

AGRITOURISM MARKETING DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY AND TYPOLOGY INVESTIGATION. THE CASE OF ARCADIA

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During last decades, agritourism started to grow significantly in Mediterranean area mostly due to its favourable climate. Within literature, there are many international studies that discuss the concept of agritourism in various ways. Wide-ranging definitions and labels concerning agritourism still create confusion as there is not a transparent and basic understanding of the characteristics that define it. This paper provides a comprehensive overview on behaviour patterns of agritourists by combining these patterns with the activity-based taxonomy of all definitions of agritourism into a structured framework. The research field of the case study is Arcadia, a prefecture in Peloponnese. The study contributes to the investigation of information sourcing behaviour in tourists' travel decision process and offers a comprehensive framework that can be used as a basis for more informed debate and discussion, as well as for further empirical research in future.

Keywords: Agritourism, Tourism Distribution Channels, Typology Information Search Behaviour, Tourism Marketing

JEL Classification: *L83, M1, O1*

INTRODUCTION

Agritourism has been recognized world-wide since the early twentieth century (Busby & Rendle, 2000; McKenzie & Wysocki, 2002; Wicks & Merrett, 2003). The development of agritourism was specifically fostered when countries established a set of policies consisting of specific



guidelines, obligations, and incentives in order to encourage farm diversification through tourism and hospitality services. (Che, Veeck, & Veeck, 2005; Hegarty & Przeborska, 2005; Kizos & Iosifides, 2007; Sonnino, 2004). One example is the LEADER program that offers grants for the promotion of rural development to farmers of the member-states of European Union (E.U.) (Caballe,1999; Cawley & Gillmor, 2008; European Court of Auditors, 2010, p.100). The attempt to understand any phenomenon requires mostly a basic conceptual understanding of the fundamental characteristics that defines it. A review of existing literature shows that there isn't any specific definition for agritourism. One can discover a wide variety of labels and definitions regarding agritourism, such as agrotourism, farm tourism, farm-based tourism, and rural tourism, (Barbieri & Mshenga, 2008; Roberts & Hall, 2001; Wall, 2000), (Iakovidou, 1997; McGehee & Kim, 2004; Sharpley & Sharpley, 1997). This results in a complex structure that combines the agriculture and tourism principles, especially when there is no distinct elucidation regarding the actual meaning of them.

While the tourism literature evidences that several factors influence travellers' behavior to consume tourism products (Lepp and Gibson, 2008; Hsu,Tsai, and Wu, 2009), to date, investigation into the determinants of agritourism consumption remains inadequate in the literature; for example, the relative importance of the various information sources (ICT sources included) used by travellers is not yet systematically analyzed. Given the increasing importance of this particular market segment for destinations, additional research is needed to understand the behavior of agritourists in an attempt to bring further theoretical and practical contributions to this field of study (Ramkissoon, Uysal and Brown, 2011). This article provides a comprehensive overview on behavior patterns of agritourists to Arcadia, Greece, and contributes to the study of information sourcing behavior in their travel decision process. It also provides a basis for channel members, especially suppliers, to assess their distribution strategies.

The research took place in Arcadia, a historic land of intense and continuous presence from antiquity to the Byzantine and modern history periods. In the European countries after the Renaissance, the "Arcadian ideal" means a dream of escape from the disturbed world of violence and exploitation and return to a world of eternal innocence and tranquillity that would be based on the good operation and fair competition of its members. The study adopts a dynamic situational perspective (Bieger and Laesser, 2002), combining characteristics of agritourists with characteristics of their trip, offering a better understanding in how tourism

distribution channels are used by agritourists and by formulating relevant hypotheses analysed below.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Meanings are the representations of a given activity developed by every person according to their background and experiences (Coulson, 2001, p. 320; Sharpley & Stone, 2010, p. 304). Tourism meanings are usually the result of any natural or social contact that takes place during a given experience (Coulson, 2001, p. 320; Greer, Donnelly, & Rickly, 2008) and can vary according to specific contextual factors including time and place (Greer et al., 2008). According to aforementioned, stakeholders can shape the meanings for agritourism so it is vital to develop successful definitions of tourism-related activities both from the supply and demand sides. (Gilbert, 2003; Stratigea, 2014). Apart from that, up to date research has assisted us to understand which bases can be used by tourism destinations to effectively segment tourism markets and these efforts have largely centred upon building tourist profiles for a destination using visitor data (Frochot, 2005).

Trying to analyze the existing theoretical framework for identifying the meanings of agritourism, the sections following deconstruct several definitions of agritourism and present a discussion of the efforts put forth by Phillip et al. (2010) to construct a broad definition of agritourism.

Deconstructing Agritourism Definitions

Definitions of agritourism are wide-ranging in the literature. The discrepancies found among the various agritourism definitions relate to three issues: (1) the type of setting (e.g., farm, any agricultural setting); (2) the authenticity of the agricultural facility or the experience; and (3) the types of activities involved (e.g., lodging, education). A fourth ontological issue was proposed to be added, related to the need of “travel”, given the use of the word “tourism” (agritourism) in its label (Arroyo, Barbieri, & Rich, 2012).

The type of setting where the activity occurs forms a big difference of agritourism definitions. The majority of studies claim that agritourism must be carried out on a farm (Carpio et al., 2008; Ilbery, Bowler, Clark, Crockett, & Shaw, 1998; McKenzie & Wysocki, 2002). But, there are few studies discussing different type of agricultural settings, such as farms, ranches (e.g., Che et al., 2005; Tew & Barbieri, 2012) or the inclusion of some types of off-farm facilities, such as farmers’ markets, where various

kinds of farm products are taken away from the agricultural production setting to be sold (Wicks & Merrett, 2003; Wilson, Thilmany, & Sullins, 2006). Furthermore, there are different meanings used to define agricultural establishments, especially those related to "farm". European Union defines a farm as an agricultural holding, meaning "economic unit under a single management engaged in agricultural production activities" and which can also engage in non-agricultural activities (OECD, 2001). Finally, thanks to academic developments over last decades there is a clear separation between terms "agritourism" and "rural tourism" (Colton & Bissix, 2005; Kizos & Iosifides, 2007; McGehee & Kim, 2004).

A second commonly found disagreement surrounds the authenticity paradigm related to the agricultural facility and to the experience offered (Arroyo, Barbieri, & Rich, 2012). McGehee (2007) based her agritourism development framework in the U.S. on Weaver and Fennell (1997)'s definition which explicitly excludes activities and experiences that are developed in non-working farms because they deem necessary the commercial aspect involved in this activity. Furthermore, various North American (Lobo et al., 1999; McGehee & Kim, 2004; Nickerson et al., 2001; Tew & Barbieri, 2012) and European (Hegarty & Przeborska, 2005; Kizos & Iosifides, 2007; Sonnino, 2004) studies claim that having a "working" agricultural setting is linked to recognizing this activity as one form of farm entrepreneurial diversification (Barbieri, Mahoney, & Butler, 2008). Phillip et al. (2010) expanded the authenticity debate in the context of tourist experiences by adopting MacCannell's (1973) "front" and "back" regions of authenticity theory. The particular study refers to the difference between providing the visitors an indirect experience of agricultural activities (e.g., through demonstrations, models) from a direct engagement in an agricultural process (e.g., harvesting).

A third definitional disagreement relates to the activities that agritourism comprises which is not surprising given the extent of inconsistencies related to its meaning. Such inconsistencies may be geopolitical as they seem to be associated to government policies (Arroyo, Barbieri, & Rich, 2012).

Finally, Arroyo et al. (2012) suggested the addition of an ontological discussion surrounding the definition of agritourism to the preceding debate in relation to the need of "travel", especially because the term "tourism" is embedded in the label most commonly used in the literature to depict this activity (agritourism). None of the agritourism definitions reviewed refers to the need of travel however, some of them may imply some sort of travel when mainly referring to farm-stays or entailing any type of accommodations.

A Typology-based Definition of Agritourism

The aforementioned discrepancies motivated Phillip et al. (2010) to propose a definition of agritourism through the development of an activity-based taxonomy. Figure 1 illustrates the proposed typology for defining agritourism.

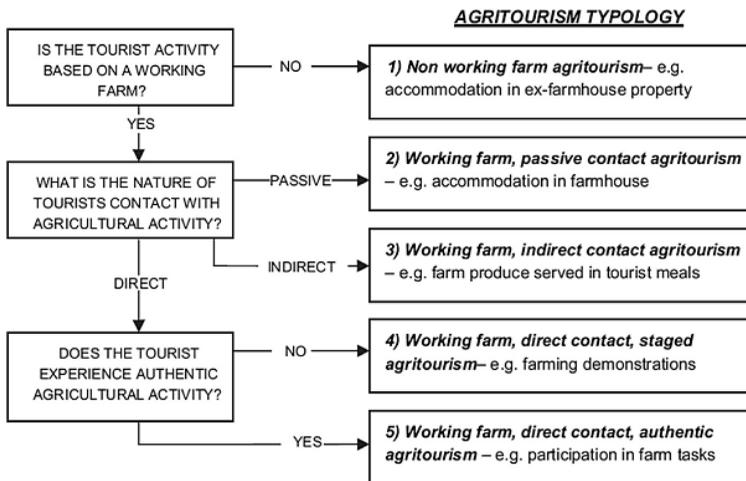


Figure 1. A typology for defining agritourism (Phillip et al., 2010)

The *Non-Working Farm agritourism (NWF)* typology refers to activities where the non-working farm only serves for scenery purposes (e.g., bird-watching on an old mill). Although the majority of the literature excludes from definition of agritourism the tourism not based on a working farm, there are cases that tourists participate in agritourism though other different ways. Examples of NWF agritourism includes farm heritage attractions, tourism activities based on converted farms (e.g. horse riding) or agricultural practices that form part of the tourist product.

The *Working Farm, Passive Contact agritourism (WFPC)* typology refers to activities that allows farmers to continue their agricultural activities without having interferences by the visitors (e.g., attending a wedding in a vineyard).

The *Working Farm, Indirect Contact agritourism (WFIC)* typology refers to activities that are more directly related to farm procedures, although the nature of the visitor's contact focuses more on the

agricultural products rather than the practice of farming itself (e.g., enjoying fresh produce or meals on site). A number of authors focus mostly on hospitality and accommodation components. Examples of WFIC agritourism is the consumption of agricultural products served in accommodation or café's or through sale to tourists at farm shops.

The *Working Farm, Direct Contact, Staged agritourism (WFDCS)* typology refers to activities through which visitors experience agricultural functions but through staged scenarios and predetermined tours (e.g. touring an operating cider mill). Other examples of WFDCS agritourism include farming demonstrations (e.g. milking cows) and direct physical contact with farm animals (e.g. feeding or petting animals).

Last but not least, the *Working Farm, Direct Contact, Authentic agritourism (WFDCA)* typology refers to activities where tourists fully participate in farm tasks. Visitors work and contribute to the farm economy in return for accommodation and food. There are limited opportunities one to experience WFDCA agritourism so there are not many examples discussed in the literature.

TOURISM DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS AND INFORMATION SEARCH BEHAVIOR

Tourism distribution channels' purposes and functions (such as information, combination and travel arrangement services), have received unequal attention from researchers examining the visitors' perspective. This is especially the case with questions of information search, in which a large discrete body of work has developed as an interest in consumer behaviour. One distinction of tourism distribution channels is being either direct or indirect in character. Direct channels normally link suppliers and consumers without the aid of channel intermediaries. Such channels normally involve suppliers developing and maintaining direct information and sales contacts with consumers in specific target market areas. Indirect distribution channels (eg. travel agents, tour operators and wholesalers), involve a wide range of organizations communicating and selling products to consumer markets on behalf of tourism suppliers and destinations (Gee, Makens and Choy, 1989; Michie and Sullivan, 1990). All of these channel operators have the potential to significantly influence the travel patterns and behaviors of specific travel markets.

There is no clear answer to the question which type of channel is better to be used and it is important for tourism suppliers and destination marketing organizations to understand the product preferences, the prior experiences, perceived risks, travel package price thresholds, use of

unique or novel destinations, and market support needs of channel partners and their customers prior to forming their marketing strategy (Hsieh and O'Leary, 1993; Haukeland, 1995; Snepenger et al., 1990; Calantone and Mazanec, 1991). Generally, the closer the destination is to the consumer in physical, product awareness and experiential terms, the more direct the channel of distribution becomes. Frequently though, strategic information concerning the product preferences of potential channel partners and their customers is not available (Murray, 1991).

Understanding how customers acquire information is important for marketing management decisions, because a travel planning process includes multiple decisions and interactions among decisions (Fesenmaier and Jeng, 2000; Pan and Fesenmaier, 2003). A plan is a traveller's reasoned attempt to recognize and define goals, consider alternative actions that might achieve the goals, judge which actions are most likely to succeed, and act on the basis of those decisions (Hoc, 1988). This definition of planning includes all information search behaviours, information uses or applications, purchase behaviours, actual trip behaviours, and the learning from all these experiences.

The Internet has intensified the complexity of the travel decision-making process, as it has become an important channel for travellers' information search (Gretzel, Fesenmaier, and O'Leary, 2006; Gursoy and McLeary 2003; Pan and Fesenmaier 2006; Xiang, Weber, and Fesenmaier 2008 Jun H.S., Vogt A.C., Mackay J. K. ,2007), creating an environment whereby online information providers such as tourist boards, hotel and resort websites, travel agents, bloggers and magazines actively compete for attention to attract searchers and ultimately, bookers.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

All the previously mentioned approaches demonstrate the complexity of the agritourism phenomenon, illustrate a range of approaches in its typology, and emphasize a concern with determinants, information sources, decision making, and segmentation. The overall goal of the present research was to combine research about information both at the tourism destination and before the trip, question whether segmentation based on the information search behavior is an appropriate way to develop marketing strategies and target marketing communications for agritourism and analyze the importance of information at destination from the tourists' perspective. The specific objectives of the study were firstly, an analysis of the sociodemographic characteristics. Secondly, an analysis of their trip characteristics: trip organization (package holiday/self guided

holiday), time used to make the trip decision, type of accommodation, travel companion and booking. Thirdly, an analysis of their information sourcing behaviour, based on internal and external information sources, and ICT use in particular: the Internet, the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) and the Personal Digital assistant (PDA).

Bearing in mind the objectives of this study the hypotheses formulated state the following:

(H1) The socio-demographic characteristics of the agritourist (gender, age, education level, occupation, nationality), differ from the characteristics of the other tourists in the area

(H2) Agritourists' trip characteristics differ from the characteristics of other tourists in the area

(H3) The purpose of the trip (agritourism) has an effect on the way tourists seek information.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

This investigation was designed to further understand the tourism market in the province of Arcadia, Greece, over a period of 12 months, between July 20130 and July 20141 to eliminate seasonality. The survey, included Greek and foreign tourists in the region. In cases where the hotel owner or manager agreed to collect the data for the study, the survey questionnaires were distributed to the survey sites, and respondents freely participated in answering the survey questionnaire after they had stayed in the hotel for at least one night. Then, researchers visited and collected the survey questionnaires from each hotel accommodation.

Data were collected by using a four-page self-administered questionnaire primarily designed to gather information on the subjects' general motivations for travel. A total of 3500 questionnaires were given to tourists and consequently, 768 usable questionnaires were collected, which leads to the response rate of 21.94%.

Analysis

In order to identify special characteristics of the sub-population of tourists that have replied positively to the question on how likely they are to be interested in visiting agricultural sites in their vacation, we have separated this group from the rest of respondents and have constructed the following sub-groups for subsequent analysis:

- Group A (N = 286): ‘Very likely’ or ‘Likely’ to be interested in visiting agricultural sites
- Group B (N = 482): ‘Very unlikely’ or ‘Unlikely’ or ‘Neither likely nor unlikely’ to be interested in visiting agricultural sites

The survey data were coded and analyzed using R, an open-source statistical package. Descriptive-statistics analysis was applied to the collected data to explore the overall sample profile. Chi-square tests have been conducted to verify whether differences between the two sub-groups, as regards particular characteristics of the population of tourists, are due to chance variation or reveal some statistically significant trend. Chi-squared tests were chosen for use in this exploratory investigation to aid in making inference about the uniform distribution (or not) of the two sub-groups in relation to demographic, trip characteristics, selection of information sources for their journey and degree of satisfaction from the use of these information sources.

In the following paragraphs we analyse the special characteristics of the two sub-groups.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics

The initial chi-square analyses were conducted to determine differences among the Group A and Group B tourists’ gender, age, education, occupation and nationality. Results in Table 1 reveal a significant chi-square only for the variable Nationality/Origin (), suggesting that nationality is not independent of the tourists’ reported preference/interest in visiting agricultural places in their vacation.

As a result, figures on Table 1 reveal that it is more likely for Greek than foreign tourists to show preference in visiting agricultural places in their vacation.

Table 1. Chi-Square analysis of demographic characteristics of tourists who find interest in visiting agricultural places in their vacation

<i>Very likely to be interested (Group A)</i>		<i>Very unlikely to be interested opinion (Group B)</i>	
n	%	n	%
286		482	

Gender						<i>X-squared = 0.1279, df = 1, p-value = 0.7206</i>
Male	123	43	200	41.5		
Female	156	54.5	271	56.2		
Age						<i>X-squared = 1.9726, df = 5, p-value = 0.853</i>
15-25	37	12.9	75	15.6		
25-35	84	29.4	152	31.5		
35-45	68	23.8	109	22.6		
45-55	52	18.2	83	17.2		
55-65	27	9.4	38	7.9		
over 65	11	3.8	16	3.3		
Higher level of education						<i>X-squared = 9.1713, df = 4, p-value = 0.05696</i>
Primary	12	4.2	15	3.1		
Secondary/high school	55	19.2	132	27.4		
Tertiary	116	40.6	195	40.5		
Postgraduate Studies	62	21.7	104	21.6		
Other	27	9.4	27	5.6		
Occupation						<i>X-squared = 9.7576, df = 9, p-value = 0.3705</i>
Scientific, free professional, technical and related worker	90	31.5	126	26.1		
Administrative and managerial worker	41	14.3	71	14.7		
Clerical worker	56	19.6	87	18		
Trade and sales worker	15	5.2	37	7.7		
Farmer, fisherman and related worker	5	1.7	9	1.9		
Craftsman, worker, operator	18	6.3	21	4.4		
Pensioner	15	5.2	23	4.8		
Housework	10	3.5	27	5.6		
Unemployed, looking for job	12	4.2	22	4.6		
Student	21	7.3	55	11.4		
Nationality/origin						<i>X-squared = 11.6626, df = 1, p-value = 0.0006377</i>
Foreign tourists	26	9.1	89	18.5		
Native (Greek) tourists	260	90.9	393	81.5		

Trip Characteristics

The tests on the trip characteristics of tourists in Group A and Group B, as displayed in Table 2, reveal that it is more likely for tourists of Group A compared to tourists of Group B to consult a travel agent to book accommodation but less common to book it by themselves directly from the producer via the Internet.

Table 2. Chi-Square analysis of trip characteristics of tourists who find interest in visiting agricultural places in their vacation

	<i>Very likely to be interested (Group A)</i>		<i>Very unlikely to be interested opinion (Group B)</i>		
	n	%	n	%	
	286		482		
Trip organization					
Package tour/holiday	19	6.6	22	4.6	<i>X-squared = 1.888, df = 2, p-value = 0.3891</i>
Partial package tour/holiday	33	11.5	55	11.4	
Self-guided tour/holiday	224	78.3	402	83.4	
Final decision for the trip was taken					
Less than 1 month before departure	196	68.5	299	62	<i>X-squared = 3.467, df = 2, p-value = 0.1767</i>
1 to 6 months before the departure	66	23.1	138	28.6	
More than 6 months before the departure	21	7.3	40	8.3	
Type of accommodation					
Hotel/club (4*/5*)	71	24.8	140	29	<i>X-squared = 10.9752, df = 6, p-value = 0.08915</i>
Agritourist accommodation B&B	51	17.8	87	18	
Friends & Relatives	25	8.7	24	5	
Hotel/club (2*/3*)	63	22	120	24.9	
Holiday Home	27	9.4	37	7.7	
Camping (including tent, trailer, mobile home)	7	2.4	29	6	
Combination of the above	20	7	33	6.8	
Travel with					
On your own	24	8.4	22	4.6	<i>X-squared = 5.094, df = 2, p-value = 0.07831</i>
With one or more friends	140	49	243	50.4	
With your family	114	39.9	211	43.8	
Book accommodation through					
Travel agent	38	13.3	37	7.7	<i>X-squared = 10.1973, df = 3, p-value = 0.01696</i>
By yourself directly from the producer via the telephone	171	59.8	295	61.2	
By yourself directly from the producer via the Internet	23	8	64	13.3	
By other person	47	16.4	79	16.4	

Information Search Behaviour of Agritourists and Degree of Satisfaction

The aim of this part of the analysis is to explore the tourists' habits in what regards the preference they show in the selection of information sources for their journey. Comparisons between the two sub-groups (Group A and Group B) have been conducted using the chi-squared test (Table 3) and a significant chi-square has been derived for the source only: Radio and TV broadcasts (). Figures in Table 3 reveal that it is more likely for tourists in Group A to use the Radio and TV broadcasts than tourist in Group B.

Information sources are displayed in Table 3 in descending order of preference for tourists in Group A.

Table 3. Chi-Square analysis of booking characteristics of tourists who find interest in visiting agricultural places in their vacation

	<i>Very likely to be interested (Group A)</i>		<i>Very unlikely to be interested opinion (Group B)</i>		
	n	%	n	%	
Total	286		482		
Recommendations from friends and relatives	149	52.1	266	55.2	<i>X-squared = 0.5707, df = 1, p-value = 0.45</i>
INTERNET	141	49.3	265	55	<i>X-squared = 2.1005, df = 1, p-value = 0.1472</i>
Travel guidebooks and travel magazines	95	33.2	174	36.1	<i>X-squared = 0.5349, df = 1, p-value = 0.4645</i>
Personal experience / knowledge	76	26.6	100	20.7	<i>X-squared = 3.1276, df = 1, p-value = 0.07698</i>
Radio and TV broadcasts (documentary and news)	73	25.5	91	18.9	<i>X-squared = 4.3317, df = 1, p-value = 0.03741</i>
Information brochures	50	17.5	74	15.4	<i>X-squared = 0.4544, df = 1, p-value = 0.5003</i>
Advertisements and articles in newspapers/magazines	39	13.6	80	16.6	<i>X-squared = 0.9865, df = 1, p-value = 0.3206</i>
Oral information provided by retailer/agency	19	6.6	20	4.1	<i>X-squared = 1.8277, df = 1, p-value = 0.1764</i>
Information from using a Global Positioning System (GPS)	17	5.9	21	4.4	<i>X-squared = 0.6536, df = 1, p-value = 0.4188</i>
VIDEO/CD-ROM/DVD/VIDEOTE XT	14	4.9	27	5.6	<i>X-squared = 0.0651, df = 1, p-value = 0.7987</i>
Hotel listings	13	4.5	35	7.3	<i>X-squared = 1.8199, df</i>

	<i>Very likely to be interested (Group A)</i>		<i>Very unlikely to be interested opinion (Group B)</i>		
Information from using a P.D.A (Personal Digital assistant)	11	3.8	23	4.8	$= 1, p\text{-value} = 0.1773$ $X\text{-squared} = 0.1776, df = 1, p\text{-value} = 0.6734$
Oral information provided by tourist information at destination or from local tourist offices	4	1.4	9	1.9	$X\text{-squared} = 0.039, df = 1, p\text{-value} = 0.8435$

Overall tourists interested in visiting agricultural places in their vacation (Group A) are both satisfied and not satisfied with the information sources, to a significantly larger extent () than other tourists (Group B) (Table 4). Neutral opinion is less common in Group A compared to Group B.

Table 4. Chi-Square Analysis of the Degree of satisfaction with information sources for Tourists who find interest in visiting agricultural places in their vacation

	<i>Very likely/likely to be interested (Group A)</i>		<i>Unlikely/very unlikely or neither likely nor unlikely to be interested opinion (Group B)</i>		
	n	%	n	%	
	286		482		
Satisfied	210	73.4	327	67.8	$X\text{-squared} = 12.5939, df = 2, p\text{-value} = 0.001842$
Somewhat satisfied	58	20.3	144	29.9	
Not satisfied	14	4.9	9	1.9	

CONCLUSIONS

Hypothesis 1 was tested in figures on Table 1, which reveal that it is more likely for Greek than foreign tourists to show preference in visiting agricultural places in their vacation. Agritourists in Arcadia are mainly between the age of 25-45 (53.2%), scientific and free professionals (31.5%), Clerical workers (19.6%), Administrative and Managerial workers (14.3%) and 40.6% have finished tertiary education.

The tests for hypothesis 2 reveal that agritourist prefer a self-guided tour/holiday (78.3%) , their final decision for the trip was taken less than 1 month before their departure (68.5%), they travel with their families

(39.9%) and they book accommodation by themselves directly from the producer via the telephone (59.8%). The surprising result was that the majority of agriotourists (24.8%) actually stay in first class Hotels/clubs (4*/5*), where only 17.8% prefer to stay in an agriotourist accommodation. This implies that either agritourists show a passive appreciation of agriculturally-produced landscapes as a backcloth for tourism, or that there is no need to be an intertwined direct connection between tourism and the agrarian environment in order to define agritourism as such, contrary to Sharpley & Sharpley, 1997 and Gladstone & Morris, 2000 arguments against. Agritourism could be involving active participation in farming life and production activities as suggested by Iakovidou, 1997, but it could not necessarily imply staying in a farm overnight; agritourists can experience varying ways of authenticity, as it has already been mentioned by MacCannell's continuum, where authenticity can be staged from reproduced settings that appear to be authentic (e.g. a model farm) to organised visits that allow tourists a glimpse backstage (e.g. farm tours). In our case, the results verify the fact that often the nature of contact between agriculture and tourism is not defined (Sharpley & Sharpley, 1997; Sonnino, 2004).

Hypothesis 3 is only partially verified by the results of this analysis. The present study agrees with other researchers that travellers usually rely on multiple information channels (Bieger and Laesser, 2004; Zins, 2007). Thus, tourists interested in visiting agricultural places in their vacation seek information on the place that they visit from recommendations from friends and family and secondly from the Internet. This increased use of the internet shows its enormous importance, as a single interaction on the Internet can provide product information, a means for payment and product exchange, and distribution, whereas a more traditional interaction frequently separates these functions (Jun , Vogt and Mackay, 2007). It is noteworthy though, that the use of the internet was quite limited for booking purposes for agritourism in Arcadia (8%), a fact than needs to be investigated in future studies.

Third in their preference come Travel guidebooks and travel magazines, while personal experience/knowledge, radio & TV broadcasts, and Information brochures are also high in their choices. The two last in their choice are the P.D.A and Oral information provided by tourist information at destination or from local tourist offices. There is no doubt that in the future, mobile technology will increasingly provide opportunities for real-time travel information. Even today mobile technology can bring the latest up-to-date information anytime and anywhere to customers. Tomorrow developments such as select cell

phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) provide real-time Web links (Jun, Vogt & Mackay, 2007). Select automobiles offer telematics (Web access in a vehicle). A new generation of mobile broadband networks provides wireless communication spurring development of location based services using global positioning systems (GPS) (Jun, Vogt & Mackay, 2007). In addition, travellers have begun to use other so called Web 2.0 websites which enable them to share their views and opinions about products and services (Pan, MacLaurin & Crofts, 2007; Xiang & Gretzel, 2009) All these developments will influence both information search and provision (Berger, Lehmann & Lehner, 2003; O'Brien & Burmeister, 2003). Future studies should be conducted to understand how to connect customers' Internet use to mobile use for agricultural products.

The results of this study have important implications from managerial perspectives at the tourism destinations. The present study can help managers carry out this task in a more informed and strategic manner by examining the effects of demographic traits on the agritourist consumption and consider the effects that information has for the agritourists at destinations. This information increases the economic impacts from travel and tourism in the destinations, adopting the necessary measures to reinforce the forms of information analyzed in this study in order to attract the suitable target market. The implantation of the forms of communication analyzed requires the collaboration of diverse tourist agencies and the creation of the Destination Management Systems (DMSs) or the Destination Management Organizations (DMO) that should integrate all these information in a manner that attends to the needs of the tourists. This article supports the view that developing alliances with well-positioned, knowledgeable distribution channels is especially important for the assessment of tourism policies and coordination in the communication process with more traditional media in order to have a unified message from all media that reaches the public should also be part of the marketing strategy, be part of the advertising campaign or the promotion of the destination (Kavoura & Katsoni, 2013). The research implies that a segmentation based on the information search behavior is an appropriate way to develop marketing strategies and target marketing communications.

As Arcadia's tourism industry grows in both capacity and services, so will its need for a wide variety of distribution channels. Fundamental technological shifts have a profound impact on the perception, consumption and construction of tourism spaces, and their local development outcomes, and 'traditional' regional communities have new

tools through which to disseminate their concerns, and may, via global networks, gain new 'community members' that can represent their interests around the world (Katsoni & Venetsanopoulou, 2013). It seems evident that tourism boards can have a significant impact on these processes, and the present findings will possibly help in outlining a cursory examination of these issues.

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