al vivere l'esperienza agrituristica come un evento appagante..

Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Dissertation untersucht den Wirtschaftszweig Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof, der einen Nischenmarkt innerhalb des ländlichen Tourismus darstellt. Auf europäischer Ebene hat Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof in den letzten Jahren einen deutlichen Zuwachs erfahren. Mittlerweile hat er sich sogar im Rahmen der Wirtschaftspolitik der Europäischen Union zu einem wesentlichen Bestandteil der wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Entwicklung der ländlichen Gebiete entwickelt.

Die meisten wissenschaftlichen Beiträge, die sich mit diesem Thema beschäftigen, betrachten es aus einer rein sozio-ökonomischen Perspektive. Hierbei wird Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof vor allem im Hinblick auf eine konkrete Unterstützung der Landwirtschaft sowie des kulturellen Reichtums der ländlichen Gebiete untersucht. Darüberhinaus finden sich interdisziplinäre Studien, welche die Komplexität dieser Tourismusform und die daraus resultierende Notwendigkeit eines mehrdimensionalen, interdisziplinären Analyseansatzes hervorheben. Sie gehen davon aus, dass das Phänomen nur so angemessen erfasst werden könne.

Demgegenüber wird das Thema Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof aus der Sichtweise des Marketing bislang kaum untersucht. Vielmehr lässt sich diesbezüglich ein Forschungsdefizit im Hinblick auf Prozesse der Identifizierung, Schaffung und Bereitstellung von Werten zur Bedürfnisbefriedigung der Verbraucher, die immer weniger in ihren Entscheidungen vorhersehbar sind, konstatieren. Jedoch sind diese Aspekte von entscheidender Bedeutung, wenn man bedenkt, dass die wenigen relevanten Studien die gegenwärtige Situation alles andere als rosig zeichnen: Die erforderlichen Kenntnisse über die Nachfrage, die Wünsche der Kunden sowie über die Entwicklung in dieser Branche scheinen der Mehrheit der landwirtschaftlichen Betreiber zu fehlen.

Das Ziel dieser Dissertation ist es, die Marktstruktur des Agritourismus sowohl auf der Nachfrage-Seite als auch auf der Angebots-Seite zu analysieren. Dabei richtet sich die Untersuchung insbesondere auf die Identifizierung der Eigenschaften, die dieses Geschäftsfeld in den Augen der Verbraucher wertvoll machen. Der Erwerb dieser Kenntnisse durch die Anbieter bildet die Grundlage für Innovationsprozesse, die Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof sowohl auf nationaler als auch internationaler Ebene braucht, um an Bedeutung gewinnen zu können. Dies bildet nicht zuletzt die Voraussetzung, um effektiver auf die

Politik einwirken zu können, die zwar häufig die Landwirte betrifft, sie aber selten mit einbezieht.

Ausgehend von diesen Überlegungen wurde beschlossen, eine international vergleichende Studie durchzuführen, die sich schwerpunktmäßig mit dem italienischen und dem deutschen Markt für Agritourismus befasst. Die Auswahl dieser beiden Länder beruht dabei auf der Komplementarität der jeweiligen Märkte für Agritourismus.

Beispielsweise besitzt der Agritourismus in Italien ein Image, das von Hochwertigkeit und Exklusivität gekennzeichnet ist. Entsprechend bildet die höhere Mittelschicht der Bevölkerung in Italien die Hauptzielgruppe für diese Tourismusform; nicht zuletzt deshalb, weil sie untrennbar mit dem gastronomischen Angebot an Weinen und Speisen verbunden ist. Nichtsdestotrotz bleibt der italienische Agritourismusmarkt nach wie vor ein Nischenmarkt. Dies ist unter anderem darauf zurückzuführen, dass die Entwicklung von strategischen Organisationsplänen in diesem Sektor erst seit Kurzem eingeführt wurde.

Auch in Deutschland erreicht Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof bislang nur einen begrenzten Teil der Bevölkerung. Im Gegensatz zu Italien ist sein Image jedoch eher bescheiden. Diese Form des Tourismus entstammt einer sozialen Tradition, die den Agritourismus insbesondere für die weniger wohlhabenden Bevölkerungsschichten interessant macht. Im Unterschied zum italienischen Markt ist es dem deutschen Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof gelungen, ein gut entwickeltes System zur Zertifizierung von Qualität zu schaffen.

Während die vorliegende Studie aus einer wissenschaftlichen Sicht heraus dazu beitragen möchte, das Wissen über das Marketing in diesem Bereich zu vertiefen, soll ihr praxisrelevanter Wert daran liegen, eine theoretische Grundlage für künftige Synergien zwischen den italienischen und den deutschen Betreibern von Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof zu liefern. Dies ist auch das erklärte Ziel der OECD (2008), das besagt, dass die Regierungen die Vorteile der nachhaltigen Formen des Tourismus erkannt haben und dass sie sich für die Schaffung einer grenzüberschreitenden Zusammenarbeit zur Tourismusförderung einsetzen werden.

Um die oben genannten Ziele zu erreichen, besteht die Untersuchung aus einem theoretischen und einem empirischen Teil. Der erste Teil stellt den Stand der Forschung über Agritourismus dar und fußt dabei auf einer Metaanalyse der wichtigsten einschlägigen wissenschaftlichen Studien und Regierungsberichte. Im zweiten Teil werden die Ergebnisse von fünf empirischen Untersuchungen vorgestellt, wobei insbesondere Nachfrage und Angebot von Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof betrachtet werden.

Bei der Datenerhebung wurden unterschiedliche Zugänge genutzt, die von der Durchführung einer Online-Umfrage bis zur Analyse digitaler Kataloge reichen. Das Datenmaterial der fünf Erhebungen wurde anschließend mit Hilfe der wichtigsten Methoden der multivariaten Statistik ausgewertet.

Dies vorliegende Arbeit ist wie folgt strukturiert:

Nach einer kurzen Einführung (Kapitel 1) über den theoretischen und methodischen Rahmen der Dissertation, werden der deutsche und italienische Agritourismusmarkt in den Kapiteln 2 und 3 näher beschrieben. Im Kapitel 4 wird die ökonometrische Theorie der Preistransmission angewendet, um eine vergleichende Studie über die Nachfrage nach Agritourismus in den beiden Ländern durchzuführen. Insbesondere wird hierbei der Einfluss der typischen Eigenschaften von Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof auf die Mietpreise in den jeweiligen Ländern analysiert, um festzustellen, worin sich die Bedürfnisse der Gäste in einem Bauernhaus in den beiden Ländern im Wesentlichen unterscheiden. Im Kapitel 5 wird der Stand der Forschung im Hinblick auf Erfolgsfaktoren dargestellt. Die empirische Untersuchung konzentriert sich auf das agritouristische Angebot aus Sicht der Betreiber und erlaubt somit, den Wissensstand über dieses Geschäftsfeld auf der Anbieterseite festzustellen. Im Kapitel 6 werden die kollektiven Vorstellungen über den gegenwärtigen agritouristischen Markt untersucht. Dabei beruht die Analyse auf den zentralen Theorien zur Imageschaffung im Bereich des integrierten Tourismus sowie auf dem Konzept der Lebensstile AIO (Activities Interests Opinion). In diesem Zusammenhang werden auch Einstellungen zu verschiedenen Vorschlägen für die Entwicklung von Agritourismus gemessen. Kapitel 7 bietet eine Typologie von potentiellen Konsumenten von Bioagritourismus, die auf den wesentlichen theoretischen Ansätzen zum Verbraucherverhalten basiert. Kapitel 8 stellt die Ergebnisse eines experimentellen Modells vor, das als Ausgangspunkt für die Reflexion über das Verhältnis zwischen Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof und neuen Technologien dient. Abschließend werden in Kapital 9 die wichtigsten Schlussfolgerungen vorgestellt und diskutiert. Darüber hinaus werden an dieser Stelle die Ergebnisse des gesamten Forschungsprojektes in einen konzeptionellen Rahmen integriert, der als Ausgangspunkt für zukünftige Untersuchungen dienen kann.

Über die Darstellung der Implikationen für das Management am Ende eines jeden Kapitels hinaus, liegt ein wesentlicher Nutzen der Untersuchung in der Beschreibung der einzelnen Phasen des Anpassungsprozesses des Agritourismus an die sich wandelnden Bedürfnisse der heutigen Verbraucher. Gleichzeitig wird verdeutlicht, wie eine strategische

Ressourcenorganisation auf der einen Seite den landwirtschaftlichen Betreibern hilft, Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof weiterzuentwickeln, indem sie sowohl die landwirtschaftliche Modernisierung wie auch die Tradition im respektvollen Umgang mit der Natur zu vereinbaren versuchen. Auf der anderen Seite erhalten die Verbraucher dadurch die Möglichkeit, als Urlaubsgäste auf dem Bauernhof eine einzigartige Erfahrung zu machen.

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Curriculum Vitae

Born in Paris in 1974, Katia Laura Sidali studied “Political Sciences” at the University of Trieste (Italy). She is currently a fellow of the joint doctoral program between the University of *Göttingen* (Germany) and the University of *Bologna* (Italy). Previously, she took a master in Business and Engineering at the Steinbeis University of *Berlin*. She was a visiting fellow at the *Kytakyushu* University (Japan) and the *Bloomington* Business School of Indiana State (USA) while completing her Master study. Her research focuses on consumer behaviour, leisure behaviour on the Internet, cross-national consumption of farm holidays and marketing of organic products. Katia Laura Sidali has been awarded scholarhips by the Italian Trade Commission (ICE) and the Steinbeis Stiftung. Her research appears in the following journals/proceedings: Journal of Global Marketing Science, Journal of the Swiss Society of Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Sociology, Journal of Göttingen’s Society of Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Sociology, Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2009, (Eds. Höpken, Gretzel & Law,Vienna: Springer-Verlag) and 105th EAAE Seminar (European Association of Agricultural Economists) “International Marketing and International Trade of Quality Food Products”, 8.-10 März 2007, Bologna, Italy.

Questionnaire (Chapter 5)

1. Aus welchem Bundesland kommen Sie?

1. Schleswig-Holstein
2. Niedersachen
3. Bayern
4. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
5. Baden-Württemberg
6. Rheinland-Pfalz
7. Nordrhein-Westfalen
8. Brandenburg
9. Hessen
10. Thüringen
11. Sachsen-Anhalt
12. Sachsen
13. Saarland
14. Bremen
15. Hamburg
16. Berlin

2. Wie viele Betten bieten Sie insgesamt Ihren Urlaubern an?

Anzahl Betten: ______________________

3. Versuchen Sie bitte zu schätzen, wie viele Gäste pro Jahr bei Ihnen den Urlaub verbringen?

Gäste pro Jahr: ______________________

4. Wie lange machen die Gäste bei Ihnen im Durchschnitt Urlaub?

____________________ Tage

5. Versuchen Sie bitte zu schätzen, wie hoch der Anteil an Stammgäste bei Ihnen ist? Stammgäste sind Urlauber, die öfter als drei Mal bei Ihnen zu Gast waren.

Anzahl Stammgäste: ______________________ in %

6. Wie bringen Sie ihre Gäste unter? Mehrfachnennungen sind möglich!

1. Ferienwohnungen
2. Gästezimmer
3. Ferienhäuser
4. Landhotel
5. Heuhotel
6. sonstiges

7. Wie hoch ist der durchschnittliche Preis pro Person und Übernachtung (ohne Verpflegung)?

Preis pro Übernachtung: ______________________ Euro

8. Wenn Sie diesen Preis mit anderen Anbietern von „Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof" aus Ihrer Region vergleichen, sind Sie dann

Sehr viel günstiger	Günstiger	Etwas günstiger	Etwa gleich	Etwas teurer	Teurer	Sehr viel teurer

9. Wie viele Arbeitskraftstunden setzen Sie durchschnittlich für den Erwerbszweig „Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof" pro Jahr ein? (zum Beispiel 0,5 für eine halbe Arbeitskraft oder 1,5 für eineinhalb). Eine Arbeitskraft hat circa 2200 Stunden pro Jahr.

Akh pro Jahr: ______________________ (nur für Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof)

10. Bevor wir mit einigen Fragen ins Detail gehen, möchten wir gerne von Ihnen wissen was den Erfolg Ihres Erwerbszweiges „Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof" ausmacht? Bitte nennen Sie uns drei Punkte die für Ihren Erfolg sehr wichtig sind.

1. ____

2. ____

3. ____

11. Im Folgenden haben wir einige Aussagen zusammengestellt, die uns andere Anbieter von „Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof“ (UadB) genannt haben. Bitte beurteilen Sie diese Aussagen anhand der unten stehenden Skala.

	Trifft voll und ganz zu	Trifft zu	Trifft eher zu	Teils, teils	Trifft eher nicht zu	Trifft nicht zu	Trifft über-haupt-nicht zu
Wir sind insgesamt zufrieden mit unserem Erwerbszweig UadB.							
Wir werden auch in Zukunft in den Erwerbszweig UadB investieren.							
Wenn ich die Zeit zurückdrehen könnte, würden wir nicht noch mal in den Erwerbszweig UadB einsteigen.							

12. Nun möchten wir gerne von Ihnen wissen, was der Erwerbszweig „Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof" persönlich für Sie bedeutet. Bitte beantworten Sie folgende Aussagen:

	Trifft voll und ganz zu		Trifft zu		Trifft eher zu		Teils, teils		Trifft eher nicht zu		Trifft nicht zu		Trifft über-haupt-nicht zu	
Die Zufriedenheit unserer Gäste ist unser oberstes Ziel.														
Ich freue mich immer wieder neue Menschen kennen zu lernen.														
Wenn es mal stressig wird, kann ich schon mal unfreundlich zu den Gästen werden.														
Es ist uns wichtig den Urlaubern zu zeigen, wie heute Landwirtschaft funktioniert.														
Wir nehmen uns sehr viel Zeit für die Betreuung der Gäste														
Der Umgang mit den Gästen macht mir Spaß.														
Bei uns herrscht eine familiäre Atmosphäre.														
Wir wollen uns mit jedem Gast persönlich unterhalten.														

13. Bitte beurteilen Sie die folgenden Aussagen bezüglich der Freizeitaktivitäten auf Ihrem Hof.

	Immer	Sehr häufig	Häufig	Man-chmal	Selten	Sehr selten	Gar-nicht
Gäste können auf dem Hof mitarbeiten (z. B. Betreuung der Tiere).							
Gästen werden gesellige Aktivitäten angeboten (z. B. Lagefeuer).							
Unser Hof bietet Attraktionen für Kinder (z. B. Tiere zum streicheln, Kinderspielplatz usw.) an.							

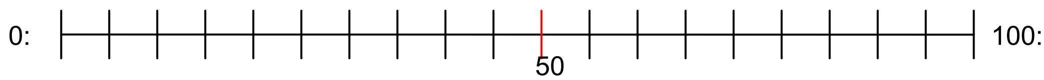
14. Damit möglichst viele Gäste auf ihren Hof kommen, sind zahlreiche Faktoren wichtig. Hier sind nun einige Aussagen anderer Anbieter von „Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof" aufgelistet. Was meinen Sie dazu?

	Trifft überha upt nicht zu	Trifft nicht zu	Trifft eher nicht zu	Teils, teils	Trifft eher zu	Trifft zu	Trifft voll und ganz zu
Komfort ist bei UadB nicht so wichtig.							
Die Gäste geben uns oft Komplimente für die geschmackvolle Einrichtung der Unterkünfte.							
Unsere Unterkünfte sind im bäuerlichen Stil eingerichtet.							
Freizeitaktivitäten sind für unsere Gäste wichtig.							

Wir versuchen das bäuerliche Erscheinungsbild unseres Hofes auszubauen.							
Unsere Gäste können aktiv am Hofleben teilnehmen.							
Unsere Gäste kommen vor allem wegen der attraktiven Urlaubsregion (z.B. Ausflugsziele, Sehenswürdigkeiten) zu uns.							
Unsere Gäste sind mit dem Preis-/Leistungsangebot zufrieden.							

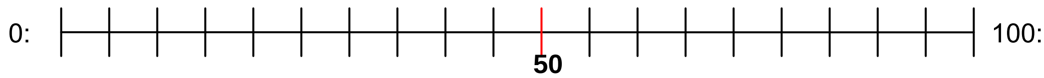
Im Folgenden bitten wir Sie, sich mit anderen Anbietern von „Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof“ zu vergleichen.

15. Wie bewerten Sie die Qualität der Unterbringung auf Ihrem Hof im Vergleich zu anderen Anbietern von „Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof“? Bitte benutzen Sie dafür die folgende Skala von 100 = „sehr hohe Qualität im Vergleich zu anderen Anbieter“ bis 0 = „sehr geringe Qualität im Vergleich zu anderen Anbietern“.



Sehr geringer Komfort | Durchschnittlicher Komfort | Sehr hoher Komfort

16. Wenn Sie an die Freizeitaktivitäten auf Ihrem Hof denken, bieten Sie im Vergleich zu anderen „Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof“ – Anbietern mehr oder weniger Freizeitaktivitäten an?



Viel weniger Freizeitaktivitäten | Durchschnittlich viele Freizeitaktivitäten | Sehr viele Freizeitaktivitäten

17. Wenn Sie an die Werbung für Ihren Erwerbszweig denken, machen Sie mehr oder weniger Werbung als andere Anbieter von „Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof“?

0: 50 100:

Viel weniger Werbung | Durchschnittlich viel Werbung | Sehr viel Werbung

______ ______ ______

18. Wenn Sie nun an den Erfolg Ihres Erwerbszweiges denken, sind Sie erfolgreicher oder weniger erfolgreicher als andere Anbieter von „Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof"?

0: 50 100:

Viel weniger Erfolgreich | Durchschnittlich Erfolgreich | Sehr viel erfolgreicher

______ ______ ______

19. Wie würden Sie die Attraktivität Ihrer Region im Vergleich zu anderen Touristikregionen bewerten? Bitte nutzen Sie die folgende Skala von 0 = sehr unattraktive (z. B. nur wenig Ausflugsziele) bis 100 = sehr attraktive Region.

0: 50 100:

Sehr unattraktive Region | Durchschnittlich attraktive Region | Sehr attraktive Region

______ ______ ______

20. Wenn Sie jetzt noch einmal an die Werbung für Ihren Erwerbszweig denken, treffen die folgenden Aussagen auf Sie zu?

	Trifft voll und ganz zu	Trifft zu	Trifft eher zu	Teils, teils	Trifft eher nicht zu	Trifft nicht zu	Trifft überhaupt nicht zu
Wir betreiben einen hohen Werbeaufwand.							
Wir vertrauen lieber auf unsere Stammgäste als in Werbung zu investieren.							

Wir investieren viel in unseren Internettauftritt.														

21. Besitzen Sie das DLG Gütesiegel? Wenn „Nein“, bitte nennen Sie uns Ihre anderen eventuellen Auszeichnungen!

☐ Ja

☐ Nein, anderes Gütesiegel, Auszeichnungen etc:

____

____

☐ Sonstige:

____

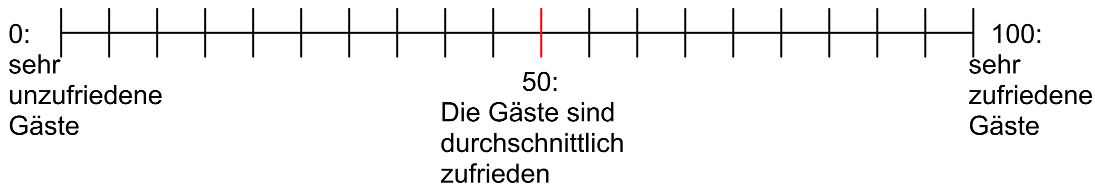
____

Nun möchten wir Ihre Meinung zu Gütezeichen wissen.

22. Bitte beantworten Sie folgende Aussagen:

	Trifft überhaupt nicht zu	Trifft nicht zu	Trifft eher nicht zu	Teils, teils	Trifft eher zu	Trifft zu	Trifft voll und ganz zu
Ein Gütesiegel ist als Werbemittel wichtig.							
Durch ein Gütesiegel kommen viel mehr Gäste auf einen Hof.							
Man muss viel investieren um ein Gütesiegel zu erhalten.							

23. Schätzen Sie bitte auf einer Skala von 0 bis 100 ein, wie zufrieden Ihre Gäste mit dem „Urlaub auf Ihrem Hof“ sind. 0 steht für sehr unzufrieden und 100 für sehr zufrieden.“



24. Welche der folgenden Faktoren sind am wichtigsten, welche sind weniger wichtig, damit die Gäste bei Ihnen auf dem Hof zufrieden sind? Bitte verteilen Sie insgesamt 100 Punkte auf die nachstehenden Faktoren nach ihrer Bedeutung. Je höher die Punktzahl, desto wichtiger ist dieser Punkt für die Zufriedenheit der Gäste. Bitte beachten Sie, dass die Gesamtsumme 100 ergeben muss.

	Punkte hier eintragen
Qualität der Unterbringung	
Angebot von Freizeitaktivitäten	
Preis/Leistungsverhältnis	
Unser persönliches Engagement	
Besonderer Service (z. B. Brötchenservice, Kinderbetreuung).	
Attraktivität des Bauernhofes	
Gesamtsumme	= 100 Punkte

25. Im Folgenden haben wir einige Aussagen zusammengestellt, die so oder so ähnlich von anderen Anbietern geäußert wurden. Treffen diese Aussagen auch auf Sie zu?

	Trifft voll und ganz zu	Trifft zu	Trifft eher zu	Teils, teils	Trifft eher nicht zu	Trifft nicht zu	Trifft überhauptnicht zu
Die Gäste waren auch nach dem Urlaub sichtlich begeistert.							
Es ist uns wichtig, die Bedürfnisse unserer Gäste genau zu kennen.							

Wir sprechen gezielt mit unseren Gästen, um unser Angebot zu verbessern.							
Wenn Gäste sich beschweren, reagieren wir sofort.							
Wir bekommen ab und zu Kritik von unseren Gästen.							

26. Wie sah der Erfolg Ihres Erwerbszweiges „Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof" im Vergleich zu den Wettbewerbern in den letzten Jahren aus?

	Sehr viel erfolg-reicher	Erfolg-reicher	Etwas mehr erfolg-reicher	Durch-schnitt-lich erfolg-reich	Etwas weniger erfolg-reich	Wenige r erfolg-reich	Sehr viel weniger erfolg-reich
Im Verhältnis zum Durchschnitt der Branche waren wir …							
Im Verhältnis zu den Hauptwettbe-werbern waren wir …							
Im Verhältnis zu unseren selbst gesetzten Zielen waren wir …							

27. Welche der folgenden Investitionen sind für Sie in der Zukunft am wichtigsten, welche sind weniger wichtig? Bitte verteilen Sie insgesamt 100 Punkte auf die folgenden Maßnahmen. Je höher die Punktzahl, desto bedeutsamer ist die Investition. Bitte beachten Sie, dass die Gesamtsumme 100 ergeben muss.

Investitionen	Punkte bitte hier eintragen:
Investitionen in Freizeitaktivitäten (z. B. Kinderspielplatz, Reitunterricht, usw.)	
Investitionen in Werbung (z. B. Internetauftritt, Broschüren)	
Investitionen in die Unterbringungen der Gäste (z. B. neue Möbel, Dekorationen)	
Investitionen zur Verbesserung der Attraktivität des landwirtschaftlichen Hofes	
Investitionen in Serviceleistung (z. B. Verpflegung der Gäste)	
Gesamtsumme	**= 100 Punkte**

Zum Schluss noch kurz einige Fragen allgemein über ihren Erwerbszweig „Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof" und ihrem Hof!

28. In welchem Jahr sind Sie in den Erwerbszweig „Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof" eingestiegen?

Jahr: ______________________

29. Betreiben Sie einen landwirtschaftlichen Betrieb?

- Ja, im Haupterwerb.
- Ja, im Nebenerwerb.
- Nein, wir haben den landwirtschaftlichen Betrieb aufgegeben.
- Nein, wir waren nie in der Landwirtschaft tätig.
- Sonstiges ___________________________

30. Haben Sie noch andere Einkommensquellen neben dem Erwerbszweig „Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof"? Mehrfachnennungen sind möglich!

1. Hofcafé
2. Pferdepension
3. Gasthof
4. Direktvermarktung
5. Landwirtschaft konventionell
6. Landwirtschaft bio
7. kein zusätzliches Einkommen

8. sonstiges Einkommen

____

____

31. Wie hoch ist die Bettenbelegung pro Bett und Jahr?

____________________ Tage (Bettenbelegung pro Bett und Jahr)

32 .Wie hoch schätzen Sie, ist der jährliche Umsatz Ihres Erwerbszweiges „Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof"?

____________________ Umsatz in Euro pro Jahr

33. Wie viel Prozent von Ihrem Gesamteinkommen macht ungefähr der Erwerbszweig „Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof" aus?

____________________ % vom Gesamteinkommen

34. Wie viel Euro haben Sie in den letzten drei Jahren investiert?

____________________ Euro

35. Wie viel Euro werden Sie wahrscheinlich in den nächsten drei Jahren in den Erwerbszweig „Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof" investieren?

____________________ Euro

36. Wie verpflegen Sie Ihre Gäste? Mehrfachnennungen sind möglich!

1. Gäste verpflegen sich selbst
2. Frühstück
3. Halbpension
4. Vollpension
5. Kaffeeangebot am Nachmittag
6. sonstiges

37. Wann wurden Sie geboren?

19 ____________________

38. Geschlecht:

Weiblich: ☐ ☐ Männlich

Zum Schluss besteht hier ihrerseits noch die Möglichkeit Anmerkung, Kommentare bezüglich dieses Fragebogens zu machen.-

____

____

____

Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme!

Questionnaire (Chapter 6 and 7)

Image-Studie zur Präferenz Messung von Urlaubsverhalten

Georg-August-Universität Göttingen
Department für Agrarökonomie und Rurale Entwicklung
Lehrstuhl „Marketing für Agrarprodukte und Lebensmittel“

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,

wir sind Studenten der Universität Göttingen. Im Rahmen unserer Vorlesung „Verbraucherverhalten“ führen wir eine Umfrage zu Urlaub und Freizeitgestaltung durch.
Wir würden uns sehr darüber freuen, wenn Sie uns zu diesem Thema einige Fragen beantworten könnten. Dies wird ungefähr 20 Minuten dauern. Alle Informationen, die wir von Ihnen bekommen, werden selbstverständlich vertraulich und anonym behandelt.

Prof. Dr. Achim Spiller

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Tel.: 0551/39-9897
a.spiller@agr.uni-goettingen.de

Interviewer	
Datum	
Uhrzeit bei Beginn	
Fragebogen-Nummer	

1. Zu Beginn der Befragung würde uns interessieren, wie oft Sie im letzten Jahr in den Urlaub gefahren sind?

Im letzten Jahr nicht	Einmal	Zweimal	Dreimal	Mehr als dreimal
□	□	□	□	□

2. Wie lange dauert in der Regel Ihr Haupt-Urlaub im Jahr?

Bis 4 Tage	Bis eine Woche	Bis 2 Wochen	Bis 3 Wochen	Länger als 3 Wochen
□	□	□	□	□

3. Wie oft machen Sie Urlaub im Ausland?

Sehr oft	Oft	Teils/ teils	Selten	Nie
□	□	□	□	□

4. Bewerten Sie folgende Urlaubsarten nach Ihrer persönlichen Beliebtheit:

	Gefällt mir sehr gut				Gefällt mir gar nicht
Städtereisen	□	□	□	□	□
Fernreisen	□	□	□	□	□
Urlaub in der Natur	□	□	□	□	□
Sporturlaub	□	□	□	□	□
Bildungsurlaub	□	□	□	□	□
Meer und Sonne	□	□	□	□	□
Schnee und Sonne	□	□	□	□	□
Freizeitpark	□	□	□	□	□

5. Bewerten Sie folgende Übernachtungsforme nach Beliebtheitsgrad:

	Sehr beliebt	Beliebt	Teils/teils	Eher unbeliebt	Gar nicht beliebt
Camping	□	□	□	□	□
Hotel	□	□	□	□	□
Pension	□	□	□	□	□
Jugendherberge	□	□	□	□	□
Bed & Breakfast	□	□	□	□	□
Ferienwohnung	□	□	□	□	□
Freizeitpark	□	□	□	□	□

6. Wohin sind Sie zuletzt in den Urlaub gefahren? Bitte nennen Sie die Ziele der letzten 3 Jahre (Haupturlaub):
- 2006 ________
- 2005 ________
- 2004 ________

7. Mit wem fahren Sie normalerweise in den Urlaub (Mehrfachantworten möglich)?
□ Lebenspartner
□ Lebenspartner/eigene Kinder
□ Eltern
□ Freunden
□ Arbeitskollegen
□ Allein

8. In diesem Teil des Fragebogens würden wir Ihnen gerne ein paar Fragen zu Ihren persönlichen Reisemotiven stellen. Wie stehen Sie zu den folgenden Aussagen? Im Urlaub…

	Trifft voll und ganz zu	Trifft eher zu	Teils/ teils	Trifft eher nicht zu	Trifft über-haupt nicht zu
... suche ich nach Ruhe und Erholung.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... will ich nah bei meinem Wohnort bleiben.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... suche ich nach Komfort.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... suche ich nach Angeboten für Kinder und kinderfreundlichem Service.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
…will ich aktiv bleiben und Sport machen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
…will ich mich sicher fühlen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… suche ich nach Abwechslung.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
…will ich Zeit für meine Familie / Freunde haben.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
…will ich nicht zu viel Geld ausgeben.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
…will ich mich frei fühlen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
…will ich meine Kreativität ausleben.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
…will ich neue Leute kennenlernen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
…suche ich nach einem Flirt	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
…will ich Spaß haben.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
…will ich neue Gegenden kennenlernen und mit dem Leben der Einheimischen vertraut werden.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
…will ich etwas für meinen Körper tun (Gesundheit, Fitness, Schönheit).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
…will ich-/ Energie auftanken.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
..will ich, dass alles schon organisiert ist und ich mich um nichts kümmern muss.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
…möchte ich möglichst sicher sein, dass das Wetter gut ist (viel Schnee / viel Sonne).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
…will ich bekannte Orte wiedersehen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
…will ich Abenteuer, etwas Außergewöhnliches erleben.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
…suche ich nach viel Natur und schönen Landschaften.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
…will ich Kultur erleben.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
…will ich meinem Alltag entkommen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
..suche ich nach Romantik.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. Im Folgenden würden wir Ihnen gerne ein paar Fragen zu Ihren Aktivitäten im Urlaub stellen. Wie stehen Sie zu den folgenden Aussagen? Im Urlaub…

	Immer	Oft	Teils/ teils	Selten	Nie
… treibe ich Wintersport (Skifahren, Snowboard, Eis-Skating...).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… treibe ich Wassersport (Schwimmen, Windsurfen, ...).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… treibe ich andere Outdoor-Sportarten (Reiten, Fahrradfahren, Wandern...).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… widme ich meine Zeit der Gesundheit und Fitness (Thermalbäder, Sauna, Wellness..).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... nehme ich an Ausflügen teil.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... mache ich Sightseeing.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… gehe ich Shoppen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… besuche ich Museen / Ausstellungen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… besuche ich Theater / Opern / Konzerte.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… gehe ich zu Festivals in der Stadt.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… besuche ich Festivals / Folklore auf dem Land.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… besuche ich Bekannte / Familie.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… besuche ich Pubs, Kneipen, Discos.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… mache ich lieber nichts.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
… konzentriere ich mich auf das Nachtleben.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. Wie häufig nutzen Sie die folgenden Verkehrsmittel, um in den Urlaub zu fahren?

	Am häufigsten	Häufig	Teils/ teils	Selten	Nie
Flugzeug	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pkw	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Caravan/Wohnmobil	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Zug	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bus	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fahrrad	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Schiff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. Wer hat den größten Einfluss auf Ihre Urlaubsentscheidungen?

	Am höchsten	Hoch	Teils/ teils	Niedrig	Gar kein
Eltern	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lebenspartner	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lebenspartner/ eigene Kinder	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bekannte / Freunde	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Arbeitskollegen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reisebüro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich selbst	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. Bitte nehmen Sie auch zu den folgenden Aussagen Stellung:

	Stimme voll und ganz zu	Stimme eher zu	Teils/ teils	Lehne eher ab	Lehne ab
Meine Freizeit verbringe ich meistens zu Hause.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Im Urlaub esse ich sehr gerne landestypische Produkte/ Gerichte.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Im Urlaub freue ich mich jedes Mal, wenn ich für einen Einheimischen gehalten werde.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Im Urlaub sind Fremdsprachen für mich eine Barriere.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich suche immer nach trendigen Urlaubszielen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bei der Wahl des Reiseziels ist Umweltschutz auch ein Auswahlkriterium.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich verbringe mein Urlaub lieber bei kleinen Familienanbietern.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. Bei der folgenden Frage haben Sie die Möglichkeit, zwischen verschiedenen Reisezielen auszuwählen. Für welches würden Sie sich entscheiden? Bitte bringen Sie die genannten Ziele in eine Reihenfolge von 1 (am beliebtesten) bis 7 (am wenigsten beliebt). Bitte keine Zahl doppelt verwenden!

Städtereise	________
Wellnesshotel	________
Wellness-Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof	________
Fernreise	________
Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof	________
Safari	________
Urlaub auf dem Land	________

14. Bei der vorherigen Frage wurde Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof erwähnt. Kennen Sie diese Urlaubsform?
□ Ja □ Nein

15. Wie informiert sind Sie über diese Urlaubsform?

Sehr gut informiert	Gut informiert	Teils/ teils	Wenig informiert	Gar nicht informiert
□	□	□	□	□

16. Haben Sie schon einmal Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof gemacht?

Sehr oft	Oft	Mehrmals	Einmal	Nie
□	□	□	□	□

➔ Wenn Sie Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof schon einmal gemacht haben, weshalb haben Sie sich für diese Urlaubsform entschieden? Bitte nennen Sie die für Sie wichtigsten Gründe.

____

____

____

17. Unabhängig davon, ob Sie schon früher Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof gemacht haben, bitte nehmen Sie zu den folgenden Aussagen Stellung:

	Stimme voll und ganz zu	Stimme eher zu	Teils/ teils	Lehne eher ab	Lehne ab
Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof kommt für mich in Zukunft in Frage.	□	□	□	□	□
Vom Preis her wäre Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof durchaus eine Alternative.	□	□	□	□	□

Im folgenden Teil des Fragebogens würden wir gerne Ihre Meinung zum Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof noch etwas genauer erfahren. Was halten Sie von dieser Urlaubsform? Bitte vervollständigen Sie folgende Sätze, indem Sie Ihre Meinung an der zutreffenden Stelle ankreuzen.

18. Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof ist sehr...

	Sehr	Mittel	Weder noch	Mittel	Sehr	
persönlich	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	unpersönlich
entspannend	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	stressig
gemütlich	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	ungemütlich
aufregend	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	langweilig
komfortabel	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	nicht komfortabel
abwechslungsreich	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	eintönig
kinderfreundlich	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	kinderunfreundlich
sicher	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	unsicher
preisgünstig	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	teuer
exklusiv	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	bodenständig
echt	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	künstlich
bekannt	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	unbekannt

19. Bei einem Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof kann ich ...

	Trifft voll und ganz zu	Trifft eher zu	Teils, teils	Trifft eher nicht zu	Trifft überhaupt nicht zu
Sport treiben.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Leute kennenlernen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Flirten.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
meine Kreativität ausleben.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
etwas für meine Gesundheit tun.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Spaß haben.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
mit dem Leben auf dem Lande vertraut werden.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Energie auftanken.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
die Organisation anderen überlassen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Außergewöhnliches erleben.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Natur und schöne Landschaft genießen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Kultur erleben.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
viel lernen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
dem Alltag entkommen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Romantik und Nostalgie erleben.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wellnessangebote in Anspruch nehmen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
besonders gesund essen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

20. Ebenso möchten wir wissen, wie einverstanden Sie mit folgenden Statements sind…

	Stimme voll und ganz zu	Stimme eher zu	Teils/ teils	Lehne eher ab	Lehne ab
Bei Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof kann ich traditionelle/regionale Gerichte neu entdecken.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bei Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof kann ich handwerkliche Traditionen neu entdecken.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Essen ist auf dem Bauernhof besser als in der Stadt.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wenn man Stress abbauen will, ist Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof die beste Urlaubsform.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Auf dem Bauernhof ist der Kontakt mit den Gastgebern sehr eng.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Der klassische Bauernhof, der Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof anbietet, hat einen rustikalen Stil.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bauernhöfe, die Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof anbieten, befinden sich in idyllischen Gegenden.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

21. Wie würde Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof in Ihrem Bekanntenkreis eingeschätzt?

	Sehr	mittel	weder noch	mittel	sehr	
out	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	in
lächerlich	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	angesagt
uninteressant	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	angesagt
komisch	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	out

22. Natürlich kann in einem Urlaub auch etwas schief gehen - Wie stehen Sie zu den folgenden Aussagen?
Bei einem Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof muss man mehr als bei anderen Urlauben damit rechnen, dass…

	Trifft voll und ganz zu	Trifft eher zu	Teils/ teils	Trifft eher nicht zu	Trifft überhaupt nicht zu
... man sich langweilt.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... man sich verletzt.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... es sehr viel Zeit kostet, bis man den Ort erreicht hat.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... es nicht sauber ist.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... es stinkt.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... es laut ist.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... das Preisleistungsverhältnis schlecht ist.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

23. Sie gewinnen ein Wochenende auf einem Bauernhof. Wen würden Sie als Begleitung mitnehmen? Bitte nur eine Antwort ankreuzen

☐ Familie
☐ Bekannte/Freunde
☐ Arbeitskollegen
☐ Partner
☐ Gewinn ablehnen
☐ Sonstiges:____________-

Im folgenden Teil des Fragebogens befindet sich die Beschreibung von fünf neue Urlaubsformen. Bitte lesen Sie sie sorgfältig durch. Danach bitten wir Sie den folgenden Fragenblock zu beantworten.

1. Urlaub im Landhausstil		**2. Country & Western Urlaub**	
Unterkunft:	großes Anwesen	Unterkunft:	Bungalows im Bauernhofsgarten
Landschaft:	Parklandschaft	Landschaft:	Weite Landschaft
Architektur:	klassischer Stil	Architektur:	Wild-West-Stil
Aktivitäten:	Dressurreiten, Jagen	Aktivitäten:	Rodeo, Reiten, …Hauptsache Freiheit
Küche:	Gourmetküche	Küche:	Essen am Lagerfeuer
3. Bio-Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof		**4. Beauty-Farm.**	
Unterkunft:	Vielseitiger Bauernhof	Unterkunft:	Romantischer Bauernhof
Landschaft:	Schöne Natur	Landschaft:	Weite Landschaft
Architektur:	Massivholzstil	Architektur:	Ziergarten
Aktivitäten:	Landwirtschaft kennen lernen	Aktivitäten:	Wellness, Fasten, Yoga, alternative Medizin
Küche:	Bio-Küche und regionale Speisen		gesundes Essen: leicht, vitaminreich
5. Kinder-Urlaub			
Unterkunft:	Bauernhof mit vielen Tieren		
Landschaft:	Natur und Spielflächen		
Architektur:	Kindergerechte Architektur		
Aktivitäten:	Ganztägige Kinderbetreuung, pädagogische Aktivitäten (lernen von Biolandwirtschaft), Spiele mit Tieren		
Küche:	Bio-Küche		

…Nun möchten wir Ihre Meinung über die obengenannten Urlaubsformen wissen.
24. Erste Urlaubsform: Urlaub im Landhausstil. Wie stehen Sie zu den folgenden Aussagen?

	Stimme voll und ganz zu	Stimme eher zu	Teils/ teils	Lehne eher ab	Lehne ab
Urlaub im Landhausstil ist für mich ein interessantes Reiseziel.	□	□	□	□	□
Urlaub im Landhausstil kann für mich in Zukunft als Urlaub in Frage kommen.	□	□	□	□	□

25. Wie viel würden Sie für eine Urlaubsnacht im Landhausstil maximal ausgeben (Halb-Pension)?____________________________________

26. Zweite Urlaubsform: Country + Western-Urlaub. Wie stehen Sie zu den folgenden Aussagen?

	Stimme voll und ganz zu	Stimme eher zu	Teils/ teils	Lehne eher ab	Lehne ab
Country + Western-Urlaub ist ein interessantes Reiseziel.	□	□	□	□	□
Country + Western-Urlaub kann für mich in Zukunft als Urlaub in Frage kommen.	□	□	□	□	□

27. Wie viel würden Sie für eine Country + Western Nacht maximal ausgeben (Halb-Pension)?____________________________________

28. Dritte Urlaubsform: Bio-Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof. Wie stehen Sie zu den folgenden Aussagen?

	Stimme voll und ganz zu	Stimme eher zu	Teils/ teils	Lehne eher ab	Lehne ab
Bio-Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof ist ein interessantes Reiseziel.	□	□	□	□	□
Bio-Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof kann für mich in Zukunft als Urlaub in Frage kommen.	□	□	□	□	□

29. Wie viel würden Sie für eine Bio-Urlaub-Nacht maximal ausgeben (Halb-Pension)?____________________________________

30. Vierte Urlaubsform: Beauty-Farm. Wie stehen Sie zu den folgenden Aussagen?

	Stimme voll und ganz zu	Stimme eher zu	Teils/ teils	Lehne eher ab	Lehne ab
Beauty-Farm ist ein interessantes Reiseziel.	□	□	□	□	□
Beauty-Farm kann für mich in Zukunft als Urlaub in Frage kommen.	□	□	□	□	□

31. Wie viel würden Sie für eine Beauty-Farm-Nacht maximal ausgeben (Halb-Pension)?____________________________________

32. Fünfte Urlaubsform: Kinder Urlaub Wie stehen Sie zu den folgenden Aussagen?

	Stimme voll und ganz zu	Stimme eher zu	Teils/ teils	Lehne eher ab	Lehne ab
Not only for Kids – Farm ist ein interessantes Reiseziel.	□	□	□	□	□
Not only for Kids – Farm kann für mich in Zukunft als Urlaub in Frage kommen.	□	□	□	□	□

33. Wie viel würden Sie für eine Urlaubsnacht bei der Not only for Kids – Farm maximal ausgeben (Halb-Pension)?____

34. Sind Sie Mitglied in einem/ mehreren Vereinen?
□ Nein □ Ja, in einem □ Ja, in mehreren

35. Wie einverstanden sind Sie mit folgenden Aussagen, die so oder ähnlich von anderen Verbrauchern genannt wurden:

	Stimme voll und ganz zu	Stimme eher zu	Teils/ teils	Lehne eher ab	Lehne ab
Gesunde Ernährung ist für mich sehr wichtig.	□	□	□	□	□
Ich esse möglichst Bio-Produkte.	□	□	□	□	□
Ich kaufe möglichst viel im Discounter (Aldi, Lidl, Penny).	□	□	□	□	□
Ich bevorzuge Spezialitäten, die echt sind und sich von der Masse abheben.	□	□	□	□	□
Ich lege viel Wert auf bekannte Markennamen.	□	□	□	□	□
Ich nutze jede Gelegenheit, um etwas Neues zu lernen.	□	□	□	□	□
Ich engagiere mich sehr für die Umwelt.	□	□	□	□	□
Ich bin absolut gegen Gentechnik.	□	□	□	□	□
.Ich lasse mich von Werbung nicht beeinflussen	□	□	□	□	□

36. Im Folgenden geht es uns um Ihre persönlichen Eigenschaften. Wie stehen Sie zu den folgenden Aussagen?

	Stimme voll und ganz zu	Stimme eher zu	Teils/ teils	Lehne eher ab	Lehne ab
Ich bin in meinem Leben allgemein sehr erfolgreich.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich habe ein sehr großes Selbstvertrauen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich bin sehr gesellig.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich fühle mich meiner Region sehr verbunden.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Familie spielt in meinem Leben eine wichtige Rolle					
Ich beeinflusse Freunde/ Kollegen manchmal bei der Wahl ihres Urlaubs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich finde, dass Landwirte konservativ.sind	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Im Allgemeinen fühle ich mich sicher in meinem Leben.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bezüglich der Zukunft fühle ich mich sehr optimistisch	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich denke, dass ich keinen großen Einfluss auf mein Leben habe	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich habe keine Angst vor Fremden/ fremden Leuten.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Technologie wird in Zukunft die Freiheit der Einzelnen gefährden	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich bin mit der Landwirtschaft sehr vertraut.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Zum Abschluss hätten wir noch einige Fragen zu Ihrer Person. Sie können sicher sein, dass diese Angaben vertraulich behandelt werden.

37. In welchem Jahr sind Sie geboren?

19___

38. In welcher Umgebung wohnen Sie momentan?

☐ In einem kleineren Dorf (< 500 Einwohner)

☐ In einer kleineren Stadt (bis 30.000 Einwohner)

☐ In einer Großstadt (bis 500.000 Einwohner)

☐ In einem größeren Dorf (bis 5.000 Einwohner)

☐ In einer Größeren Stadt (bis 150.000 Einwohner)

☐ In einer Großstadt mit mehr als 500.000 Einwohnern

39. Was ist Ihr höchster Bildungsabschluss?

- ☐ (noch) keinen Abschluss
- ☐ Hauptschule/Volksschule
- ☐ Realschule
- ☐ Gymnasium
- ☐ Meister- , Techniker-, Fachhochschule
- ☐ Universität
- ☐ Promotion
- ☐ Sonstige
- ☐ Abgeschloßene Lehre

40. Zu welcher Berufsgruppe gehören Sie?

- ☐ Schüler/in
- ☐ Arbeiter/in
- ☐ Student/in
- ☐ zzt. ohne Beschäftigung
- ☐ Angestellte/r
- ☐ Rentner/Pensionär/in
- ☐ Selbständige/r
- ☐ Hausfrau/-mann
- ☐ Beamtin/er
- ☐ Bundeswehr/Zivildienst
- ☐ Auszubildender/r
- ☐ Sonstiges

40. Aus welchem Bundesland kommenSie

- ☐ Baden-Württemberg
- ☐ Brandenburg
- ☐ Hessen
- ☐ Nordrhein-Westfalen
- ☐ Sachsen
- ☐ Thüringen
- ☐ Bayern
- ☐ Bremen
- ☐ Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
- ☐ Rheinland-Pfalz
- ☐ Sachsen-Anhalt
- ☐ Berlin
- ☐ Hamburg
- ☐ Niedersachsen
- ☐ Saarland
- ☐ Schleswig-Holstein

42. Wie viele Personen gehören zu Ihrem Haushalt?
____________Personen, davon________ Kinder unter 18 Jahren

43. Bitte geben Sie Ihr ungefähres Haushalts-Nettoeinkommen in € an (gemeint ist das durchschnittliche Einkommen aller Haushaltsmitglieder nach Abzug von Steuer und Sozialversicherung).

☐ bis 500 € ☐ 501-1000 € ☐ 1001-1500 € ☐ 1501-2000 €

☐ 2001-2500 € ☐ 2501-3000 € ☐ 3001-3500 € ☐ über 3500 €

44. Vom Interviewer auszufüllen:

Geschlecht der/des Befragten
☐ weiblich ☐ männlich

Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme!

Questionnaire (Chapter 8)

Georg-August-Universität Göttingen
Department für Agrarökonomie und Rurale Entwicklung
Lehrstuhl „Marketing für Agrarprodukte und Lebensmittel“

Reiseverhalten – wissenschaftliche Studie 2008

Guten Tag! Wir sind Studierende der Universität Göttingen und würden gerne eine kleine Befragung durchführen. Es handelt sich um eine wissenschaftliche Studie zum Reiseverhalten. Wir würden uns sehr freuen, wenn Sie ca. 10 Minuten Zeit für den selbstverständlich vollkommen anonymen Fragebogen hätten.

1. Zu Beginn der Befragung würde uns interessieren, wie oft Sie im letzten Jahr in den Urlaub gefahren sind (ab 2 Übernachtungen)?

Im letzten Jahr nicht	Einmal	Zweimal	Dreimal	Mehr als dreimal
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Wie lange dauert in der Regel Ihr Haupt-Urlaub im Jahr?

Bis 4 Tage	Bis eine Woche	Bis 2 Wochen	Bis 3 Wochen	Länger als 3 Wochen
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Wenn die Entscheidung für einen Urlaub fällt, wer wählt bei Ihnen im Haushalt (oder Miturlauber) die Unterkunft (das Hotel, die Ferienwohnung usf.) aus?

Immer ich	Meistens ich	Alle gemeinsam	Meistens jemand anderes	Immer jemand anderes
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. Wenn Sie nach einem Hotel/Pension/Ferienwohnung/Campingplatz usf. suchen, welche Informationsquellen verwenden Sie dann wie häufig?

	Immer	Häufig	Manchmal	Selten	Nie
Kataloge (von Reiseveranstalten, Fremden-verkehrsvereinen usf.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Empfehlungen von Freunden	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Empfehlungen von Reisebüros	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Empfehlungen in Zeitungen/Reiseführern/ Fernsehen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Empfehlungen von anderen Urlaubern im Internet	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Eigene Suche im Internet	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. Im Folgenden haben wir Statements einiger Personen gesammelt. Was trifft auf Sie persönlich zu? Stimmen Sie diesen Aussagen zu oder lehnen Sie diese ab?

	Stimme voll und ganz zu	Stimme eher zu	Teils/ Teils	Stimme eher nicht zu	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu
Ich gebe mir viel Mühe bei der Auswahl meiner Urlaubsziele.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bevor ich einen Urlaub buche, informiere ich mich genau.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich buche am liebsten Pauschalreisen, bei denen ich mich um nichts kümmern muss.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. Haben Sie das Internet schon einmal für die Buchung Ihrer Urlaubsreise verwendet?

ja, sehr häufig	ja, häufig	ja, gelegentlich	ja, selten	nein, noch nie
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. Falls Sie das Internet schon einmal für die Urlaubsplanung/-buchung genutzt haben, auf welche Web-Seite gehen Sie dabei? Können Sie uns hier bitte wenn möglich drei von Ihnen für die Urlaubsplanung verwendete Internet-Seiten nennen?

www. ______________________________

www. ______________________________

www. ______________________________

8. Wenn Sie im Internet eine Reise buchen, worauf achten Sie dann dabei, was ist ausschlaggebend für die Entscheidung? Bitte nennen Sie uns spontan drei Aspekte!

1. ______________________________

2. ______________________________

3. ______________________________

9. Haben Sie vielleicht schon einmal von sogenannten Bewertungsportalen im Internet gehört, auf denen die Verbraucher untereinander ihre Erfahrungen mit Hotels, Reiseveranstaltern, Ferienwohnungen usf. austauschen? Die Menschen schreiben dort Kommentare zu ihren Erfahrungen und lesen die Berichte der Anderen. Häufig werden auch Noten an die Unternehmen verteilt. Hier finden Sie eine Reihe von solchen Bewertungsportalen. Wenn Sie die Seiten lesen, welchen Namen haben Sie davon schon einmal gehört? Bitte bekannte Namen ankreuzen.

☐ Expedia.de	☐ TravelScout24.de	☐ Hotelinfodienst.de
☐ Hotel.de	☐ Tripadvisor.de	☐ myhotelcheck.de
☐ Holidaycheck.de	☐ LonelyPlanet.de	☐ lastminute.de
☐ hotelinfos24.de	☐ Start.de	☐ travel24.com
☐ priceline.de	☐ discounttravel.de	☐ virtualtourist.com

☐ Ich kenne keine dieser Seiten

10. Haben Sie schon mal ein solches Bewertungsportal für Ihre Urlaubsentscheidung verwendet?

ja, sehr häufig	ja, häufig	ja, gelegentlich	ja, selten	nein, noch nie
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. Wenn man in den Urlaub fährt, muss man ja aus verschiedenen Angeboten auswählen. Im Folgenden haben wir in einem kleinen Experiment einige vergleichbare Urlaubsunterkünfte zusammengestellt. Uns würde interessieren, für welche der jeweils angegebenen Reisen Sie sich entscheiden würden, wenn Sie zwischen diesen Unterkünften auswählen müssten. Gehen Sie davon aus, dass der Veranstalter und die Preise in beiden Fällen gleich sind.

Bei der ersten Frage stoßen Sie auf die beiden folgenden Hotels, über die Sie unterschiedliche Informationen finden. Angegeben ist die Anzahl der Sterne des Hotels und die Bewertung, die das Hotel in einem Internet-Bewertungsportal durch andere Nutzer bekommen hat.

Hotel 1: Garden Hotel, 3 Sterne, Malta ★★★

Bewertung auf expedia.de

Expedia.de
Reisen. Wie, wann, wohin du willst.

Zufriedenheit allgemein	100% der Reisenden (50 von 50) empfehlen dieses Hotel
5 von 5 möglichen Punkten	

Ein Reisender aus Berlin empfiehlt dieses Hotel (4.5.08)
Gerne wieder
Geräumige, relativ moderne Zimmer mit Meeresblick, Balkon inkl. Stuhl und Tisch. schönes Schwimmbad auf dem Dach und im Hotel drinnen. Sehr freundliches hilfsbereites Personal, Frühstückbuffet mit Meeresblick ev. Sommer zum draußen frühstücken, gute internationale und einheimische Restaurant in unmittelbarerer Nähe.

Dagmar aus Deutschland empfiehlt dieses Hotel (1.5.08)
Empfehlenswertes Hotel
Zimmer sehr geräumig, Frühstück gut, Personal sehr freundlich, schöner Blick auf Balluta Bay beim Frühstück. Die Zimmer sind alle renoviert worden und die Lage ist gut.

oder

Hotel 2: Summer Hotel, 4 Sterne, Malta ★★★★

Bewertung auf expedia.de

Expedia.de
Reisen. Wie, wann, wohin du willst.

Zufriedenheit allgemein	80% der Reisenden (40 von 50) empfehlen dieses Hotel
4 von 5 möglichen Punkten	

Ein Reisender aus Hamburg empfiehlt dieses Hotel nicht (7.5.08)
Nie wieder!
Eigentlich könnte das Hotel ganz schön sein, große Zimmer, Meerblick, Schwimmbad auf dem Dach und drinnen, aber sonst stimmt vieles nicht. Bei Ankunft Türschloss fast komplett lose, Teppich nicht richtig gesaugt, etliche Mücken an der Wand, Personal gelangweilt.

Holger aus Kassel empfiehlt dieses Hotel (23.4.08)
Sehr ordentlich!
Es war soweit alles OK. Man merkt zwar, dass das Haus etwas älter ist. Die Zimmer sind aber gepflegt und renoviert worden. Das Hotel verfügt über einen Badesteg, von dem aus man toll im Meer schwimmen kann. Das Ambiente im hoteleigenen Restaurant, wo sich auch das Frühstücksbuffet mit Meerblick befindet, ist sehr schön.

Welches der beiden Hotels würden Sie in diesem Fall wählen?

☐ Hotel 1 oder ☐ Hotel 2

12. **Im Folgenden geht es um zwei Ferienwohnungen von privaten Anbietern, jeweils gleich groß und mit dem gleichen Preis. Die erste ist in einem Reiseführer (Buch) empfohlen, die zweite im Internet. Bitte sagen Sie uns auch hier, für welche Ferienwohnung Sie sich in diesem Fall entscheiden würden.**

Ferienwohnung 1: Haus Ortler, 3 Sterne, Südtirol ☆☆☆

Bewertung im Marco Polo Reiseführer (Buch)

Sehr empfehlenswertes Haus, schön gelegen. Das Haus Ortler bietet geräumige Zimmer zu einem ausgezeichneten Preis-Leistungsverhältnis. Tolles Frühstück, gute Aussicht

oder

Ferienwohnung 2: Haus Weißspitze, 3 Sterne, Südtirol ☆☆☆

Bewertung auf expedia.de

Zufriedenheit allgemein	**100% der Reisenden (13 von 13) empfehlen diese Ferienwohnung**
5 von 5 möglichen Punkten	

Frederike aus Lüneburg empfiehlt diese Ferienwohnung (3.5.08)
Sehr empfehlenswerte Ferienwohnung
Das Frühstück ist wirklich super und die Zimmer sind großzügig. Bei dem Preis kann man wirklich nicht viel falsch machen, wenn man den tollen Ausblick aus den Zimmerfenstern bedenkt.

Helmut aus Duisburg empfiehlt diese Ferienwohnung (8.5.08)
Schönes Haus – habe hier entspannte Tage verbracht
Selten einen so erholsamen Urlaub verbracht. Kann ich allen anderen nur empfehlen! Hier gibt es nichts zu meckern.

Welche der beiden Ferienwohnungen würden Sie in diesem Fall wählen?

☐ Ferienwohnung 1 oder ☐ Ferienwohnung 2

13. **Im dritten Fall stellen wir Ihnen zwei Bauernhöfe vor, auf denen man Urlaub machen kann. Der erste ist im Internet bewertet und hat ein Gütesiegel des ADAC, der zweite ist von anderen Reisenden etwas besser bewertet worden.**

Bauernhof 1: Haus Schulze, Ostfriesland

ADAC Reisen — Dieser Bauernhof ist empfohlen von ADAC-Reisen.

Bewertung auf tripadvisor.de tripadvisor Tipps für Ihre Trips

Zufriedenheit allgemein	**75 % der Reisenden (15 von 20) empfehlen diesen Bauernhof**
4 von 5 möglichen Punkten	

Paul aus Detmold empfiehlt diese Ferienwohnung (10.4.08)
Bedingt empfehlenswert
Die Ferienwohnung war groß und gut ausgestattet, Tiere gibt es auch, aber wir hatten uns für unsere Kinder noch etwas mehr Spaß versprochen.

Ein Reisender aus Deutschland empfiehlt diese Ferienwohnung (3.4.2008)
Würde ich weiter empfehlen
Dies war unser erster Urlaub auf einem Bauernhof. So ähnlich hatten wir es uns auch gewünscht, viel Ruhe und Erholung, gute Kinderbetreuung.

oder

Bauernhof 2: Haus Meier, Ostfriesland

Bewertung auf tripadvisor.de tripadvisor Tipps für Ihre Trips

Zufriedenheit allgemein	**85 % der Reisenden (17 von 20) empfehlen diesen Bauernhof**
4,25 von 5 möglichen Punkten	

Sabine S. empfiehlt diese Ferienwohnung (3.5.08)
So stelle ich mir einen Bauernhof vor
Viele Tiere, Ruhe, nette Leute – hier stimmte einfach alles. Kann ich nur empfehlen.

Reisender aus Deutschland empfiehlt diese Ferienwohnung (25.4.08)
Wirklich gelungener Urlaub
Vom netten Empfang durch die Familie bis hin zur guten Kinderbetreuung passte alles. Zimmer gut und geräumig. Insgesamt guter Standard.

Welchen der beiden Bauernhöfe würden Sie in diesem Fall wählen?

☐ Bauernhof 1 oder ☐ Bauernhof 2

14. Im letzen Fall geht es wieder um eine Hotelübernachtung. Diesmal interessiert uns, wie viel Sie ggf. für ein besser bewertetes Hotel mehr ausgeben würden?

Hotel 1: Hotel Heide, Lüneburger Heide, Bispingen
Preis: Doppelzimmer pro Nacht 69 €

Bewertung auf www.travelscout24.de

Zufriedenheit allgemein	60 % der Reisenden (12 von 20) empfehlen dieses Hotel
3 von 5 möglichen Punkten	

Ein Reisender aus Deutschland empfiehlt dieses Hotel (3.5.08)
Preis-Leistungs-Verhältnis gut
Sicherlich kein Top-Haus, aber gute Betten, angenehmer Service und gutes Frühstück

Oliver aus Essen empfiehlt dieses Hotel nicht (25.4.08)
Zu wenig
Der Service war eher mäßig. Die Matratze war durchgelegen. Ich hatte mir mehr versprochen.

oder

Hotel 2: Hotel Lüneburg, Lüneburger Heide, Bispingen

Bewertung auf www.travelscout24.de

Zufriedenheit allgemein	90 % der Reisenden (18 von 20) empfehlen dieses Hotel
4,5 von 5 möglichen Punkten	

Ein Reisender aus Deutschland empfiehlt dieses Hotel (1.5.08)
Preis-Leistungs-Verhältnis gut
Ein wirklich schönes Hotel. Toller Service

Jürgen aus Köln empfiehlt dieses Hotel (22.4.08)
Da kommt Freude auf
Viel mehr kann man nicht verlangen – tolles Essen, schöne Zimmer, gute Ausstattung des Hotels.

Wie Sie sehen, ist die Kundenbewertung des Hotels im zweiten Fall besser ausgefallen. Wie viel würden Sie für das Zimmer hier gegenüber dem Preis von Hotel 1 (69 €) möglicherweise mehr bezahlen, um das besser bewertete Hotel 2 zu erhalten.

- ☐ Ich würde Hotel 2 nur buchen, wenn es nicht teurer wäre.
- ☐ Ich würde für **Hotel 2 .... €** **<u>mehr</u>** ausgeben als für Hotel 1 (Preis hier 69 €). Bitte Mehrpreis eintragen für den Fall, dass Sie dort eine Nacht buchen würden.

15. Im Folgenden geht es weiterhin um das Thema Internet-Bewertungsportale wie expedia.de, Hotel.de, Holidaycheck.de usf. Falls Sie diese Seiten noch nicht kannten, haben Sie ja in den vorherigen Fragen gesehen, welche Art von Informationen man dort findet. Wir würden gerne genauer fragen, wie Sie diese Seiten einschätzen. Über den Nutzen des Internets kann man ja ganz unterschiedlicher Meinung sein. Welchen Aussagen stimmen Sie zu, welche halten Sie für nicht zutreffend?

	Stimme voll und ganz zu	Stimme eher zu	Teils/ Teils	Stimme eher nicht zu	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu
Ich finde die Bewertungen anderer Nutzer hilfreich für meine Buchungsentscheidung.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Insgesamt kann man diese Portale als vertrauenswürdig einstufen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich möchte von den Erfahrungen anderer Internet-Nutzer profitieren, bevor ich buche.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Die Kommentare anderer Reisender im Internet erleichtern es mir, die richtige Buchungsentscheidung zu treffen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bei schlechten Bewertungen im Internet würde ich das Hotel nie buchen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Kommentare von anderen Reisenden sind aus meiner Sicht nicht verlässlich.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Es ist mir zu mühsam, im Internet nach Reiseinformationen zu suchen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Zu anderen Verbrauchern im Internet habe ich mehr Vertrauen als in Prospekte.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Durch das Lesen von Kommentaren anderer Internet-Besucher werde ich in meiner Buchungsentscheidung bestätigt.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In die Bewertung von Personen, die viel reisen, habe ich mehr Vertrauen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Je detailierter die Kommentare anderer Nutzer, desto mehr Vertrauen habe ich in die Bewertung.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Je freundlicher der Stil des Kommentars, desto mehr Vertrauen habe ich in die Bewertung.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich vertraue Kommentaren, bei denen ich denke, dass der Schreiber mir sehr ähnlich ist.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wenn ein Hotel von vielen Kunden sehr gut bewertet wurde, bin ich auch bereit einen höheren Preis zu zahlen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Solche Internet-Seiten sind alle von den Reiseveranstaltern „gekauft“.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Den Bewertungen anderer Nutzer kann man vertrauen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Kommentare im Internet sind häufig widersprüchlich.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Im Internet kann ich Informationen schneller bekommen als woanders.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ohne das Internet könnte ich nicht mehr auskommen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

16. Im Folgenden haben wir weitere Statements einiger Personen gesammelt. Was trifft auf Sie persönlich zu? Stimmen Sie diesen Aussagen zu oder lehnen Sie diese ab?

	Stimme voll und ganz zu	Stimme eher zu	Teils/ Teils	Stimme eher nicht zu	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu
Wenn ich in einem Hotel schon einmal war, vertraue ich nur meiner eigenen Erfahrung und suche nicht mehr im Internet.	□	□	□	□	□
Wenn ein Hotel bereits ziemlich bekannt ist, sind Empfehlungen von anderen Urlaubern nicht so wichtig.	□	□	□	□	□
Wenn ein Hotel von anderen Urlaubern gut bewertet wird, ist meine Bereitschaft dieses zu buchen größer.	□	□	□	□	□
Wenn das Hotel sehr viele Sterne hat, sind die Empfehlungen von anderen Mitgliedern des Portals nicht so wichtig.	□	□	□	□	□
Für mich ist die Zahl der abgegebenen Bewertungen entscheidend für die Glaubwürdigkeit.	□	□	□	□	□
Ich vertraue eher meinem Reisebüro als den Bewertungstexten anderer Urlauber.	□	□	□	□	□

17. Wie wichtig sind Ihnen die folgenden Kriterien bei der Urlaubsentscheidung?

	Sehr wichtig	Wichtig	Teils/ Teils	Unwichtig	Absolut unwichtig
Anzahl Sterne	□	□	□	□	□
Positive Bewertungen im Internet	□	□	□	□	□
Anzahl der Bewertungen im Internet	□	□	□	□	□
Bekanntheit des Hotels	□	□	□	□	□
Erfahrungen von Bekannten	□	□	□	□	□
Empfehlungen des Reisbüros	□	□	□	□	□

18. Haben Sie schon mal selbst eine Bewertung über einen Urlaub im Internet abgegeben?

ja, sehr häufig	ja, häufig	ja, gelegentlich	ja, selten	nein, noch nie, könnte ich mir aber vorstellen	nein, noch nie und werde ich auch zukünftig nicht tun
□	□	□	□	□	□
Weiter mit Frage 19					**Weiter mit Frage 20**

19. Ich habe (würde) einen Beitrag im Internet veröffentlicht (veröffentlichen), ...

	Stimme voll und ganz zu	Stimme eher zu	Teils/ Teils	Stimme eher nicht zu	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu
… um meinen Frust loszuwerden.	□	□	□	□	□
… um andere vor schlechten Anbietern zu warnen.	□	□	□	□	□
… um anderen durch meine Erfahrungen zu helfen.	□	□	□	□	□
… um mit anderen meine Erfahrungen zu teilen.	□	□	□	□	□
... weil ich einem guten Unternehmen helfen will.	□	□	□	□	□
... weil ich mich bei schlechten Erfahrungen an dem Unternehmen „rächen“ will.	□	□	□	□	□
... weil es einfach Spaß macht, sich mit anderen auszutauschen..	□	□	□	□	□

20. Im Folgenden finden Sie Aussagen einiger Internetnutzer dazu, warum diese manche Internetseiten besser oder vertrauenswürdiger finden als andere. Welche Erfahrungen haben Sie insgesamt mit dem Internet gemacht? Wonach wählen Sie die Seiten aus, denen Sie vertrauen?

	Stimme voll und ganz zu	Stimme eher zu	Teils/ Teils	Stimme eher nicht zu	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu
Einer sehr bekannten Internetseite kann man eher vertrauen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Prämien/Anreize erhöhen meine Bereitschaft aktiv am Internet teilzunehmen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Es ist wichtig, dass eine Seite unabhängig von Unternehmen ist.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Je mehr Zusatzfunktionen ein Portal bietet (z. B. Blog, regionaler Terminplaner), desto vertrauenswürdiger ist es.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Einem Portal, das häufig aktualisiert wird, kann man eher vertrauen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Eine hohe Anzahl von Suchkriterien garantiert mir verlässliche Empfehlungen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Der Bekanntheitsgrad ist für mich ein wichtiges Auswahlkriterium im Internet.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Es ist mir wichtig, individuelle Anfragen an ein Portal richten zu können.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Zu viel Werbung auf einer Internetseite senkt die Glaubwürdigkeit.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bei der Auswahl einer Internetseite ist mir eine Zertifizierung durch eine unabhängige Institution sehr wichtig.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Abschließend haben wir noch ein paar Fragen zu Ihrer Person.

21. Wie häufig nutzen Sie das Internet?

☐ mehrmals täglich

☐ (fast) täglich

☐ mehrmals pro Woche

☐ ein paar Mal pro Monat

☐ (fast) niemals

22. Wofür verwenden Sie das Internet?

	sehr häufig	häufig	gelegent-lich	selten	nie
Infosuche zu bestimmten Themen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
E-Mail	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Chat	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Diskussionen (z. B. Newsgroups, Foren, Studi-VZ)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unterhaltung (z. B. Musik herunterladen)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Hotelbuchungen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Online-Shopping	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Online-Banking	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

23. Haben Sie schon einmal Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof/ Ponyhof gemacht?

- ☐ Ja, aber nur als Kind
- ☐ Ja, schon häufig
- ☐ Ja, schon mehrmals
- ☐ Ja, schon einmal
- ☐ Nein, könnte ich mir aber vorstellen.
- ☐ Nein, und würde mich auch nicht interessieren.

24. In welchem Jahr sind Sie geboren?

19________

25. In welcher Umgebung wohnen Sie momentan (Hauptwohnsitz)?

- ☐ In einem kleineren Dorf (< 500 Einwohner)
- ☐ In einem größeren Dorf (bis 5.000 Einwohner)
- ☐ In einer kleineren Stadt (bis 30.000 Einwohner)
- ☐ In einer größeren Stadt (bis 150.000 Einwohner)
- ☐ In einer Großstadt (bis 500.000 Einwohner)
- ☐ In einer Großstadt mit mehr als 500.000 Einwohnern

26. Was ist Ihr höchster Bildungsabschluss?

- ☐ (noch) keinen Abschluss
- ☐ Hauptschul-/Volksschulabschluss
- ☐ Realschulabschluss
- ☐ (Fach-)Abitur
- ☐ abgeschlossene Berufsausbildung
- ☐ Meister, Techniker, Fachhochschulabschluss
- ☐ Universitätsabschluss
- ☐ Promotion
- ☐ Sonstiges

27. Wie viele Personen gehören zu Ihrem Haushalt?

____________Personen, davon________ Kinder unter 18 Jahren

28. Bitte geben Sie Ihr ungefähres Haushalts-Nettoeinkommen in € an (gemeint ist das durchschnittliche Einkommen aller Haushaltsmitglieder nach Abzug von Steuer und Sozialversicherung).

☐ bis 500	☐ 501-1.000	☐ 1.001-1.500	☐ 1.501-2.000
☐ 2.001-2.500	☐ 2.501-3.000	☐ 3.001-3.500	☐ über 3.500

29. Geschlecht der/des Befragten

☐ weiblich ☐ männlich

Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme!