

A Study on Tourist Push and Pull Motives to Visit Farm Tourism Sites in Kerala

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Abstract - Farm tourism has grown in popularity in Kerala, India, attracting a diverse range of tourists looking for authentic and immersive agricultural experiences. This research investigates the push and pull factors influencing farm tourists in Kerala. A convenience sampling technique was used to collect the sample of 200 tourists randomly selected from various parts of Kerala. Statistical tools such as simple percentages, chi-square test, factor analysis, and weighted average method were used to analyze the collected data. Understanding these factors allows tourism stakeholders and local communities to better tailor their offerings to meet the needs and desires of farm tourists, maximizing the potential benefits of this growing niche market.

Keywords: Farm, Tourist, Pull, Push factors, Motives, Desires, Practices, Influencing, etc.,

I. INTRODUCTION

Farm tourism, also known as agritourism or agrotourism, involves tourists participating in agricultural activities, experiencing rural life, and learning about a specific region's farming practices. Kerala has experienced a growth in farm tourism in recent years, thanks to its lush green landscapes and abundant biodiversity. Despite its growing popularity, there has been little research into the encouraging elements for tourists to participate in farm-based experiences. The purpose of this research is to fill that gap by identifying the push and pull factors that influence farm tourists' decisions to experience Kerala.

Kerala has captured the attention of the world tourism area. Kerala's tourism brand is among India's top 100 and has been awarded the highly coveted 'Super Brand' status. Kerala has been named 'One of National Geographic Traveler's 50 must-see destinations,' it is also a 'partner state' of the World Tourism and Travel Council (Harrison & Husbands, 1996). While tourism initiatives date back to the late 1980s, the state government has only been focusing on tourism development since 1995 (Crompton, 1979).

In 1995, several tourism planning and development initiatives were introduced after the tourism policy (Dann, 1977). Since 1995, Kerala has taken important steps, and the

results show its impact today (Lea, 1993). Farm tourism is a recent development in Kerala (Gurumoorthy et al., 2019). As an agrarian state, Kerala has great prospects for Farm Tourism with little additional investment (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1997). According to the reports, Kerala has 30.22 lakh hectares of gross harvesting area, which accounts for 56.78% of the state's total land area. Tea, coffee, rubber, pepper, cardamom, and ginger plantations cover more than a third of the cropped area, and coconut plantations cover another third. Paddy cultivation covers approximately 350,000 lakh hectares of land in the state.

It is quite possible to convert potential cropped areas of the state into tourist attractions with minimal intercession, thereby transferring tourism profits directly to farmers (Sánchez-Ancajima et al., 2024). The different plans pursued now are developing Kerala's farms/plantations to attract visitors by presenting an enjoyable picture of the farm and agriculture, to revitalize Kerala's agriculture sector through tourism (Assegid & Ketema, 2023; Ganapathy & Thangam, 2017). The government's decision to allow 5% of farmland for tourism purposes has been a boon to the tourism industry (Khaydarova et al., 2024). The state is planning numerous projects to prepare Kerala's farms or plantations to entice globe trotters by showing a glowing picture of the farm and agriculture, energizing the agriculture sector through tourism, and increasing tourist traffic (The Hindu, 2012).

II. BENEFITS OF FARM TOURISM

Farm Tourism has the potential to transform traditional agriculture's economic landscape. The advantages of farm tourism are numerous. It would provide numerous forthright and secondary benefits to farmers and rural residents.

Advantages: - Farmer employment opportunities

- Farmers can supplement their income to protect against income fluctuations.
- Cultural sea changes in city and village populations, such as common and individual ethics.

- Contacts with urban people can help farmers to enhance their life conditions.
- Benefits to the city people, as they can experience village life and agricultural farmactivities.
- It promotes a better lifestyle and agrarian development.
- Assist in reducing the impact on other conventional tourist destinations.

Factors Influencing Push and Pull Factors Pull Factors

- **Natural Beauty:** Kerala's lush green landscapes, picturesque hills, and backwaters draw visitors, who are looking for a peaceful and scenic environment (d'Amore, 1993).
- **Traditional Farming Practices:** Tourists are drawn to experiences and are eager to learn about the age-old farming techniques and agricultural traditions.
- **Fresh and Organic Produce:** The allure of tasting and purchasing fresh and organic fruits, vegetables, and spices straight from the farms.
- **Cultural Immersion:** Farm tourism allows visitors to immerse themselves in Kerala's rich culture, traditions, and healthy lifestyle (The Hindu, 2006).
- **Eco-Friendly experiences:** Environmentally conscious tourists are drawn to farm tourism's sustainable and eco-friendly practices.
- **Escape from Urban Life:** Travellers take relief in the peace of rural settings as a diversion from the rush of city life.

Push Factors

- **Desire for Unique Experiences:** Tourists are motivated by the opportunity to participate in something different and authentic, away from typical tourist attractions.
- **Curiosity about Agriculture:** The opportunity to learn about the farming process and its significance in the region's economy and culture.
- **Growing Agro-tourism Interest:** There is a growing awareness and interest in agro-tourism as a distinct and fulfilling travel option.
- **Seeking Relaxation:** The allure of a relaxed and leisurely experience, away from the stresses of everyday life.
- **Wellness and Health Benefits:** Some tourists are drawn to rural areas because of the perceived health benefits of organic produce and fresh air.
- **Supporting Local Communities:** Tourists may

be motivated by a desire to support local farmers and communities through responsible tourism practices (Pearce et al., 1998).

Statement of the Problem

Finding the push and pull elements that influence travelers' decisions to pick farm tourism as their Kerala vacation experience is the first aim of this study (Thangam et al., 2020). The push factors are internal motivations or forces generated by tourists, whereas the pull factors are external elements inherent in the destination that attract tourists (Uysal & Jurowski, 1994). Understanding these factors allows stakeholders to devise appropriate strategies for promoting and sustaining farm tourism in Kerala, promoting rural development and community empowerment.

Objectives

- To determine the farm tourism scenario in Kerala.
- To identify the push and pull factors influencing tourist satisfaction levels in Kerala.
- To study the factors influencing tourist satisfaction levels in Kerala.

Research Methodology

Area of the study:

Kerala was chosen for this study.

Sampling Design

A convenient sampling technique was used to select the sample of 200 tourists from Kerala.

Data Collection

Primary Data

The study is entirely based on primary data gathered through a well-defined interview schedule. The study was carried out using a pre-planned interview schedule.

Secondary Data

Secondary data is gathered by consulting journals, articles, and magazines, as well as various relevant websites.

Analysis and Interpretation

Based on the data collected from the tourists, analysis and interpretation were performed.

Further, the following specific tools were used.

- Simple Percentage
- Chi-square Analysis
- Factor Analysis

- Weighted Average Method

Limitations of the Study

- This study is restricted to Kerala. Its findings and recommendations may not apply to all regions.
- Time and cost are the factors that have limited the sample size to 200.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Deepthi & Jancy Davy, (2019), examine the different kinds of travel motivations that affect the choices made by visitors to agritourism destinations. This research contributes theoretically to the understanding of visitor motivational expectations by addressing the motivating variables. It also proposes practical implications for the establishment and marketing of agritourism.

Valencia et al., (2022), study looked at the correlation between visitors' motives for visiting farm tourism zones and their preferred activities. According to the study, when it comes to visiting farm tourism destinations, travellers have stronger pull reasons than push motives.

Thakur & Monga, (2022), the purpose of the study is to assess the several facets of rural agricultural tourism accommodations that influence visitors' levels of happiness or dissatisfaction. It also aims to inform agritourism operators about the requirements and expectations of visitors to enhance the quality of services offered. The research findings back up suggestions made by government agencies and agritourism operators to increase customer satisfaction and promote rural and cultural tourism more broadly (Kokkranikal & Morrison, 2002).

Dewandini, (2021), states that findings indicate Kampung Flory Agritourism is capable of satisfying customers. Meanwhile, Spearman rank correlation study results demonstrated that product quality, service quality, emotions, cost, and convenience are all related to consumer happiness. On the other hand, the cost of admission has no relationship with customer happiness (Cohen, 1972).

Moraru, (2019), the primary goal of this research is to identify the factors influencing tourists to select agritourism as a type of leisure using worldwide literature. The correlations between visitors' preferences for agritourism activities and their motivations demonstrate that they are interested in activities that are congruent with the initial reasons that prompted their decision to engage in agritourism.

Research Gap

Since accurate studies on farm tourism, especially the pull and push motives in customer satisfaction in farm tourism, were very scarce, this attempt to determine the motives and motivation of farm tourism in Kerala became very relevant. This present study is an endeavor it fills the gap in this area. Consequently, the gap can be addressed by this attempt by the researcher, encouraging others to focus on this area.

IV. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

TABLE I ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Variables	Distribution	Number	Frequency
Gender	Male	112	56
	Female	88	44
Age	Below 30 years	82	41
	30 – 50 years	66	33
	Above 50 years	52	26
Marital Status	Married	106	53
	Unmarried	94	47
Educational Qualification	Up to HSC	72	36
	Degree/Diploma	80	40
	Others	48	24
Monthly Income	Below Rs.25,000	60	30
	Rs.25,001 – 50,000	82	41
	Above Rs.50,000	58	29

Source: Primary data

Table I The demographic profile of farm tourists in Kerala is shown in the table. Gender makes up 56% of male tourists. The age of the tourist reveals that 41% are under the age of 30. According to marital status, 53% are married. According to educational qualifications, 40% have a degree or diploma. The Monthly earnings of tourists show that 41% of the earnings range from Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 50,000 every month.

TABLE II FACTORS INFLUENCING TOURIST PUSH AND PULL MOTIVES TO VISIT FARM TOURISM SITES

Factors	Statements	Factor Loadings	Square Loading	Total	Eigen Value	% of Variance Explained
Pull factors (0.937)	Nature Beauty	0.824	0.679	4.089	11.542	22.621
	Traditional farming practices	0.811	0.658			
	Fresh and organic produce	0.877	0.769			
	Culture immersion	0.775	0.601			
	Escape from urban life	0.785	0.616			
	Eco-friendly experiences	0.875	0.766			
Push factors (0.867)	A desire for unique experiences	0.625	0.391	1.768	5.265	9.729
	Curiosity about Agriculture	0.845	0.714			
	Growing interest in Agro-tourism	0.524	0.275			
	Relaxation	0.623	0.388			

Source: Primary data

Table II shows that two factors were identified out of the total variance. The influence of two factors on the pull and push factors of farm tourists in Kerala was revealed by factor analysis. The scores obtained were greater than 0.775, indicating that the statements have a relatively high degree of internal consistency and acceptance. Pull factors with Eigen Values of 11.542 and 9.720 and reliability of 0.937, are the most important factors for this study. The next important factor extracted through factor analysis is push factors, which have an Eigen Value of 5.265, a percentage of the variance of 9.719, and a reliability coefficient, of 0.867. The factor analysis confirms that all the factors and statements have a

significant impact on the pull and push factors of farm tourists in Kerala.

TABLE III KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.512
Approx. Chi-square	231.81
Bartlett's test of Sphericity	55
Sig.	0.000

Table III shows that, 5.1, KMO and Bartlett's test signify the value i.e. 0.512, is greater than the value 0.5. Bartlett signifies the connection between correlation tables.

TABLE IV CHI-SQUARE TEST

Significant Relationship between Demographic Profile and Satisfaction Level of the Tourist

Factors	Level of Attitude			Total	χ^2 Value	Table Value	Remarks
	Low	Moderate	High				
Gender							
Male	35	42	35	112	1.483	5.991	NS
Female	22	40	26	88			
Age (Years)							
Less than 30 years	24	33	25	82	7.802	9.488	NS
30 – 50 years	24	17	25	66			
Above 50 years	25	15	12	52			
Educational Qualification							
Up to HSC	20	30	22	72	2.605	9.488	NS
Degree/Diploma	26	29	25	80			
Others	15	23	10	48			
Monthly Income							
Less than Rs.25,000	22	18	20	60	8.233	9.488	NS
Rs.25,001 – 50,000	30	35	17	82			
More than Rs.50,000	12	28	18	58			
Marital Status							
Married	37	41	28	106	1.032	5.991	NS
Single	30	33	31	94			

Source: Primary data

Table IV shows that at the 5% level of significance, age, educational qualification, monthly income, and marital status are not significant. This table shows that there is no correlation

between these demographic factors and tourist satisfaction levels in Kerala.

TABLE V TOURIST MOTIVATION TOWARDS FARM TOURISM

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	Totalscore(sum of wxi)	Mean Score(weighted average)	Rank
Nature beauty	44	82	52	12	10			
wx1	44	164	156	48	50	462	17.55	5
Fresh and organic produce	12	122	52	4	10			
wx2	44	188	144	16	50	442	16.79	4
Traditional farming practices	60	50	56	18	16			
wx3	60	100	168	72	80	480	18.24	6
Eco-friendly experiences	40	116	44	0	0			
Wx4	40	232	132	0	0	404	15.35	1
Escape from urban life	48	82	68	2	0			
Wx5	48	164	204	8	0	424	16.11	3
Cultural immersion	44	96	56	4	0			
Wx6	44	192	168	16	0	420	15.96	2

Table V The ranking of tourist motivation towards farm tourism is revealed. The selected sample tourist ranked eco-friendly experiences first, with a total score of 404 and a mean score of 15.35. 'Cultural immersion' came in second with a total score of 420 and a mean score of 15.96. 'Escape from

Urban Life' finished third with a total score of 424 and a mean score of 16.11. With a total score of 442 and a mean score of 16.79, 'Fresh and Organic Produce' was ranked fourth. 'Nature Beauty' came in fifth place with a total point of 462 and a mean score of 17.55. 'Traditional Farming Practices'

finished last with a total score of 480 and a mean score of 18.24.

V. SUGGESTIONS

- According to the data, 56 percent of the total tourists belong to the male gender. As there has been an increase in the number of female tourist groups in recent times, special activities can be planned and executed by the farm as attractive involvement in this field.
- As most of the total tourists belong to an average income group, activities can be planned in such a way that the farm exclusively rewards the tourists with fresh organic products from the farm.
- Student group tourists can be invited to have a firsthand experience of farming, as most urban areas, where educational institutions are established, have a dearth of farms and orchards.
- The data analysis shows that pull factors like tranquil settings and cultural experiences motivate tourists to visit rural farms. So, the basic amenities of such areas where the farms are situated can be improved. Better transportation facilities, hospitals, and other medical facilities, safe vehicle parking lots, etc, should be planned which will enhance the quality experience offered by the farm.
- When we implement modernization, care must be taken not to destroy the essence of the rural environment and cultural experience, as this is a major pull factor. Hence, careful planning for an amalgamation of ethnicity and modern facilities should be made available by the Farm Tourism providers to attract tourists from urban areas.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study's findings shed light on the major push and pull factors influencing farm tourists' decisions to visit Kerala. The desire for authentic and unique experiences which can be an escape from urban life, and an interest in sustainable and eco-friendly tourism are all push factors. The pull factors, on the other hand, include the tranquil natural environment, cultural richness, traditional farming practices, and the warm hospitality provided by local communities. Understanding these factors can assist tourism operators and policymakers in designing tailored farm tourism experiences that cater to tourist preferences and expectations, maximizing the sector's economic and socio-cultural benefits.

Future Scope

The study presents the potential for development in behavioral intentions, expectations, and experience, the impact of farm tourism on host communities, farm tourism entrepreneurship, and the role of farm tourism in sustainable development.

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