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IMPORTANT FACTORS OF AGRICULTURAL ATTRACTIONS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS ORIENTED TOWARDS AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

WAŻNE CZYNNIKI ATRAKCJI ROLNICZYCH DLA STUDENTÓW KIERUNKÓW ROLNICZYCH

Key words: agricultural attractions, marketing, tourism

Słowa kluczowe: atrakcje rolnicze, marketing, turystyka

Abstract. In Hungary the less developed regions are mostly agricultural based, to help close the gap between the developed and less developed regions every opportunity needs to be investigated. In this study the use of agriculture as an attraction to increase tourism is investigated by examining US examples in Kentucky which is also a state where agriculture is the main activity. In the analysis a questionnaire was used to determine the demand towards agricultural attractions. The questionnaire was only open for college students oriented towards agricultural sciences. The results showed that the marketing strategies of these attractions are not efficient to attract visitors, from the investigated group, from large distanced, but do seem to be popular among the local, nearby people.

Introduction

The base of this study is region improvement from tourism point of view. In Hungary the less developed regions are mostly agricultural based [Malakuczíné 2008], thus it is an important research area to find examples, how agriculture can be used to increase tourism and help the regions development. The aim of this study is to collect international examples for the research and try to find factors that can be adopted to help the region to become developed by increasing agritourism. Agritourism is defined as “The act of visiting a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural, or agribusiness operations for the purpose of enjoyment, education or active involvement in the activities of the farm or operation” [Rata et al. 2012, p. 111].

In this paper the demand towards several agricultural attractions located in Kentucky was surveyed among the college students who are oriented towards agricultural sciences. The reason for narrowing the sampling down is that, this way there are better conditions for making a representative comparison between the interest towards agricultural attraction among the selected group in Hungary and Kentucky. Furthermore it is assumed that those who are specialised at agricultural sciences have greater interest towards agri-attractions, than others.

Material and methods

Quantitative research was used to collect and evaluate the data. A questionnaire with standardised questions was used, the questions were designed to correspond to the research area. The questioner was digitalised and uploaded for online availability. The online method was chosen due to its advantages: “cheap”, “fast”, “multi-faceted” and “respondents are usually more honest compared to personal or telephone interviews” [Kotler, Keller 2006, p. 171]. The link containing the questionnaire was not public, it was only available for those who received an invitation to fill out the questionnaire.

The online questionnaire was provided for students and teachers at Murray State University in Kentucky. The questionnaire was asked to be filled out autonomously, there was no data asked, that could be used for identification. The reason for this is that more people are willing to share their opinion if less confidential questions are asked [Malhotra 2009, p. 339] and their identity

can be kept in secret. The questionnaire contained 15 questions, the first 8 referred to the agri-attractions and the last 7 questions referred to the demographic data. Using the questions about the attractions the aim was to collect information about the popularity of agri-attraction types, the visit frequency of specific attraction, the most interesting feature at the attraction. In case of visiting an agri-attractions, people were asked if they were there with any accompanying persons and how many nights they spent at the location or nearby city.

From the online questionnaire a total of 99 responses arrived back for evaluation. This data allowed statistical calculations to be made.

Results

Sample. Most of the answers 91% came from people between the age of 18 and 25. Other age groups represented themselves minor: age from 25 to 30 only 1%, age from 30 to 35 only 1%, age from 35 to 40 only 2%, age from 40 to 45 none 0%, age from 45 to 50 only 1%, age 50 and above only 1%, did not answer: 4%. 94% of the questioned subjects are single, which corresponds to the young age group. 90% of those who are married are aged above 25 years. Only 15% live in a household where there are children (aged under 18). The majority of the subjects are still studying. The highest earned education for 64% is high school, 17% has bachelor's degree, 15% has associate degree and only 3% has some kind of an advanced degree. The gross yearly income of the household the subject lives in was also questioned. However the answers do not give precise results as 27% preferred not to answer to this question. 44% from those who did answer have an income above \$75,000, 24% are below \$18,000, 17% are between \$18,000 and \$45,000, 15% are between \$45,000 and \$75,000.

Agricultural attractions

The eight popular agricultural attractions types that can be found in Kentucky were collected from the "kentuckyfarmsarefun" homepage which is owned by the Kentucky department of Agriculture. The questionnaire asked whether the respondent visited any of them in the last five years. In case an important attraction had been left out of the list the question was left open to specify any other attraction, however there were no other attraction types mentioned. The results showed that all selected elements are important as all of them reached higher level than 10% (Fig. 1). From Figure 1 it can be seen that the most popular attraction is the corn maze as it reached over 67%.

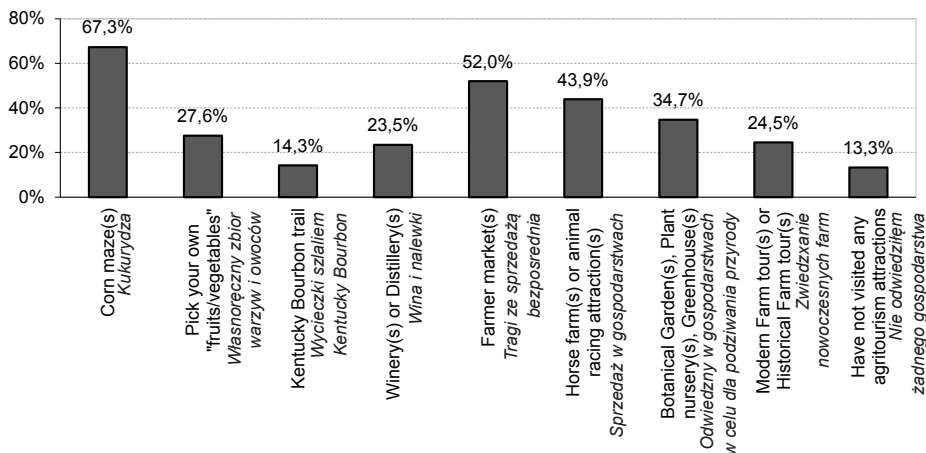


Figure 1. Visited agricultural attraction types in Kentucky in the last 5 years

Rysunek 1. Odwiedziny określonych atrakcji agroturystycznych w Kentucky w ciągu ostatnich 5 lat

Source: own study

Źródło: opracowanie własne

From the investment point of view this is fortunate as creating a corn maize is a low cost project. The second most popular attractions reaching 52% are the farmer markets. The least visited attraction was the “Kentucky bourbon trail” as only 14% of the questioned people visited it. Farm tours performed 24% which is low compared to the corn maize’s 67%, despite that this is probably the most common idea firstly related to agricultural attractions.

In the following question a specific agricultural attraction was listed for each attraction type, which are the most successful Agritourism Operations according to the Kentucky Department of Agriculture Office of Marketing. The local agricultural event organised by the university “Fall on the Farm in Murray” (11th annual Fall on the farm) was also listed as I observed it is very popular among the local students. The question asked whether the subject visited the listed attractions in the last five years. The results are summarised in Figure 2.

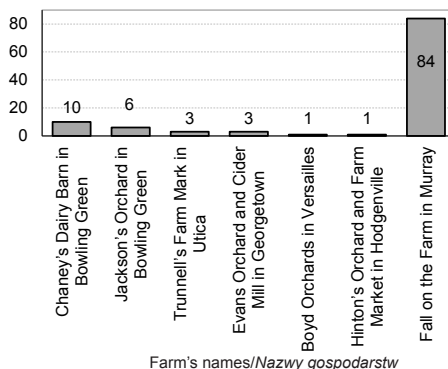


Figure 2. Visited specific agricultural attractions in Kentucky in the last 5 years

Rysunek 2. Odwiedziny określonych atrakcji agroturystycznych w Kentucky w ciągu ostatnich 5 lat

Source: own study

Źródło: opracowanie własne

Table 1. Marketing tools and agricultural attractions

Tabela 1. Narzędzia marketingowe i atrakcje agroturystyczne

Attractions/Atrakcje		Where have you heard about the following agri-attraction/ Gdzie usłyszano o atrakcji						total respondents/ liczba respondentów
		internet/ interenet	newspaper/ gazety	poster/ plakaty	TV	other/ inne	have not heard about/ nie słyszano	
Chaney's Dairy Barn in Bowling Green	%	6.41	2.56	1.28	3.85	14.10	78.21	78
	count/ liczba	5	2	1	3	11	61	
Jackson's Orchard in Bowling Green	%	0.00	2.60	0.00	1.30	10.39	88.31	77
	count/ liczba	0	2	0	1	8	68	
Trunnell's Farm Mark in Utica	%	1.30	0.00	0.00	1.30	3.90	94.81	77
	count/ liczba	1	0	0	1	3	73	
Evans Orchard and Cider Mill in Georgetown	%	1.32	2.63	1.32	2.63	1.32	94.74	76
	count/ liczba	1	2	1	2	1	72	
Boyd Orchards in Versailles	%	1.30	1.30	0.00	2.60	2.60	92.21	77
	count/ liczba	1	1	0	2	2	71	
Hinton's Orchard and Farm Market in Hodgenville	%	0.00	1.30	1.30	1.30	3.90	97.40	77
	count/ liczba	0	1	1	1	3	75	
Fall on the Farm in Murray	%	33.33	16.09	32.18	2.30	70.11	3.45	87
	count/ liczba	29	14	28	2	61	3	

Source: own study

Źródło: opracowanie własne

Among the questioned people most of them (85%) visited the local Fall on the Farm attraction. The second most visited attraction was only visited by 10% of the subjects. The third attraction reached 6 % and the remaining four attraction reached 3% or lower. Based in these results it seems that one of the key factors for is the location, however this is not fortunate for attracting distant visitors. The questionnaire also asked about where did the subjects heard about the specific attraction. Except for the Fall on the Farm attraction the attractions were not known to most of the questioned people. Investigating the common marketing channels [Kotler, Keller 2006, p. 749]: Internet, Newspaper, Poster, TV, neither showed outstanding results. The evaluated data are shown in Table 1. Those who marked “other” as the answer, specified the following channels most often: “Word of mouth”, or “Drive by it”. These results show that the marketing activity of these attractions requires improving. The 60% or higher of the respondents did not even know about the attraction, which can explain the low visiting activity.

To find out which part was the most interesting in the specific agri-attraction, five options were given to choose from: Education, Games; Location, Museum, Ability to buy food products and also “other” was selectable. Due to the low number of respondents who visited the specific attractions, the results could only be based on 8 or fewer samples. This does not apply to the local Fall on the Farm attractions. Table 2 shows the specific agri-attraction and attractions elements.

Table 2. Interesting elements and agricultural attractions

Tabela 2. Ciekawe miejsca i atrakcje agroturystyczne

Attractions/ <i>Atrakcje</i>		What is the most interesting thing for you about the attractions/ <i>Co najbardziej decyduje o atrakcyjności</i>						
		education/ <i>nauka</i>	games/ <i>zabawy</i>	location/ <i>miejsce</i>	museum/ <i>muzeum</i>	ability to buy food products/ <i>możliwość zakupu żywności</i>	other/ <i>inne</i>	total respondents/ <i>liczba respondentów</i>
Chaney's Dairy Barn in Bowling Green	%	4.62	3.08	7.69	0.00	12.31	1.54	
	count/ <i>liczba</i>	3	2	5	0	8	1	10
Jackson's Orchard in Bowling Green	%	3.13	0.00	4.69	0.00	6.25	1.56	
	count/ <i>liczba</i>	2	0	3	0	4	1	7
Trunnell's Farm Market in Utica	%	0.00	1.64	1.64	0.00	4.92	1.64	
	count/ <i>liczba</i>	0	1	1	0	3	1	3
Evans Orchard and Cider Mill in Georgetown	%	3.23	3.23	4.84	0.00	3.23	0.00	
	count/ <i>liczba</i>	2	2	3	0	2	0	3
Boyd Orchards in Versailles	%	1.67	0.00	1.67	0.00	1.67	0.00	
	count/ <i>liczba</i>	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
Hinton's Orchard and Farm Market in Hodgenville	%	0.00	0.00	3.39	0.00	1.69	0.00	
	count/ <i>liczba</i>	0	0	2	0	1	0	2
Fall on the Farm in Murray	%	67.44	60.47	34.88	1.16	1.16	8.14	
	count/ <i>liczba</i>	58	52	30	1	1	7	80

Source: own study

Źródło: opracowanie własne

The most interesting part was the education and games on the Fall on the Farm attraction, but this does not apply for the other attractions. The location also reached relatively higher scores and this can be said for all attractions. An unexpected result is the museum part at the attractions reached the lowest score, a total of only one vote was counted. Although at the local Fall on the Farm attraction the ability to buy local foods was not popular, at other attraction this opportunity was more important. The opposite results can be explained by the speciality of the local Fall on the Farm attraction as it is a temporary one week long attraction which is based on fun and educational programs rather than selling the local products.

Another aim of the research was to try determine the groups that come to visit the farm. By groups the accompanying persons are meant. In the questionnaire the following groups were given: Husband/wife, family without children, family with children, Friend, Group, Alone. The results for this list need to be evaluated carefully as the questioned people are mostly unmarried and have no children. This means that the “Husband/Wife” and the family (with children) groups cannot reach high levels, and probably would receive different votes if more people above the age of 40 would be asked. The result are summarised in Table 3, group “Husband/Wife” and “Family with children” have been removed due to the reasons mentioned above.

The most commonly, these attraction are visited with members of the family however this does not apply to the Fall on the Farm attraction, the explanation can be that most of the questioned people come to Murray to study and live in college rooms, therefore the family members are far away, thus friend (29%) and other groups (54%) are preferred. Although other attractions also show high percentage values for friends and groups it cannot be used for statistical conclusions due the small number of samples (count < 3).

Table 3. Accompanying people and agricultural attractions
Tabela 3. Osoby towarzyszące i atrakcje agroturystyczne

Attractions/Atrakcje		With whom did the respondent visit the agricultural attraction/Kto towarzyszy w zwiedzaniu atrakcyjnych miejsc				
		family/ rodzina	friend/ przyjaciel	group/ grupa	alone/ samotnie	total odpowiedzi/ liczba respondentów
Chaney’s Dairy Barn in Bowling Green	%	50,00	20,00	20,00	10,00	
	count/liczba	5	2	2	1	10
Jackson’s Orchard in Bowling Green	%	42,86	0,00	57,14	0,00	
	count/liczba	3	0	4	0	7
Trunnell’s Farm Mark in Utica	%	66,67	33,33	0,00	0,00	
	count/liczba	2	1	0	0	3
Evans Orchard and Cider Mill in Georgetown	%	100,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	
	count/liczba	3	0	0	0	3
Boyd Orchards in Versailles	%	100,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	
	count/liczba	1	0	0	0	1
Hinton’s Orchard and Farm Market in Hodgenville	%	0,00	0,00	50,00	50,00	
	count/liczba	0	0	1	1	2
Fall on the Farm in Murray	%	0,00	28,95	53,95	17,11	
	count/liczba	0	22	41	13	76

Source: own study

Źródło: opracowanie własne

Conclusions

The reasons for visiting agricultural attractions located in Kentucky was surveyed among the college students who are oriented towards agricultural sciences. The results, according to the answers given to the surveys, showed that the location of the attraction is important, many of the questioned people visited only the local attractions and did not travel large distances. The results also show that the marketing tools used by the attractions is not efficient, as most of the respondent have not heard about the listed specific attractions, those who do knew about the attraction mentioned that they heard about the attraction from a friend. Therefore an important factor is to prepare a usable marketing strategy. These attractions are mostly visited in groups/with family and not alone, thus the programs need to be created according to this. Among the most popular attractions are the corn maze, farmer markets and horse farms or animal racing attractions. The first two of these attractions can be created relatively easily, thus it is advised to make this small investment.

This research showed that agricultural attraction can be good tools to reach the local people, but did not prove that they have the attracting power to convince potential visitors living far away to come and visit the agricultural attraction and spent a few nights nearby.

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Streszczenie

Na Węgrzech większość najsłabiej rozwiniętych obszarów opiera swój rozwój na rolnictwie. Podjęto próbę określenia różnych czynników wpływających na ten rozwój w celu zmniejszenia dystansu między słabo rozwiniętymi regionami a tymi najlepiej rozwijającymi się. Jednym z tych elementów jest traktowanie obszarów wiejskich jako atrakcji turystycznej. Podejście takie zastosowano na przykładzie amerykańskiego stanu Kentucky, który również należy do najsłabiej rozwiniętych, a w którym turystykę potraktowano jako produkt marketingowy rolnictwa. Badanie przeprowadzono metodą kwestionariuszową w obiektach turystycznych oferujących usługi bazujące na rolnictwie. Stwierdzono, że ich strategie marketingowe nie są na tyle efektywne, aby zachęcić turystów z odległych rejonów do zwiedzania tych atrakcji.

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