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# Agritourism as a Driver of Rural Development in Nigeria: A Review



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### Abstract

There are various agricultural activities that describe agritourism. Agritourism activities solely occur in farmlands. It could occur on either existing farmlands or abandoned farmlands. Agritourism is a niche tourism with many advantages for farmers, tourists, the community, and the environment. It is capable of satisfying the leisure desires of tourists while offering them profound agricultural knowledge and experiences about farming activities and the agrarian environment. Agritourism is a developing concept in Nigeria. Many farmers and tourists are engaging in agritourism, but it is unbeknownst to them that their farm engagements are referred to as agritourism. The discussion of this study was centred around previous agritourism research conducted by Nigerian scholars. The scholars' submissions were systematically reviewed, and their pertinent inferences were drawn. The theory of critical success factors was essentially engaged to underpin the discussion of the findings of this study. The findings revealed that agritourism is a major driver of rural development, especially with respect to the economic, environmental, and infrastructural enhancement of the agrarian area. Hence, there is no doubt that agritourism could trigger sustainable development in the rural areas of Nigeria.


### Keywords


Agritourism · farm engagements · countryside · leisure trips · ex-farm houses



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## Agritourism as a Driver of Rural Development in Nigeria: A Review

Agritourism is a concept that infuses agricultural engagements with tourism. It is an entrepreneurial engagement that gives tourists a blend of leisure satisfaction with an agricultural experience/feeling. Olawuyi (2022) submitted that the perception of agritourism from the farm owner's end is that it is the connection between agricultural practices and tourism, in a bid to enhance income generation, while the perception of agritourism from the agritourist end is that agritourism implies trips to farmlands for relaxation, business, conference, as well as events. Agritourism is the displacement of individuals to farm areas for leisure, education, and business. Gil *et al.* (2013) noted that agritourism implies a rare agriculturally inclined engagement in rural areas, precisely with respect to leisure and educational experience. Xiaowen *et al.* (2022) opined that agritourism is a blend of farm practices with tourism in areas set aside for agriculture.

It is an activity that has been around since the first industrial revolution. This is premised on the fact that during the first industrial revolution, city dwellers periodically retreated to the rural areas to spend time with their relatives and catch up with the experiences of the countryside that the city could not offer them. Olawuyi (2022) noted that the contemporary American history of agritourism could be connected to the 1800s, when individuals (s) returned to the rural areas to visit their relatives who were farmers, in a bid to escape the harsh conditions of summer in urban areas. Therefore, the practice has been around for some time, but it has recently become a concept discussed in the literature. As a matter of fact, it is an evolving concept in some parts of the world. Maumbe (2012) opined that agritourism in almost all African nations is evolving due to the brief history of its importance. In Nigeria, agritourism is an evolving concept for farmers, tourists, and community members. Oladeji *et al.* (2020) asserted that it is indeed evident that agritourism knowledge is generally in an infant stage in the communities under study. It is therefore pertinent to explore the various and topical literature vis-à-vis the connection between agritourism and rural development.

### Literature Review

#### Rural Tourism

A rural area is essentially described by a small population and scant social amenities. A rural area is the countryside with inadequate infrastructure, social amenities, and low internally generated revenue. The rural area usually has a plethora of tourism potentials and attractions in various quarters. Travelling to any or all of these attractions or potentials underpins the concept of rural tourism. Lane (1994) opined that rural tourism must be engaged in the countryside, primarily, an area that has distinct characteristics associated with micro businesses, an abundant area, interconnectedness to natural as well inherited items, and it also has the features of traditional characteristics, driving development as well as an organic relationship with indigenous relatives.

Rural tourism is a type of tourism that generally unveils valuable rural assets, heritage resources, and the protection of the rural landscape. Fang (2020) submitted that it is pertinent to preserve the countryside with all its germane features that range from its finances, societal perceptions, and culture, which implies the general boost for rural tourism. Therefore, it is important to ascertain the viable nature of the countryside based on the enhanced inflow of different persons into such an area. Kataya (2021) noted that rural tourism has the capacity to maintain the viability and stability of the rural regions, based on the underpinning ideas of depopulation, essentially, obvious through migration of youthful individuals to cities, therefore

neglecting aged and abandoned houses and lands. Rural tourism leads to responsible and sustainable exploration of various parts and assets of rural areas. It simply implies a form of tourism that is representative of sustainability as well as well-mannered dispositions, which compels tourists' active involvement in frequent indigenous lifestyles that are characterised by small population size, agriculture, rare traditions, as well as culture-inclined characters, which are oftentimes subjected to marginalisation (Situmorang *et al.*, 2019; Manaf *et al.*, 2018).

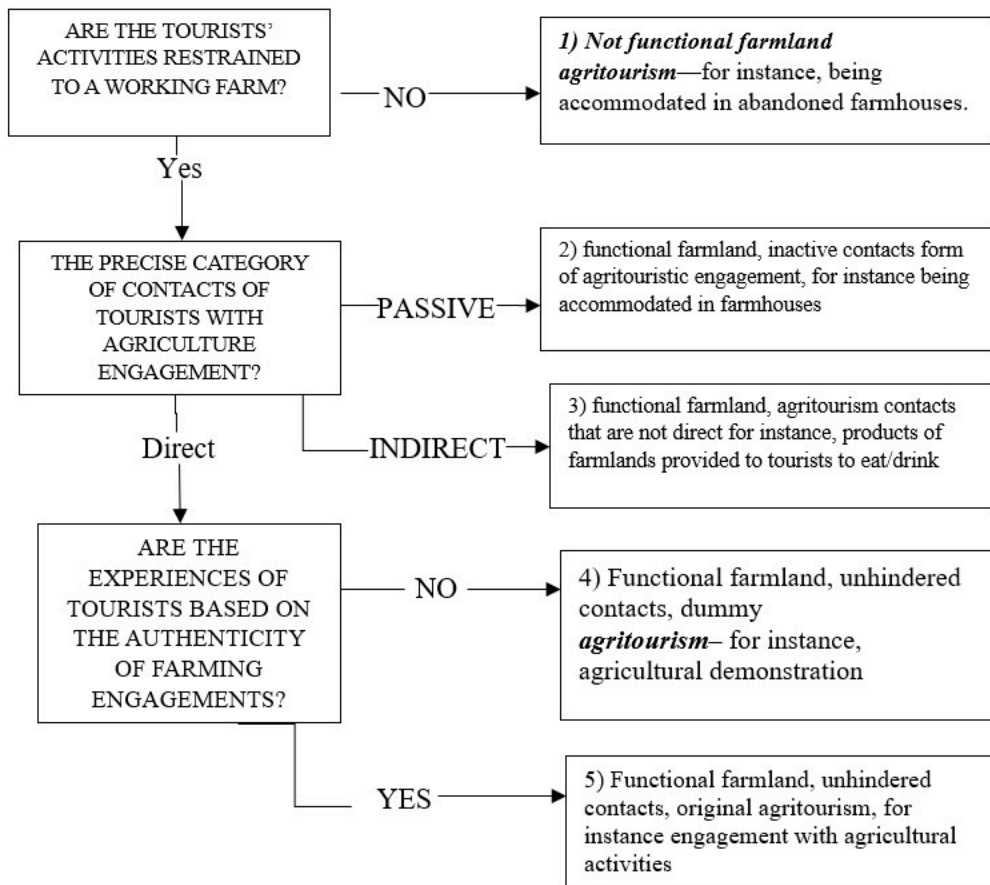
Essentially, rural tourism preserves cultural activities, ethics, and norms. Rural tourism could force people to preserve their inherited cultural activities, values, and ethics, in a bid to ensure that these assets are easily bequeathed unto the next generation and also serve as educational materials to tourists. It can be used in promoting indigenous activities and heritage materials that are only situated in the countrysides. Rosalina *et al.* (2021)'s assertion revolves around rural tourism being a tourism type that can promote an area with precise geomorphic and socio-economic assets, which can be subjected to the practice of sustainability via reiterating the importance of the indigenous space and the importance associated with the countryside's experiences. It could also be used in creating balance for its stakeholders through the means of forcing them to acquire an impressive style and approach of management. Gao and Wu (2017) submitted that a mixture of ruralness and tourism that retains the template engaged for balancing the perception of various stakeholders and their effective and kind management practices could be called rural tourism. Rural tourism can lead to rural dwellers behaving at their best behaviors, in a bid to provide excellent service to customers. Priatmoko *et al.* (2023) noted that rural tourism engagements have indirect advantages on the life of rural area dwellers via activating some good behaviours, for instance, sport training, engaging in self-regulation, and enhancing positive emotional dispositions.

### Typology for Defining Agritourism

Concerning conceptualising agritourism, it is pertinent to decipher some pertinent agriculture-based defining indices. Olawuyi (2023) asserted that the description of agritourism from a typical farmer's trajectory is the relationship between agricultural businesses/operations as well as tourism, for the enhancement of the farmer's revenue. The concept of agritourism is also lucid and understandable from the perspective of precise agricultural activities engaged by agritourists (Olawuyi *et al.*, 2024). Based on the fact that the major operating words in agritourism are agriculture and tourism, the instructive concept that usually leads to the definition of agritourism is underpinned by the idea of agriculture. On this premise, Philip *et al.* (2010) developed a typology to aid in defining agritourism, as evident in [Figure 1](#) below. The first idea to be considered focuses on the question "Are agritourism activities done on a working farm?". This denotes that agritourism can be done on a working or non-working farm. Olawuyi (2022) opined that non-working farmlands are portions of farms or farm settlements that lack functional agricultural practice but have agricultural facilities, for instance, a farmhouse, stores, and halls, which can be used for tourism and hospitality purposes. Sanjeeb (2017) opined that non-working farm agritourism is usually done to satisfy the scenic desires of tourists, for instance, bird watching. In a non-working farm agritourism situation, the farmland has no obvious agricultural activities. However, there are opportunities for tourists to establish passive agritourism contacts in an agritourism destination, precisely, where tourists essentially pass the night in an ex-farmhouse morphed into lodging/accommodation units. This implies that tourists can be on a functional farmland and not interfere or intervene with the farmer's agricultural activities (for example, a vineyard wedding event). Philip *et al.* (2010) opined that there are also instances of indirect agritourism contacts in a typical agritourism destination, for example, when tourists consume farm produce that directly

emanates from the farm component of the agritourism destination. To be able to minimize the risk of contracting and spreading zoonotic diseases to or from farm animals, some farmers establish conditions for tourists to engage in farming activities specifically via staged farm sections, for instance, by taking a tour of a cider mill (Sanjeeb, 2017). Ultimately, tourists can actively engage in various agricultural sections of a typical agritourism destination. Philip *et al.* (2010) noted that this form of agritourism contact ensures that tourists are active and directly participate as well as experience physical farming activities. Sanjeeb (2017) noted that this type of agritourism's contact implied active tourists' participation with regards to the direct involvement in farming endeavours, precisely by the contributions and works of tourists in exchange for accommodation and food. Olawuyi (2022) opined that visitors may decide to actively engage in farming operations, especially tourists that are academics/trainees, such as interns. This typology captures all the activities of tourists in a typical agritourism site. Plokhikh *et al.* (2022) submitted that establishing agritourism's typology is not easy, because it is associated with the assets of the environment of the countryside.

**Figure 1**  
Agritourism Typology



Source: Philip *et al.*, 2010.

### Concept of Rural Tourism and its Relation to Agritourism

Based on the fact that mechanized farming is usually done on a relatively large expanse of land, most mechanised farms are located in rural areas. In most cases, agritourism activities on a functional farm are associated with mechanised farming practices; therefore, because of the large expanse of land required, agritourism destinations are usually located in rural areas. Animal husbandry with large numbers of farm



animals is generally done in rural areas because of the attendant offensive smell of the animal faecal droppings. Nistoreanu and Marinela (2011), as cited in Olawuyi and Alabi (2018), opined that this is why the countryside maintains undisturbed traditional as well as spiritual ethics, especially, ethnographical, social economy lifestyle and surroundings, which facilitates boosting of rural tourism, with awesome potentials, and direct link with sundry tourism forms. There is usually a plethora of heritage assets in rural areas. The heritage assets in the rural area could be natural or cultural. Notably, agritourism enterprises could be referred to as a cultural heritage in this regard. This is premised on the fact that a typical farm in the rural area belongs to an individual. There is a tendency for the farm to have been inherited and have a prospect of being passed to the incoming generation. Generally, heritage resources in well-developed rural areas could become substantive objects of tourism attraction. For instance, waterfalls, hills, wildlife, sand dunes, monuments, farms, and so on, situated in the rural areas are all forms of countryside tourism attractions.

Matić *et al.* (2019) submitted that various types of tourism that are linked with the countryside are inclusive of cultural tourism, culinary activities in agritourism, ecotourism, wine tourism, religious tourism, tourism of special interest like sporting engagements, pristine natural surroundings, indigenous handicrafts, and wellbeing. Sasu and Epuran (2016) asserted that rural tourism is an umbrella phenomenon that covers different types of tourism, for example, agritourism, ethnicity-based tourism, ecotourism, culinary tourism, and creative tourism. Mandy *et al.* (2019) opined that the various forms of tourism can be inclusive of ecotourism, cultural tourism, and agricultural tourism. Although rural tourism may be difficult to describe, a consideration of the foregoing can aid in contextualising a defining concept of rural tourism. Ray and Das (2016) noted that rural tourism essentially encompasses rurality, cultural bias, heritage as well as arts in a rural destination, thus exhibiting valuable impacts on the local area vis-à-vis raising their commercial and social values. In the same vein, Nagaraju and Chandrashekara's (2014) opinion about countryside tourism basically depicts different tourism types that exhibit the countryside's attributes, arts, cultural characteristics as well as heritage in the rural area; therefore, it creates an advantage for local communities with regard to their financial and social values. Podgorica (2019) opined that rural tourism offers the following:

- a) Accommodation in rural and countryside areas;
- b) Contents: activity and attraction;
- c) Staying in a camp, a rural household, or a family boarding house as well as agricultural husbandry based on bed and breakfasts;
- d) Being accommodated in small rural area hotels, tents, tree houses (camping), and rural houses;
- e) Content that requires the availability of farm animals;
- f) Organising events via boats and riding a bicycle;
- g) Culinary and handicraft conferences;
- h) Riding on the backs of horses, various sporting engagements;
- i) Organisation of trips (visiting different rural communities while taking coffee, tea, wine, and trails)
- j) Archaeological sites as well as the centre of culture;
- k) Themes of culture and trailing gastronomy.

Considering the above, it is pertinent to note that most of the indices of agritourism are captured under rural tourism. For instance, accommodation in rural areas may be sacrosanct for agritourism destinations, especially where ex-farm houses have been converted to lodging facilities for agritourists. The culinary

workshop aspect of the above also underpins agritourism. However, the germane agritourism aspect missing in the above is the intentional travel to see and learn about crops (production, harvest, storage, and processing) and farm animals, which may not necessarily include lodging in accommodation facilities on the farm. Meanwhile, it is pertinent to note that agritourism and other tourism forms in the countryside can easily exhibit peculiar attributes associated with the rural areas to visitors and people in other parts of the world. Streinfeneder (2016) opined that agritourism and different forms of tourism in the countryside are essential attributes that attract tourists to the countryside.

## Methodology

This study engaged a critical review of the pertinent literature. The relevant literature was retrieved from Google Scholar, Research Gate, and academia. It is noteworthy that initially, 30 articles were downloaded. However, when the keywords that underpin the search term were varied, 20 more articles were downloaded. Out of 50 articles, six were chosen for systematic review. The inclusion conditions engaged in selecting the six articles were as follows: articles must have been published between 2014 and 2024, articles must focus on agritourism, especially in the light of rural area/development, and articles must be from Nigeria. The exclusion conditions were as follows: articles published in years preceding 2014 were not considered, articles that are not agritourism focused, and articles not from Nigeria were not considered. A theoretical framework essentially underpinned the discussion on the chosen articles.

## Discussion

**Table 1**

*Authors Who Addressed Agritourism in the Light of Being a Driver of Rural Tourism.*

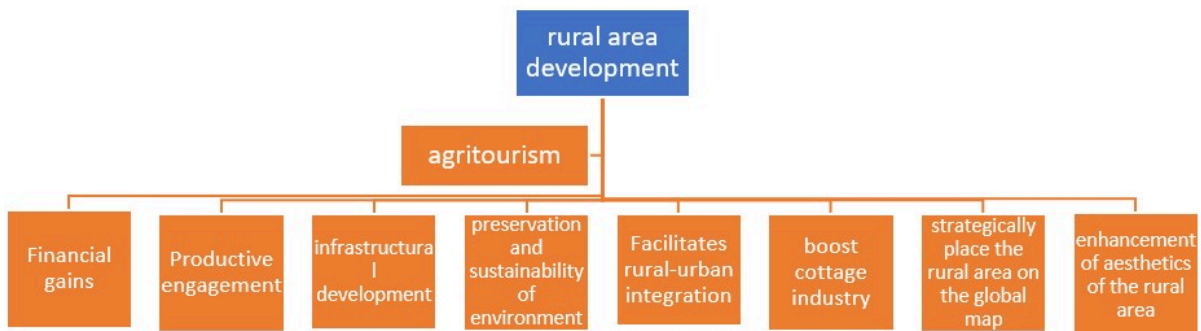
S/N	Author's name	Title research	Issues discussed considering agritourism being an indicator of rural development
1.	Udoh (2015)	Measurement of the potential associated with developing agrotourism in the Nigerian countryside.	Agritourism shows the capability of enhancing the arts and crafts business enterprise.
2.	Balogun (2020)	Developing Agritourism as well as Sustainable Development of Community Social-Economy	Tourists' trips to ABUAD farms positively influence the host community. The presence of tourists at this destination generates significant revenues for the investor and host community.
3.	Oladeji <i>et al.</i> (2020)	Prospects of agritourism for developing societal as well as economies of chosen farmlands, likewise, adjacent communities in the southwest of Nigeria	Agrotourism has been considered as a fit rural development template, which could be engaged for the diversity of the Nigerian single economy, generation of employment for the youth as well as improvement of the livelihood of the indigenous communities.
4.	Omotilewa <i>et al.</i> (2021)	Revisiting sizes of farms as well as richness: A Nigerian empirical study through various categories of sizes of farms.	Many relatively large farms are of investors that are essentially involved in non-agricultural employment of people who reside in the farm's environment. A couple of the investors depend on family members to serve as farm workers, especially when the farm owners are absent.
5.	Lan <i>et al.</i> (2022)	Agritourism as an Effective Strategy for Teaching Fish Processing by Agriculture Education Lecturers in	Agritourism as a strategy fosters the enhancement and establishment of agricultural procedures' knowledge, skills as well as attitudes. It provides

S/N	Author's name	Title research	Issues discussed considering agritourism being an indicator of rural development
6.	Olagunju (2024)	Colleges of Education in North Central, Nigeria  Agritourism: a spur for revitalizing as well as sustaining the Nigerian tourism sector	materials/facilities as well as content that could be engaged for agricultural procedures.  It leads to developed infrastructure, especially considering investment in the transport business, lodges, and tourist ancillary services. The preservation and sustenance of environments are well considered for attaining prosperity in agritourism ventures.

Table 1 shows the pertinent findings vis-à-vis the impacts of agritourism on rural development in Nigeria. It is no gainsaying that agritourism is essentially a niche tourism and many people are engaging in it in oblivion in Nigeria; however, the advantages associated with it are enormous. Agritourists spend money rather than make money while on agricultural farms or agritourism destinations. Therefore, the money spent by agritourists is distributed and redistributed in the host community. This is essentially achievable because agritourism creates employment for community members. The fact that community members are employed implies that they are productively engaged. Agritourism fosters infrastructural development. A road path connecting the agritourism destination to the city must be constructed.

In the same vein, clean and sanitary water must be provided for tourists to drink, wash, and clean their items. Electricity must also be offered to tourists to charge their devices, power air-conditioners, and illuminate the environment. Agritourism can also facilitate ancillary facilities such as internet connectivity, organization of events. It could lead to the preservation and sustainability of the environment, vis-à-vis its ecology. Farmers will ensure that the land used for agricultural activities gets revived periodically to remain fertile. Agritourism activities are a means of putting the land to good use. Agritourism ventures are typically pull factors that could attract people from different areas (especially cities) to the rural areas. It essentially facilitates rural-urban integration. It easily helps introduce rural products (arts and agriculture), especially cottage products, to urban areas and other parts of the world. This attracts more money to the rural area and strategically places the rural area in the global map. Agritourism opens up other resources for agricultural purposes. It demystifies niche areas or agricultural practices to agricultural enthusiasts and prospective investors. Agritourism destinations that are primary enterprises are set up for agritourism, and as such, they are constructed with beautiful materials to be endearing to visitors. This implies that agritourism is a trigger of aesthetic development in the rural area. It could ensure the facelift and beautification of the rural area.

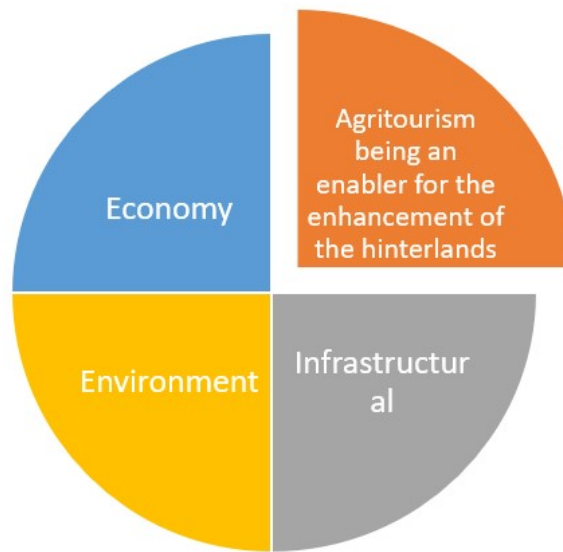
**Figure 2**  
*Major Advantages of Agritourism in Rural Areas*



Source: Author's Deductions from the Reviewed Literature



**Figure 3**  
Core Aspects Impacted by Rural Areas



**Source:** Author's Deductions from the Reviewed Literature

The above figure highlights the positive influence of agritourism evident in the Nigerian hinterlands. Agritourism is evolving in Nigeria, so all of these impacts may not be obvious in all rural areas simultaneously. However, it is pertinent that most rural areas with agritourism activities and enterprises have significant numbers of the highlighted advantages, especially with respect to the fact that the highlighted advantages can easily be captured under the predictors of sustainable development, namely, economy, environment, and infrastructure. A tourism destination/geographical area can be rebuilt according to the dimensions of sustainable development, resulting in a sustainable economy, environment, society, and tourism (Olawuyi *et al.*, 2017; Olawuyi and Posun, 2021).

Therefore, the findings of the positive impacts of agritourism are corroborated by the position of Popescu *et al.* (2023) that the positive values of agritourism with respect to the development of rural areas are anchored around the social level, economic level, and resources. Agritourism, as a component of rural tourism, determines the general perception of people about the rural area. Liu *et al.*'s (2023) submission shows that tourism in the hinterland has been validly engaged to be an enhancement template in the countryside in various developed and developing nations; similarly, the community gets rejuvenated. The fact that agritourism generally facilitates rural tourism implies that it can make a typical rural area an interesting place to visit based on its improved facilities. Rural tourism in different destinations has resulted in an essential new element for the countryside's financial development; its importance with respect to the enhancement of the development of the countryside has thus increased (Polukhina *et al.*, 2021). An example is with regard to rural tourism being a vehicle for the farmers to meet prospective customers.

Agritourism is a concept that could also underpin innovative agricultural practices and engagement. The essence of agritourism being an innovative model for entrepreneurial activities, as well as its influence on the countryside side is positive (Petrović *et al.*, 2017). The fact that agritourism implies diversified agricultural engagement equates to agrarian expansion in some quarters. Moreover, engagements of agritourism boost the diversification of agricultural engagements that steadily give room for farmers to reduce risk factors, an example is evident with inadequate farm production indices, as well as the fact that they also

produce extra cash from non-agricultural engagements (Brandth and Haugen, 2007). An expanded agricultural enterprise could easily yield increased supplementary or primary income to the farmers. Such income will be directly or indirectly spent in communities where farmlands are located. The good financial influence of agritourism is not only felt by the farm owners' relatives and families, but there is a multiplier impact on the indigenous community, which is significant with respect to their contribution to indigenous markets via the generation of local employment as well as sales taxes (Veeck *et al.*, 2006). In the same vein, an expanded agricultural enterprise that captures tourism engagement implies the creation of new or improved facilities on the farm. Olawuyi (2024) noted that a typical tourism site can attract people from different areas based on the available or new facilities at such sites. The availability of sufficient infrastructure remains a fundamental unit of the agritourism sector, which could be discarded, particularly concerning satisfying the desires of those visiting from cities (Kunasekaran *et al.*, 2012).

### Theoretical Underpinning and Conclusion

The theory of critical success factors was used to underpin the discussion of this study. Part of the early description of critical success factors was made available by Rockart (1979) and cited in Malesu and Syrovátka (2024), who described critical success factors as restricted sections capable of providing superlative performance for business enterprises. Musinguzi (2023) noted that the definition of critical success factors revolves around the sections or activities needed for a business entity to attain set aims and successes. Rodrigues *et al.* (2021) asserted that the critical success factors for MSMEs are inclusive strategic plans, manager/management capacities, entrepreneurship and innovativeness, human resource collaborations, and financial capabilities. The theory connotes the presence or availability of parameter(s) that could translate an area/business/entity into success. The discussion of this study bodaciously revealed that agritourism is a critical success factor for rural development based on the following deductions: it is capable of enhancing arts and crafts of tourism business enterprises, it positively influences the host community, it is capable of generating significant revenues to the investor and host community, it is a fit rural development template that could be engaged for the diversity of the Nigerian economy, it has the capacity of generating employment for the youth, it is capable of improving the livelihood of the indigenous communities, it is capable of propagating agricultural procedures' knowledge skills and attitudes, it has the capacity of providing materials/facilities as well as contents which could be engaged of farming procedures, ultimately, it could lead to developed infrastructure, especially in the light of investment in transport business, lodges, as well as tourists' ancillary services. Agritourism, being a substantive critical success factor, can achieve the foregoing for and in rural areas. Chit *et al.* (2023) noted that critical success factors are innovations in terms of capabilities, connection of institutions, governance, and managerial experiences in business organisations. Babandi and Barjoyai (2023) avowed that critical success factors are the components required of a system to be operationalised to achieve success. They are qualitative indicators whose applications could be deciphered based on their location and industry. Hence, agritourism can serve as both an internal and an external rural development indicator. Malesu and Syrovátka (2024) noted that studies on critical success factors for small business entities have pointed out broad categories of indicators, which range from external to internal indicators, which could be connected with the success of enterprises. The robust discussion has made it clear that agritourism is a major driver of rural development in Nigeria. Agritourism can neither be disregarded nor discounted in a rural area, as long as there are average-sized and vast farms in such a rural area. This is because the more farms are located in the rural areas, the more people flock to the rural areas for different forms of agribusiness and educational trips. Therefore, farmers' investments into agritourism will attract

more people to the rural area, lead to more infrastructural development capable of satisfying tourists, result in more spending of tourists that will be distributed and redistributed in the rural area, and finally lead to a facelift of the environment to satisfy the aesthetic desires of tourists.



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