

# Innovation Technology on Connecting Agricultural Products with Tourism Enterprises in Rural Areas of Northern Albania

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## INTRODUCTION

In a developing country such as Albania, the tourism industry is considered very important in creating economic benefits. The possible contribution of tourism is also considered in the agricultural sector. The integration of regional agriculture and tourism enterprises is very important and brings economic development to the rural area. The relationship of agriculture with the tourism sector in rural areas stimulates local production, and sustains tourism profits. The problem of integrating the two sectors is related to the seasonal nature of tourism, the low quality of local products, the dependence of the tourism industry on imported supplies and the lack of a direct link between agricultural enterprises and the tourism industry.

Digitalisation of agriculture is considered very important for the progress of farming. Different interested parties assume that adopting new farming technology influences performance and will also provide an increase in accuracy of output produced to meet the needs of tourism business in the region.

The purpose of this paper is to explore farmers' and tourism enterprises' perception and attitude in relation to farming technology. This paper also shows the importance of digitalisation of the supply chain of agricultural products in order for it to sustain the tourism market. Finding optimal ways to improve relations between agricultural and tourism enterprises is necessary to create market synergy and improve the image of the tourist destination. The main source of this is agricultural development and potential in tourism development, in the form of tourism programmes and facilities. Two hypotheses were raised: digitalisation improves the production process of agricultural products, and digitalisation of the supply chain sustains relations between agricultural and tourism enterprises to create market synergy.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodology of this paper is based on the analysis of secondary data and processing of primary data. The secondary data are the result of a review of extensive and contemporary literature, domestic and foreign, related to the research topic. In formal statistical management systems, data are used to research the characteristics and importance of agricultural and tourism companies using farming technology. The primary data is obtained using quantitative research through questionnaires. The questionnaires contain open and structured questions and are self-administered by the respondent. Two questionnaires were distributed; one to guest houses that operate specifically in the area of Theth, Razma, Bogë, Tamara, Lepushë, Vermosh, and the other to farmers that operate in the same area. The results of the questionnaire were elaborated using the SPSS program.

Since a scientific method has been used for data collection, the paper can be reproduced by other researchers.

## RESULTS

The data show that there is generally a positive attitude of farmers and tourism businesses in northern Albania towards adopting new technology, especially regarding distribution channels. There are several barriers to the adoption of technology by business in these two sectors.

## DISCUSSION

The positive contribution of this paper is at the governmental level because it helps them understand where and what to invest or support regarding the tourism and agricultural sector. This paper is also valuable for private investors and NGOs.

**KEYWORDS:** Innovative, Technology, Supply chain, Agriculture, Tourism