

Impact of Virtual Farm Tours on Agrotourism Destination Choice in Sri Lanka

S.M.S.L. Ariyaratna^{1*}, W.A.M.K. Adikaram², and M.G.L.N.K. Samarawansa²

¹School of Tourism, Sichuan University, China

²School of Business Collage, Sichuan University, China

*salindalakshan25@gmail.com

In the Tourism industry, agrotourism has gained more attention as a form of sustainable tourism and this helps to rural development, culture heritage preservation, enhancing the tourist knowledge about agricultural lifestyle. Sri Lanka can provide opportunities for tourists to engage with tea plantations, spice gardens, organic farms, and traditional rural communities. Potential tourist can experience farm environments before making travel decisions by using virtual farm tours, including video-based tours and interactive digital content. Limited research has explored how virtual farm tours shaping agrotourism destination selection. This study uses a quantitative approach with 300 agrotourism-interested respondents selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected via an online questionnaire after viewing a virtual farm tour video. Measures used a five-point Likert scale, and data were analyzed using SPSS (Version 26) with reliability, validity, and moderate analysis. Pearson correlation analysis revealed a moderate positive relationship between virtual farm tours and agrotourism destination selection ($r = .459, p < .01$), and between trust and destination selection ($r = .364, p < .01$). A strong positive relationship was found between trust and virtual farm tours ($r = .752, p < .01$). Moderation analysis further indicated that trust significantly strengthens the relationship between virtual farm tours and destination selection ($\beta = .098, p = .017$), explaining additional variance ($R^2 = .007$), confirming its moderating role. This study, based on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework, finds that virtual farm tours significantly influence agrotourism destination selection in Sri Lanka, with trust strengthening this relationship. The results highlight the importance of authentic virtual content. Tourism stakeholders should invest in realistic, high-quality virtual tours to enhance trust and attract global tourists.

Keywords: Agrotourism, Destination selection, Stimulus–organism–response (S-O-R) framework, Trust, Virtual farm tours