



A Study of Demand and Supply of Agritourism Activities (Case Study: Rural Areas of Semrom County, Iran)

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Abstract

Purpose- To develop agritourism, based on the supply and demand framework, it is essential to understand the preferences of tourists as well as the tendency and capabilities of the local community to participate in the development of agritourism. The study aims to examine tourists' preferences, gardeners' preferences and capabilities for agritourism activities, and to compare tourists' preferences and gardeners' preferences and capabilities regarding agritourism activities.

Design/methodology/approach- The research method is a descriptive-analytical type carried out by a survey method. The study population consisted of 109 apple gardeners the 15 sample villages of Semrom County who were selected using a targeted sampling method, and 252 tourists who visited the sample villages. The data were collected using two researcher-designed questionnaires. To analyze the data, SPSS software along with inferential statistical methods, including One-sample t-test and Friedman were used .

Findings- The findings indicated that tourists' demand for agritourism activities is high and they are interested in all types of agritourism activities. Gardeners are willing to provide agritourism activities, but they have low capability to offer them to tourists. Also, the findings indicated no match between the demand and supply for agritourism activities; Tourists' main preferences were for Agri-recreation, Agri-experience and Agri-accommodation, and food services, while the tendency and capability of gardeners were more about agri-entertainment and Agri-education .

Practical implications- The findings will be useful for tourism planners to develop optimal strategies for developing agritourism with a better understanding of the behaviors and preferences of tourists as well as the willingness and ability of gardeners .

Original/value- Using the integrated supply and demand framework to analyze the gap between tourists' preferences and gardeners' capabilities for agritourism activities is the innovations of the research.

Keywords- Agritourism, Demand-supply framework, Tourists' preferences, Gardeners' preferences, Gardeners' capabilities, Semrom county.

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1. Introduction

Agritourism includes planned recreational and educational activities on any working farm or other agricultural operations (Ollenburg & Buckley, 2007). Today, the significant change in tourist demand for food and local experiences on farms has led to a rapid increase in agritourism worldwide (Matyakubov et al., 2022). Researchers with different views agree that agritourism can be an appropriate solution to meet the needs of tourists as well as rural populations and provide real opportunities for the development of rural societies (Ammirato et al., 2020).

Agritourism development has recently had a great appeal in academic circles. Most studies have mainly analyzed demand (tourists) and supply (farmers) separately. The majority of studies have focused on the supply side, especially the challenges of agritourism development (Yang, 2012; Rezvani et al., 2017), the effects of agritourism on rural areas (Tew & Barbieri, 2012; Bouzarjomehri et al., 2021; Slámová, 2021), the farmers' motivation and willingness to develop agritourism (McGehee & Kim, 2004; Barbieri, 2010), and the prerequisites for agritourism development (Anabestani & Mozafari, 2018; Campbell & Kubickva, 2020; Huber, et al., 2020). Some studies have focused on the demand side and investigated the tourists' preferences for agritourism (Ohe & Ciani, 2012; Gao et al., 2014; Varmazyari et al., 2017; Torabi et al., 2019; Moradi et al., 2020). Few studies have dealt with both, such as Brandano et al. (2018), based on the supply and demand approach, identified the factors affecting tourists' decision to select agritourism companies.

To develop agritourism, it is essential to analyze the attitude and expectations of two groups of main stakeholders, including tourists and the local community (farmers). The demand of tourists should be examined; so, it is necessary to provide appropriate solutions by understanding the intentions and behaviors of agritourists (Hurst & Niehm, 2012). In addition, due to the direct relationship between farmers and tourists, the participation of farmers is one of the most important factors in the success of agritourism development. According to Peira et al. (2021),

rural areas will become tourist destinations if local actors (farmers) participate in tourism development. Therefore, the analysis of the farmers' attitude to agritourism, as well as their facilities and capabilities to participate in agritourism development is very important. Indeed, the knowledge of tourists' demand for agritourism activities and the perception plus willingness of farmers to participate in the agritourism development and their capability to provide agritourism activities can lead to the adaptation of the preferences of destination suppliers (farmers) to the preferences of customers (tourists).

Accordingly, the study aims to analyze the supply and demand for agritourism activities. More specifically, evaluate tourists' preferences for agritourism activities, gardeners' preferences and capabilities to provide agritourism activities, and examine the match between tourists' preferences with gardeners' preferences and capabilities for agritourism activities. The study area covers the rural areas of Semirom county in Isfahan Province, which has a strong gardening and tourism potential due to the large size of apple orchards as well as diverse natural and cultural attractions. Through adopting proper planning, this area can become a center of agritourism in the region. Using the integrated supply and demand conceptual framework to evaluate tourists' preferences for agritourism activities and gardeners' preferences and capabilities to participate in agritourism development as well as analyzing the gap between these two main sides of agritourism development are the innovations of this research. The findings will help tourism planners gain a better understanding of both the needs and preferences of agritourists, along with the preferences and capability of gardeners to participate in agritourism development, and accordingly, provide the outlines of the agritourism development plan.

2. Research Theoretical Literature

Agritourism refers to visiting a farm or rural area, living in a farm, and participating in agriculture-related activities in a farm or other agricultural environment for the purpose of recreation, entertainment, and education (Yang, 2012; Arroyo et al., 2013). It allows visitors to learn about

agricultural businesses and activities (Mpiti & Harpe, 2016), and experience the rural plus agricultural lifestyle (Duffy et al., 2016). Thus, agritourism is not only considered as a tourism product in the rural environment, but also is a new method for better understanding the destination, acquiring new knowledge and awareness, and a better attitude towards the culture of the local people and the environment (Sathe, 2012: 17).

Today, agritourism is considered as a strategy for economic-social development, as well as regeneration and reconstruction of rural areas (Kim et al., 2019; Barbieri, 2013). Agritourism, as one of the new livelihood options, has the capacity to provide the necessary motivation in local communities to turn local resources into tourism products and services as well as help the local community's economy and sustainable rural development (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005). This kind of tourism is a strategy for empowering local community, which plays a role in providing appropriate capital for local people, generating supplemental or additional income for local residents (Tew & Barbieri, 2012; Dubois et al., 2017) and job opportunities, especially for women and youth (Kizos & Iosifides, 2007). It also affects the protection of cultural values and environmental sustainability (Campbell & Kubickova, 2020), along with the agricultural heritage (Torabi et al., 2019).

In recent years, the demand for agritourism has increased. A wide range of products and services can be developed in agritourism destinations, including visiting the natural and rural environment (Frivoll, 2013), exciting activities (physical activity) (Yoon & Uysal, 2005), acquiring knowledge and education (Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002), relaxation and recreation (Dubois et al., 2017; Artuger & Kendir, 2013), farm life experience (Chen et al., 2010; Forbord et al., 2012), socializing (Galloway et al., 2008; Choo & Petrick, 2014), entertainment and cultural events (Daugstad & Kirchengast, 2013), purchasing agricultural products (Peng & Chris, 2018), and nostalgia (Christou et al., 2018). Various categories have been created regarding tourism services and products. Sznajder et al. (2009) has divided agrotourism services and products into nine categories, including agri-accommodation, agri-food services, agritourism primary, direct sales, agri-recreation, agri-sports, agritainment, agri-therapy, and cultural tourism

(Sznajder et al., 2009: 133). Kenebayeva (2014) classified agritourism products and services into four categories: agri-experience, including living in rural accommodation and observing as well as participating in agricultural activities; agritainment, including excursions, activities such as horse riding and cultural programs; agri-recreation, including relaxation and agri-therapy; and agri-sales, including sales of agricultural and homemade products plus souvenirs.

To develop agritourism, it is important to consider the needs and preferences of tourists. In this regard, according to Varmazyari et al. (2017), the prosperity and competitiveness of tourism businesses entail identifying and planning to provide the preferred activities and services of tourists. According to Ammirato et al. (2020), knowledge of the expectations and preferences of tourists is essential both for designing tourism strategies and promoting destinations to meet their expectations regarding innovative rural experiences.

According to the literature review, farmers, as local actors in the village economy (Peira et al., 2021), are among the main stakeholders in agritourism development. Farmers and the rural community are essential players in the process of diversifying activities, especially the multifunctionality of rural landscapes (Ferreira & Sánchez-Martín, 2022). Thus, it is necessary to know the perceptions, and preferences of the farmers to make appropriate decisions (Bidegain, 2020), as well as develop effective rural tourism strategies (Peira et al., 2021) and create activities to enhance communication with tourists (Christou et al., 2018).

Despite the increasing demand for agritourism, one of the barriers to agritourism development is the lack of willingness and capability of the local community to develop agritourism. In this regard, Matyakubov et al. (2022) stated that agritourism is still seen as a more complicated type of tourism by the local people since farmers and entrepreneurs do not have sufficient knowledge about what to do and how to develop agritourism in their farms. To participate in the development of agritourism, farmers should have the necessary abilities and skills, some of which include commercial factors and structural resources (Campbell & Kubickova, 2020), personal skills, sufficient education and knowledge (Chen et al., 2010; Gao et al., 2014), product promotion and

advertising (Kubickova & Campbell, 2020), skills in establishing tourism companies, working with other tourism businesses (Zapata et al., 2011), access to sufficient resources (suitable land, financial and human resources) (Atkisson et al., 2003), ability to provide adequate services to customers and access to skilled staff (Forbord et al., 2012; Byrd et al, 2016), and financial support (Galluzzo, 2021; Su, 2011; Barbieri, 2013).

The agritourism system is successful if it meets the needs of all stakeholders and reduces or removes all barriers (Yang, 2012). Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the perception of the stakeholders for the development of sustainable

tourism (Byrd, 2016). Esper et al. (2010) state that there is a need to integrate supply and demand to understand customers' preferences and services in the target market. Integrating demand and supply can provide a complete view to ensure that services are provided according to the customers' most important expectations (Brandano, 2018). This framework will offer real preferences to tourists and empower the local community to participate in tourism development and finally make the destination more competitive and attract more tourists in the future. Figure 1 presents the research proposed model.

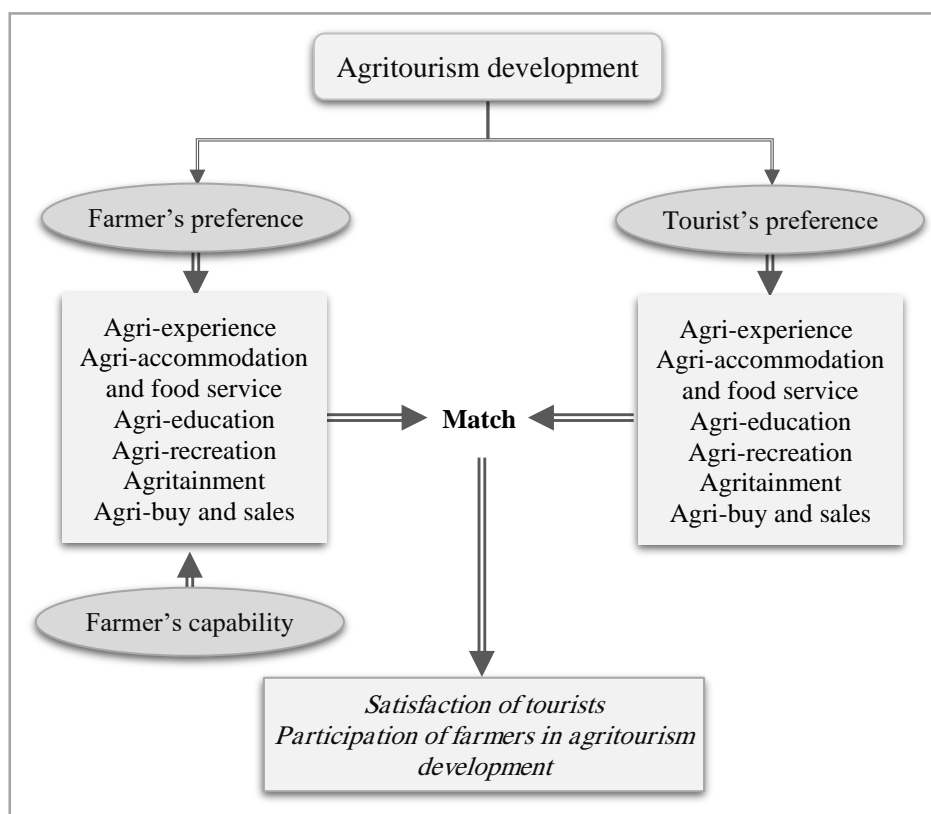


Figure 1. The research proposed model
Source: Research finding, 2021

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Geographical Scope of the Research

Semirom County is situated 165 kilometers from Isfahan city (Figure 2). Semirom County, with 21 thousand hectares of gardens, most of which produce apples, is the hub of gardens of Isfahan province. Further, this area contains a lot of natural attractions, including Zarin-Giyah (an area with a

variety of medical herbs), Naaz spring, Ab-Malakh and BiBi-Seydan waterfall, Dangezloo cave, and Khansar spa, and historical attractions, including the cultural-historical complex of Khan-Ali and Toghrache, and a traditional handicraft market (MCTH, 2021). Every year, many tourists from different parts of the country travel to this region for various purposes, such as visiting gardens and

villages, as well as natural and cultural attractions. It has also attracted the attention of tourism companies to create agritourism and rural tourism tours in the region. Although the rural areas of Semirom county

have many capabilities for agritourism development, not many practical studies have been conducted to plan agritourism in the region

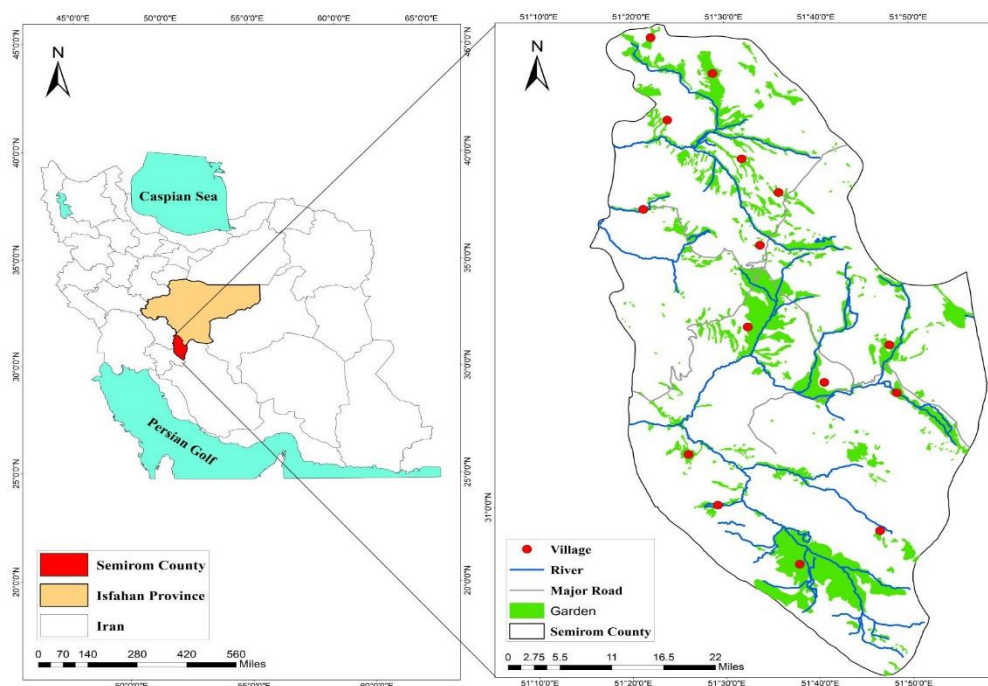


Figure 2. The study area and distribution of sample villages

Source: Drawn by the authors

3.2. Methodology

The research method is a descriptive-analytical type carried out by a survey method. From all villages in Semirom county, 15 villages with more gardens as well as more agritourism capabilities and attractions for tourism based on the opinion of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of the area were identified and selected as samples. The study population consisted of apple gardeners of the sample villages and tourists who visited the sample villages. Regarding the sample size of tourists, due to the lack of statistics on the number of tourists in the sample villages, it was not possible to determine the sample size. The sample consisted of 252 tourists who were available due to the lack of a suitable sampling frame. The data through the simple random sampling method were collected from respondents. Data were collected in spring 2021. A total of 270 questionnaires were distributed, of which 252 were valid questionnaires. Regarding apple gardeners, a targeted sampling method was used. At first, the main gardeners of the villages were identified, and only those who were willing to

develop agritourism were selected as a sample, a total of 109 apple gardeners participated.

The data were collected using two researcher-designed questionnaires. On review of the literature, measurement items were extracted and then classified into six categories, including “agri-experience”, “agri-accommodation and food services”, “agri-education”, “agri-recreation”, “agritainment”, and “agri-buy and sales”. To measure the validity of the questionnaire, the face validity method was used, and items of the questionnaire were reviewed by ten professors and researchers who specialized in agritourism and rural tourism. After applying experts' opinions, the final questionnaire was developed and used for data collection. Finally, two questionnaires, one for tourists and one for gardeners, were designed. The tourists' questionnaire was designed in two sections, including demographic data of the respondents (gender, age, education, occupation), and items related to tourists' preferences regarding agritourism products and services (28 items). The questionnaire of gardeners was developed in three parts. The first section asked about the demographic characteristics

of gardeners, including gender, age, education, and the number of available bedrooms. The second section included gardeners' tendency for agritourism products and services, which consisted of 22 items. The third section included gardeners' capabilities for agritourism offerings with 19 items. In both questionnaires, aside from demographic data of the respondents, all other parts of the questionnaire were measured in 5-point Likert scales of very low (1) to very high (5). Before the field data collection, a pilot test was conducted on 40 tourists and 25 gardeners randomly to ensure procedures worked properly for the survey. The reliability coefficient was calculated using Cronbach's alpha. The alpha coefficient for the data of three questionnaires of tourists' preferences (0.82), gardeners' tendency (0.91), and gardeners' capabilities (0.84) has been above the recommended threshold of 0.7. To analyze the data, SPSS 26 software along with descriptive

(percentage and mean) and inferential statistical methods, including Kolmogorov-Smirnov, One-sample t-test and Friedman were used.

4. Research Findings

4.1. Profile of respondents

The respondents' demographic profile is summarized in Table 1. The total number of tourists was 252, of whom 55.2% were men, and 44.8% were women. Most respondents were aged between 20 and 29. In terms of education, most respondents had BA degrees (54.4%), and regarding occupation, most respondents (63.9%) were self-employed. The number of gardeners was 109, and all of them were men. Most respondents were aged 50 and 59 years. Most participants had a diploma and lower education level (71.6%). Regarding available bedrooms, 55% of gardeners had no room available, and 33% had between 1 and 2 rooms (Table 1).

Table 1. Participants' Demographic profile (percentage)

Characteristics		Tourists	Gardeners
Gender	Male	55.2	100
	Female	44.8	0
Age	20-29	36.4	17.5
	30-39	36.2	16.5
	40-49	15.5	17.4
	50-59	9.1	40.4
	60+	2.8	8.3
Education	Diploma	16.6	71.6
	Bachelor	54.4	21.1
	Master & above	29	7.3
Occupation	Self-employed	63.9	-
	Government employee	13.5	-
	Retired	1.6	-
	Student	14.7	-
	Housewife	6.3	-
Available bedrooms	0	-	55.0
	1	-	14.7
	2	-	18.3
	3	-	4.6
	5	-	3.7
	10	-	2.8
	15+ Parasol	-	0.9

4.2. Assessing the demand and supply for agritourism activities

In any test, the normality and non-normality of the data should be checked first to select the appropriate statistical methods. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

was used for the normality of the data distribution. According to the significance level, which is higher than alpha 0.05, it can be said that the data distribution is normal, and parametric tests are used for data analysis (Table 2).

Table 2. The results of One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the normality of the data

Variable	tourists' references		gardeners' tendency		gardeners' capabilities	
	Test Statistic	Sig.	Test Statistic	Sig.	Test Statistic	Sig.
Agri-experience	1.053	.132	1.124	.145	1.205	.145
Agri-accommodation and food services	1.302	.094	1.146	.104	1.245	.118
Agri-education	1.154	.103	1.175	.078	1.324	.095
Agri-recreation	1.022	.160	1.090	.183	1.033	.183
Agritainment	1.088	.127	1.134	.097	1.150	.142
Agri-buy and sales	1.328	.086	1.106	.168	1.175	.126

To evaluate the demand and supply of agritourism activities, one-sample t-test was used. The results of measuring tourists' preferences for agritourism activities are summarized in [Table 3](#) and [Figure 3](#). As observed, the calculated mean of all six types of agritourism activities is greater than the test

value (3), and the mean difference is positive. The t-test statistic is significant at the alpha level of 0.05 (Sig=0.000) for all agritourism activities. Thus, at confidence level of 95%, it can be accepted that all types of agritourism activities of Semrom county are very important for tourists.

Table 3. The result of measuring tourists' preferences regarding agritourism (Test value = 3)

Variable	Mean	t	Sig.	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Agri-experience	3.67	17.096	.000	.67394	.5963	.7516
Agri-accommodation and food services	3.85	17.839	.000	.85317	.7590	.9474
Agri-education	3.16	2.036	.043	.16667	.0054	.3279
Agri-recreation	3.96	27.708	.000	.95578	.8878	1.0237
Agritainment	3.44	7.466	.000	.43585	.3209	.5508
Agri-buy and sales	3.23	3.846	.000	.23884	.1290	.3287

The results of measuring gardeners' tendency for offering agritourism activities indicate that gardeners tend to offer all six types of agritourism activities to tourists. The obtained mean for all six agritourism activities is greater than 3, and mean difference is positive for all activities. In addition, the t-test statistic at the alpha level of 0.05 is significant for all

types (Sig=0.000), except for the two types of 'agri-experience' and 'agri-accommodation and food services'. Thus, at confidence level of 95%, it can be concluded that Semrom's gardeners have tendency to provide four types of agritourism activities to tourists ([Table 4](#) and [Figure 3](#)).

Table 4. The result of measuring gardeners' tendency for agritourism (Test value = 3)

Variable	Mean	t	Sig.	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Agri-experience	3.15	3.726	.065	.14908	-.0094	.3076
Agri-accommodation and food services	3.06	.567	.572	.05872	-.1467	.2641
Agri-education	3.46	4.627	.000	.45566	.2605	.6508
Agri-recreation	3.34	3.595	.000	.33945	.1523	.5266
Agritainment	3.49	4.250	.000	.49083	.2619	.7197
Agri-buy and sales	3.29	3.796	.000	.29128	.1392	.4434

The results of measuring gardeners' capabilities for agritourism offerings are indicated in [Table 5](#) and [Figure 3](#). The results indicate that gardeners' capability is only desired to offer 'agri-education'

activities to tourists (M=3.20, Sig=.035). In terms of 'agri-entertainment' activities, the capability of gardeners is desired, according to the calculated mean (M=3.15), but the t-test statistic is not

significant (Sig=.074). For other types, the results show that gardeners' capability is lower than the test value (3). Also, the t-test statistic is

significant, indicating the difference from the optimal level.

Table 5. The result of measuring gardeners' capabilities regarding agritourism (Test value = 3)

Variable	Mean	t	Sig.	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Agri-experience	2.21	-9.011	.000	-.79083	-.9648	-.6169
Agri-accommodation and food services	2.50	-6.804	.000	-.50092	-.6469	-.3550
Agri-education	3.20	2.135	.035	.19725	.0141	.3804
Agri-recreation	2.46	-6.633	.000	-.54128	-.7030	-.3795
Agritainment	3.15	1.802	.074	.14679	.0147	.3083
Agri-buy and sales	2.53	-4.258	.000	-.47248	-.6924	-.2526

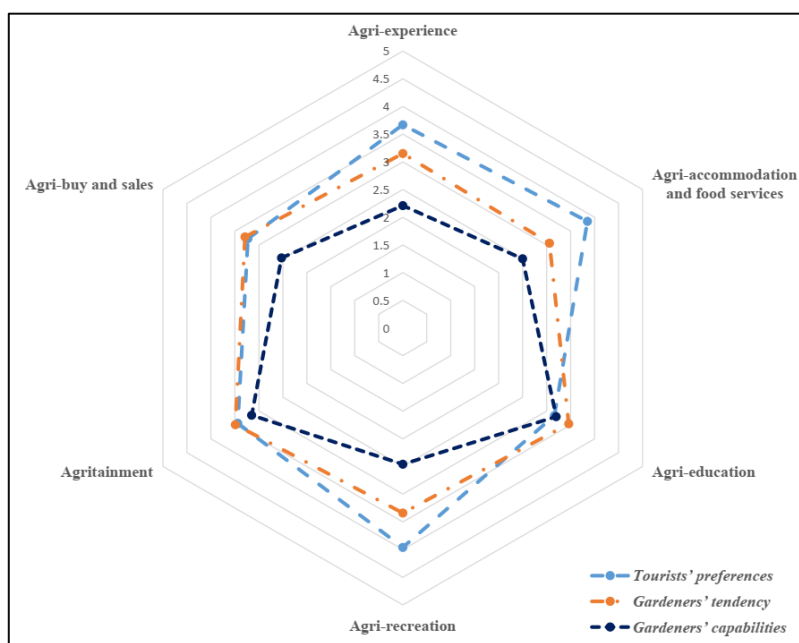


Figure 3. Demand and Supply for agritourism activities

4.3. Prioritizing tourists' preferences, gardeners' tendency, and capabilities

Then, Friedman's test was applied to determine the priority of tourists' references, gardeners' tendencies and capabilities regarding agritourism, and the results are shown in Table 6.

For tourists' preferences, given the Chi-square value and significant level (Sig=.000), tourists' preferences for agritourism activities are different. The tourists' main preference belongs to 'agri-recreation', 'agri-accommodation and food services' and 'agri-experience'. The lowest preference is related to 'agri-education'.

Considering gardeners' tendency, given the significant level (Sig=0.000 < 0.05), it can be stated that gardeners' tendency to provide agritourism activities is different. Based on the mean, gardeners' major tendency is fir 'agritainment' and 'agri-education'. The lowest tendency is related to 'agri-accommodation and food services'.

For gardeners' capability, given the significant level (Sig=0.000), and the mean, it can be noted that gardeners' capability towards offering agritourism activities is different. The gardeners have the highest capability for 'agri-education' and 'agritainment' activities, and the lowest capability for 'agri-experience' and 'agri-recreation' activities.

Table 6. The results of Freidman test to determine the priority of tourists' references, gardeners' tendency and capabilities regarding agritourism

Variable	tourists' references		gardeners' tendency		gardeners' capabilities	
	Mean Rank	Rank	Mean Rank	Rank	Mean Rank	Rank
Agri-experience	3.74	3	3.17	5	2.28	6
Agri-accommodation and food services	4.20	2	2.63	6	3.13	4
Agri-education	2.75	6	3.89	2	4.67	1
Agri-recreation	4.36	1	3.67	3	3.00	5
Agritainment	3.25	4	4.18	1	4.64	2
Agri-buy and sales	2.87	5	3.45	4	3.28	3
Test Statistics	<i>N</i> = 252 <i>Chi-Square</i> = 180.758 <i>Df</i> = 5 <i>Asymp. Sig.</i> = .000		<i>N</i> = 109 <i>Chi-Square</i> = 49.875 <i>Df</i> = 5 <i>Asymp. Sig.</i> = .000		<i>N</i> = 109 <i>Chi-Square</i> = 149.690 <i>Df</i> = 5 <i>Asymp. Sig.</i> = .000	

4.4. Tourists' preferences, gardeners' tendency and capabilities for agritourism products and services

Table 7 lists the results of Friedman test to determine the priority of tourists' preferences for agritourism services and products. According to the chi-square value and significant level ($Sig=0.000$), it can be concluded that tourists' preferences for agritourism products and services is different. Tourists' main priority is related to 'enjoying natural

and garden scenery ($MR=21.05$)', 'enjoying the peace and quiet of the garden ($MR=20.44$)', 'tasting traditional foods and beverages ($MR=19.62$)', 'using picnic sites ($MR=18.43$)', and 'familiarity with local cultural heritage ($MR=16.79$)'. The lowest priority is related to 'participation in recreational educational programs ($MR=10.19$)', 'participation in learning programs on product processing ($MR=11.00$)', and 'participation in gardening educational programs ($MR=11.27$)'.

Table 7. The results of tourists' preferences regarding agritourism products and services

Variables		Mean Rank	Rank
Agri-experience	Watching gardening activities	16.69	6
	Participating in gardening activities	14.35	13
	Spending time with the gardener and his family	13.48	16
	Familiarity and participation in daily rural activities	14.76	11
	Familiarity with local cultural heritage and traditions	16.79	5
	Visiting historical artifacts	15.58	8
Agri-accommodation and food service	Interested in accommodation in farmhouses and rural houses	15.37	9
	Camping in garden	13.35	18
	Tasting traditional food and beverages	19.62	3
Agri-education	Participating in gardening training programs	11.27	26
	Participating in learning programs on product processing	11.00	27
	Participating in recreational learning programs	10.19	28
Agri-recreation	Peace and quiet	20.44	2
	To enjoy natural and garden scenery	21.05	1
	Visiting gardens for recreational activities, and relaxation	14.22	14
	Recreational self-harvesting	13.75	15
	Picnic sites	18.43	4
	Walking or biking through the property on trails	16.32	7
	Therapeutic reasons	12.40	22
Agritainment	Attending traditional events	13.45	17
	Participating in sport event	15.09	10
	Attending local food festivals	14.57	12
	Attending harvest festivals	12.96	19

Variables		Mean Rank	Rank
Agri-buy and sales	Visiting local exhibitions	12.29	23
	Visiting farm museums	11.57	24
	Seeking organic and healthy products	11.49	25
	Buy souvenirs and handicrafts	12.87	20
	Picking fresh fruit	12.65	21
<i>Test Statistics</i>		<i>Chi-Square = 950.607 Df = 27 Asymp. Sig. = .000</i>	

Table 8 reports the results gardeners' tendency regarding agritourism products and services. According to the chi-square value and significant level (Sig=0.000), the preferences of gardeners towards agritourism products and services have been different in the study area. Gardeners' main tendency to providing agritourism products and services to tourists has been related to 'educate tourists about gardening activities (MR=15.02)', 'hold garden

products exhibitions (MR=14.23)', 'watch gardening activities (MR=12.80)', and 'enter the garden to visit the garden' attractions (MR=12.67)'. The minimum tendency is related to 'holding ecotourism and rural tourism tours (MR=9.37)', 'offering food services to tourists (MR=9.42)', 'offering traditional dishes (MR=9.51)', and 'entering the garden to pick apples and buy them (MR=9.64)'.

Table 8. The results of gardeners' tendency regarding agritourism products and services

Variables		Mean Rank	Rank
Agri-experience	Watching gardening activities	12.80	3
	Tourists' cooperation in garden activities	10.68	16
	Holding ecotourism, and rural tourism tours	9.37	22
	Companionship with visitors	12.61	5
Agri-accommodation and food service	Dedicating a part of the house to tourists	11.42	12
	Leasing farm buildings to tourists	9.67	18
	Providing camping	10.54	17
	Offering food services	9.42	21
	Offering traditional dishes	9.51	20
Agri-education	Educating tourists about apple growing and gardening activities	15.02	1
	Educating tourists on how to drive garden vehicles	11.29	14
	Educating tourists on how to exploit garden equipment	10.70	15
Agri-recreation	Entering the garden to visit the garden's attractions	12.67	4
	Diversifying farm activities by adding recreational activities	12.25	7
	Offering sport and entertainment facilities	11.61	11
	Determining tourist routes for tourists	12.09	8
Agritainment	Holding garden products exhibitions	14.23	2
	Holding apple cultivating and harvesting festivals	11.41	13
Agri-buy and sales	Selling garden products to tourists directly	12.54	6
	Selling garden products on-farm markets	11.88	9
	Entering the garden to pick apples and buy them	9.64	19
	Providing homemade products	11.66	10
<i>Test Statistics</i>		<i>Chi-Square = 156.241 Df = 21 Asymp. Sig. = .000</i>	

The results of measuring gardeners' capabilities indicate that gardeners' highest capability is for 'knowledge and skills in the terms of apple growing and gardening activities (MR=16.07)', 'possibility of providing apple-related products (MR=14.19)',

and 'local herbal remedies (MR=12.75)'. Regarding the variables of "access to sports and entertainment facilities (MR=6.36)", "access to human resources trained in tourism (MR=8.01)", "possibility of providing accommodation facilities to tourists in

gardens (MR =8.08)” and “access to trained human resources regarding tourism such as tour guides

(MR=8.16)” have undesired conditions (Table 9).

Table 9. The results of gardeners’ capabilities for agritourism offerings

	Variables	Mean Rank	Rank
Agri-experience	Education on behaving with tourists	8.44	14
	Education in communication skills (with local community, tourism businesses)	8.16	16
	Availability of information sources about the area	9.29	11
	Knowing the tourist attractions of the area	8.39	15
	Access to trained human resources regarding tourism (trained tour guide)	8.01	18
Agri-accommodation and food service	Accessibility to accommodation	9.28	12
	Access to food and beverage services	11.34	4
	The possibility of providing accommodation facilities in the gardens	8.08	17
	The possibility of providing food services in the garden	10.12	8
Agri-education	Access to trained human resources to cook traditional dishes	11.32	5
	Skills in terms of apple growing and gardening activities	16.07	1
Agri-recreation	Access to appropriate facilities and technology in gardening activities	8.47	13
	Access to sport and entertainment facilities	6.36	19
	Availability of local herbal remedies and treatments	12.75	3
Agritainment	Access to adequate financial supports	9.33	10
	The possibility of providing apple-related products	14.19	2
Agri-buy and sales	Access to place and local facilities for holding festivals	10.42	6
	Access to facilities for selling garden products to tourists	10.37	7
	Access to local markets to sell products	9.61	9
<i>Test Statistics</i> <i>Chi-Square = 414.003</i> <i>Df = 18</i> <i>Asymp. Sig. = .000</i>			

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Studies on tourism development usually investigate the behavioral patterns and preferences of customers or the motivation, and willingness of the local population. Meanwhile, the match between supply and demand is necessary for developing appropriate strategies to satisfy tourists as well as the participation of the local people as one of the destination's main stakeholders in tourism development. This study investigated the demand of tourists for agritourism activities and the gardeners' tendency and capability to provide agritourism activities in the rural areas of Semirrom county. The findings indicate no match between demand (tourists' preferences) and supply (gardeners' preferences and capabilities) for agritourism activities in the study area (Table 10).

The results indicate that ‘agri-recreation’ is the tourists’ most important preference. The tourists’ main purpose visiting the gardens of the area is to enjoy agri-recreation attractions, including the natural scenery of the gardens, and the peace and quiet of the gardens. Thus, agri-recreation services and products are among of the factors affecting the

choice of destination by agritourists. This confirmed previous studies Dubois et al., 2017; Huber et al., 2020) who found the peaceful natural environment along with recreational activities are the tourists’ main preferences. In addition, the results show that ‘agri-accommodation and food services’ plus ‘agri-experience’, including tasting traditional foods and beverages, knowing the local cultural heritage and traditions of the area, and participating in gardening activities are important for tourists. This finding is consistent with Chen et al. (2010) and Forbord et al. (2012), who found tourists were willing to experience farm life. In any case, the results reveal that despite the difference between tourists' preferences, all agritourism activities are important for tourists and influential in their decision to select a destination. In other words, tourists tend to experience emotional and recreational activities including visiting farms, enjoying recreational and entertainment activities, purchasing souvenirs and products, and staying in farms accommodations. They are also interested in experiencing and understanding the agri-experience activities such as participating in gardening activities and learning handicrafts. These results support the study of

Torabi et al. (2019), concluding that there is no difference between tangible and intangible agricultural heritage from the tourists' viewpoint. The findings show that the apple gardeners in the study area tend to develop agritourism and provide all agritourism activities to tourists. It can be stated that gardeners have perceived the positive effects of agritourism on their business, and they tend to work in the field of agritourism along with horticulture. In this regard, Bouzarjomehri et al. (2021) found understanding the impacts of tourism affects farmers' tendency to participate in the agritourism development. Nevertheless, the findings indicate that gardeners' tendency is not in accordance with tourists' preferences, and is more to provide activities of 'agritainment' and 'agri-education', while these activities are less demanded by tourists. The findings indicate that the apple gardeners do not enjoy the appropriate capability to participate in agritourism development. The gardeners' capability, except in the two types of 'agri-education' and 'agri-entertainment' has been evaluated below the optimal level in the other types. Also, gardeners do not have sufficient knowledge, expertise, and training to develop agritourism practices. Meanwhile, studies show education and awareness (Naidoo & Sharpley, 2016; Rezvani et al., 2017) is an essential factor in tourism development. Furthermore, gardeners have insufficient training and skills to interact with the local population, tourists, and tourism businesses. As studies have shown, communication with tourists and the local population (Alonso & Nyanjom, 2016), as well as interaction with tourism sector activists (Zapata et al., 2011) are essential factors for agritourism development. Additionally, limited access to facilities, trained human resources, and financial and advisory support are other challenges

facing gardeners to participate in the agritourism development.

The findings of the match between demand and supply separately for each type of agritourism activity indicate that there is the match between demand and supply only for 'agri-education' type; for types of 'agritainment' and 'agri-buy and sales', there is a relative match between demand and supply, and there is no match between supply and demand in the other three types.

The results of 'agri-experience' type show that tourists' tendency is very high. In the supply, the gardeners' tendency is average, and their capability to offer these activities is low. The gardeners are not aware of the capacities of tourism in the area, they have inadequate knowledge of tourists' preferences, they have limited access to trained human resources, and they have insufficient training in communication skills to communicate with tourists. The weaknesses have caused gardeners not to be willing to develop agri-experience activities, while these activities are the tourists' main preferences. For 'agri-accommodation and food services' type, the tourists' preference is very high, but the gardeners are not willing to provide activities of this group due to the low access to accommodation and catering facilities in farm and rural areas. For 'agri-recreation' type, the tourists' preference for some services and products is very high. Also, the gardeners' tendency to provide such products is high, such as entering tourists to enjoy the scenery, diversifying tourism activities, offering recreational facilities, and offering local herbal remedies. However, they have a low tendency for access to recreational facilities, and financial support for providing activities.

Table 10. Match between demand and supply regarding agritourism activities

Activity	Tourists' preferences	Gardeners		Match/Mismatch
		tendency	Capability	
Agri-experience	Very High	Average	Low	Mismatch
Agri-accommodation and food services	Very high	Average	Low	Mismatch
Agri-education	High	High	High	Match
Agri-recreation	Very high	High	Low	Mismatch
Agritainment	High	High	Average	Relatively match
Agri-buy and sales	High	High	Low	Relatively match

For 'agritainment', the gardeners tend to provide the services and products of this group, especially by

holding garden products exhibitions. Also, gardeners have adequate access to facilities, and human

resources for holding the exhibitions. For 'agri-buy and sales' type, gardeners' access to the local market, and facilities for direct sales are desired. However, the gardeners are not willing to allow tourists to enter the garden and pick apples, which is due to the concern about the lack of training of tourists and the possibility of damage to the garden. Finally, for 'agri-education' type, a good match is between the tourists' preferences and the gardeners' tendencies. Also, the gardeners of the area also have the necessary knowledge, expertise, and facilities to provide services and products to tourists.

Overall, the findings showed no significant match between demand and supply. "Agri-recreation", along with "agri-experience" and "agri-accommodation and food services" have been among the main priorities of tourists to visit the area, still, the gardeners' tendency and capability have not been consistent with the tourists' preferences. The gardeners' tendency and capability has mostly been related to "agritainment" and "agri-education". The findings suggest that for developing agritourism in the destination, the tourists' needs and preferences to attract tourists and the destination's competitiveness should be prioritized. Tourists will be attracted to the destination if they can enjoy the benefits of the peaceful rural and agricultural environment along with access to recreational facilities, tasting traditional foods, connect with the cultural aspects of rural areas, experience the rural lifestyle, and participate in farming activities. Also, gardeners should be trained on the required skills related to tourism and agritourism as well as acquire the necessary qualifications. They should also be given the necessary facilities, support and funds so that they can participate in the agritourism development and provide products and services preferred by tourists.

The findings of this study will be worthwhile to tourism planners, as well as tourism services providers to develop a better understanding of agritourists' preferences, meet the agritourists' needs, and ultimately gain satisfaction. Also, it will be helpful for planners to recognize the capacities of gardeners and the challenges they face in developing agritourism to formulate practical strategies. Importantly, it will empower the gardeners involved in agritourism enterprise, to make a profound contribution to the decision-making, planning, and successful implementation of agritourism programs. The present study had some limitations. Agritourism is attractive to a wide range of consumers (Fabio Gaetano & Mariangela, 2014), and each customer has different motivations (Hurst et al., 2009) and therefore different needs which affect their intention and behavior. Hence, demographic features including age, gender, education, income, and socio-cultural background may influence agritourists' preferences; thus, it is important to examine whether agritourists' needs are different, or they are consistent across different subgroups of society. Also, this study only investigated the gardeners' tendency and capability. To develop agritourism, it is necessary to examine the capacities of the destination and active businesses in the tourism sector; thus, future research can examine this issue in depth.

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The authors equally contributed to the preparation of this article.

Conflict of interest

The author declare no conflict of interest.

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چکیده مبسوط

۱- مقدمه

را می‌توان در مقاصد آگروتوریسم توسعه داد. برای توسعه آگروتوریسم، توجه به نیازها و ترجیحات گردشگران برای طراحی راهبردهای گردشگری و رقابت پذیری مقصد مهم است. با وجود افزایش تقاضا برای آگروتوریسم، یکی از موانع توسعه آگروتوریسم در مناطق روستایی، عدم تمایل و توانمندی جامعه محلی در توسعه آگروتوریسم است. کشاورزان، یکی از ذینفعان اصلی در توسعه آگروتوریسم است. لذا شناخت انگیزه و ترجیحات کشاورزان و گنجاندن نظرات آنها در فرآیند تصمیم‌گیری، و توسعه راهبردهای مطلوب ضروری است. سیستم آگروتوریسم در صورتی موفق است که هم نیازهای همه گروههای ذینفع را تأمین کند و هم موانع همه گروهها را کاهش و یا برطرف نماید. در این راستا، ادغام عرضه و تقاضا برای درک ترجیحات مشتریانی که به طور واقعی در بازار وجود دارد، الزامی است. یکپارچه‌سازی تقاضا و عرضه می‌تواند نمای کامل‌تری از ترجیحات بخش تقاضا و شرایط بخش عرضه ارائه دهد تا اطمینان حاصل شود که خدمات مطابق با سودآورترین خواسته‌ها و انتظارات مشتریان ارائه می‌شوند.

۳- روش تحقیق

روش تحقیق توصیفی-تحلیلی است و به شیوه پیمایشی انجام شده است. پانزده روستا با قابلیت‌های آگروتوریستی شناسایی و به عنوان نمونه انتخاب شدند. جامعه نمونه ۱۰۹ نفر از باغداران سیب روستاهای نمونه بودند که با روش نمونه‌گیری هدفمند انتخاب شدند و همچنین ۲۵۲ گردشگرانی بودند که از روستاهای نمونه بازدید کردند.

آگروتوریسم نوعی از فعالیت‌های مرتبط با گردشگری است که خدمات و محصولات کشاورزی را به گردشگران ارائه می‌دهد. برای توسعه آگروتوریسم، تحلیل نگرش و انتظارات دو گروه از ذینفعان اصلی، شامل گردشگران و کشاورزان ضروری است. تقاضای گردشگران باید بررسی شود؛ بنابراین لازم است با درک نیت و رفتار گردشگران کشاورزی، راه حل‌های مناسب ارائه شود. همچنین به دلیل ارتباط مستقیم کشاورزان و گردشگران، مشارکت کشاورزان یکی از عوامل موفقیت در توسعه آگروتوریسم است. هدف تحقیق، تحلیل عرضه و تقاضا برای فعالیت‌های آگروتوریستی است، و به طور خاص تر ارزیابی ترجیحات گردشگران برای فعالیت‌های آگروتوریستی، ارزیابی ترجیحات و توانمندی باغداران برای ارائه فعالیت‌های آگروتوریستی، و همچنین بررسی تفاوت بین ترجیحات گردشگران و ترجیحات و توانمندی باغداران برای فعالیت‌های آگروتوریستی می‌باشد. منطقه مورد مطالعه، مناطق روستایی شهرستان سمیرم در استان اصفهان است که به دلیل وسعت زیاد باغات سیب و همچنین جاذبه‌های طبیعی و فرهنگی متنوع، از پتانسیل آگروتوریستی قوی برخوردار است.

۲- مبانی نظری تحقیق

در سال‌های اخیر، تقاضا برای آگروتوریسم افزایش یافته و برای طیف وسیعی از گردشگران جذاب است. طیف گسترده‌ای از محصولات شامل تماشای محیط روستا، تفریح، تجربه زندگی در مزرعه، رویدادهای سرگرمی و فرهنگی، خرید محصولات کشاورزی

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اگروتوریستی در سایر گروهها پایین تر از حد مطلوب بوده است و باغداران از آموزش و مهارت لازم برای توسعه شیوه های اگروتوریسم، تعامل با جامعه محلی، گردشگران و کسب و کارهای گردشگری برخوردار نیستند، و همین امر تمایل باغداران برای ارائه برخی از خدمات و محصولات مرجع گردشگران را کاهش داده است.

۵- بحث و نتیجه گیری

مطالعه به بررسی تقاضای گردشگران برای فعالیت های اگروتوریستی و تمایل و توانمندی باغداران برای عرضه فعالیت های اگروتوریستی در مناطق روستایی شهرستان سمیرم استان اصفهان پرداخته است، که نتایج نشان داد بین تقاضا و عرضه تطابقی وجود ندارد. برای توسعه اگروتوریسم در مقصد باید تمایلات گردشگران برای جذب گردشگر و رقابت پذیری مقصد در اولویت قرار گیرد. در واقع تا زمانی که گردشگران بتوانند از مزایای محیط آرام و مناظر روستایی و کشاورزی، همراه با دسترسی به امکانات تفریحی و ورزشی، چشیدن غذاهای سنتی، تجربه سبک زندگی روستایی، و مشارکت در فعالیت های باغداری بهره مند شوند، جذب مقصد خواهند شد. همچنین باغداران باید در مهارت های ضروری در خصوص اگروتوریسم آموزش ببینند و صلاحیت های لازم را کسب کنند، و از تسهیلات، حمایت و سرمایه لازم برخوردار شوند تا بتوانند در توسعه اگروتوریسم مشارکت داشته باشند و محصولات و خدمات مرجع گردشگران را عرضه نمایند.

کلیدواژه ها: اگروتوریسم، چارچوب تقاضا-عرضه، ترجیحات گردشگران، ترجیحات باغداران، توانمندی باغداران، شهرستان سمیرم.

تشکر و قدردانی

پژوهش حاضر حامی مالی نداشته و حاصل فعالیت علمی نویسندگان است.

برای جمع آوری اطلاعات از دو پرسشنامه محقق ساخته استفاده شد. با مرور ادبیات، آیتها استخراج شدند و به شش دسته «تجربه-اگروتوریستی»، «خدمات اقامتی و غذایی اگروتوریستی»، «آموزشی-اگروتوریستی»، «سرگرمی-اگروتوریستی»، «تفریح-اگروتوریستی» و «خرید و فروش-اگروتوریستی» طبقه بندی شدند. گویه های پرسشنامه با استفاده از مقیاس پنج درجه ای لیکرت از بسیار کم تا بسیار زیاد اندازه گیری شدند. برای تجزیه و تحلیل داده ها از نرم افزار SPSS و روش های آماری استفاده شد.

۴- یافته های تحقیق

یافته ها نشان می دهد تفریحات-اگروتوریستی مهم ترین تقاضای گردشگران بوده است. همچنین بهره مندی از «خدمات اقامتی و غذایی اگروتوریستی» و «تجربه-اگروتوریستی» نیز برای گردشگران مهم بوده است. بهر حال نتیجه نشان می دهد با وجود تفاوت بین ترجیحات گردشگران، همه انواع فعالیت های اگروتوریستی برای گردشگران مهم بوده است. به بیان دیگر گردشگران هم تمایل به فعالیت های احساسی و تفریحی شامل لذت بردن از فعالیت های تفریحی و سرگرمی را دارند، و هم علاقمند به تجربه و درک فعالیت های تجربی اگروتوریستی نظیر مشارکت در فعالیت های باغداری هستند. یافته ها نشان می دهد باغداران تمایل به توسعه اگروتوریسم و عرضه انواع فعالیت های اگروتوریستی به گردشگران را دارند، اما یافته ها نشان می دهد که تمایل باغداران در تطابق با ترجیحات گردشگران نبوده است، و تمایل باغداران بیشتر به عرضه انواع فعالیت های «سرگرمی-اگروتوریستی» و «آموزشی-اگروتوریستی» می باشد، در حالیکه این فعالیت ها کمتر مورد تقاضای گردشگران بوده است. همچنین نتایج نشان می دهد باغداران از توانمندی مطلوب برای مشارکت در توسعه اگروتوریسم برخوردار نیستند. توانمندی باغداران برای ارائه انواع فعالیت های اگروتوریستی به جز در دو گروه آموزشی-اگروتوریستی و سرگرمی-



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