

## Education as an Important Factor in the Exercise of Agro-tourism Activities

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### Abstract

*In Kosovo after 1999 when the armed conflict ended, a large part of its citizens did not have adequate education and this has directly impacted on the standard of living and the way of exercising economic activities. Seeking a quick alternative to doing business and rebuilding the economy of the country, some of the important sectors of the economy were forgotten and the main focus was the trading of imported goods, the increase of hotel and restaurant capacity, but an important sector as agriculture was forgotten. In this aspect, the level of education and the preparation of human resources for the labor market also fell. As a result of this, we have an awareness beyond each level with the advantages that may arise from the development of agro-tourism in relation to the development of the country's economy and the improvement of the quality of life. In order to reflect the impact of education on the development of agro-tourism and the reasons why farmers would practice or why they would not pursue agro-touristic activities, we conducted a study involving 150 respondents and their analysis was done according to the log model of variance by extracting some average data according to the need of our study and utilizing this data to achieve results. The study is presented by tables and graphs according to the results obtained from the research.*

**Key words:** *education, agro-tourism, development, farm.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In order to develop the country as quickly as possible and with ideas and alternatives that can easily lead to the development of certain spaces and areas, we were encouraged to raise this problem by addressing agro-tourism as an alternative for development.

Although a new form of tourism, agro-tourism in many parts of the world is seen as one of the most attractive alternatives to relax and overcome daily monotony from extremely urbanized spaces. To practice organized business activities or to transform farm activities into complementary businesses, farmers should have basic knowledge of the benefits that come from this or have basic education.

On the subject that we have dealt with in this paper, the main problem lies in the low education of farmers and the impact it has on farmers' perceptions of agro-tourism. To assess the impact that the level of farmer education can have, we have conducted a survey activity for farmers in the western area of Kosovo in this study, from which we have made some conclusions about the topic being raised. The main topics addressed in the questionnaire concern the level of education of farmers, the reasons why they would start an agro-touristic activity, have they ever heard of agro-tourism and whether they would like them to start an agro-touristic activity.

From the answers provided by the respondents, we find that a large number of respondents have a low level of education and as such they find it difficult to organize tourist activities within their farms, much less to understand the benefits that they can come from agro-touristic activities within the farm. It is now well-known on some of the main reasons why people, in our case farmers, try to find alternatives for the

realization of jobs inside and outside the farm, which can be: increase of family income, increase of life quality, employment of family members and the like. Education ultimately plays an important role in achieving these goals and achieving them in the easiest way.

## **2. MAIN OBJECTIVE**

Through this paper we intend to analyze the importance of the education of farmers in relation to the exercise of agro-tourism activities. All this was accomplished by surveying as the most appropriate way to obtain the necessary results. So the main purpose is to research on what is the role of educating farmers in the level of information about agrotourism and the pursuit of agro-tourism activities. We aim to see this paper as a good initiative for researchers in this field for the future. This paper addresses the education of farmers as a theme to be faced by all those who think to develop tourism in general and in particular agrotourism in Peja region as one of the most attractive municipalities for tourism in Kosovo.

## **3. THE ROLE OF FARMERS' EDUCATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRO-TOURISM ACTIVITIES ON THE FARM**

From life experience, we can understand that education changes human life almost completely. In order to have management skills and to perceive what the market requires, of course, farmers should be educated and in this spirit to increase and expand the new capacities within the farm. Of course, we can ask whether the generations ahead of us, which have established a strong base for us, precisely by exercising their activity as farmer and although not so much educated how they have achieved it? But we should find answers to this question by asking again, so if they had the opportunity of education and

awareness on the level and opportunities we have today?! Today we can find abundant material in relation to consumer education (consumer education is one of the main elements in the segmentation of the market in agro tourism)<sup>1</sup>, but it is not the same situation in the literature which describes the education of the farmer and the role of education in this matter. The fact that the "low" part of society has to deal with farming and farm activities, now needs to be overcome and changed by our society. We should think about agriculture in general and in particular about agro-tourism and how to turn it into a professional school by turning the farm into a loving and profitable place for man. At this point we have found the main motivation to approach this topic.

#### **4. METHODOLOGY**

Our research has focused on surveying some of the area's farmers, where we see the real possibility of starting agro-touristic activities. For this purpose, questionnaires were used which represent the opinions of farmers in relation to agro-tourism, depending on the level of education they have. Therefore, tables and figures are used to show the results of the survey. The log model is used to derive the additive values that the development of agro-tourism in the country is from the level of education of respondents, respectively the influence of education on respondents to understand agro-tourism as a phenomenon. Also is used the literature which presents important data from different authors. The logit model is used to test the dependence on the development of agro-tourism in the country by the level of education of respondents, respectively the influence of education on respondents to understand agro-tourism as a phenomenon.

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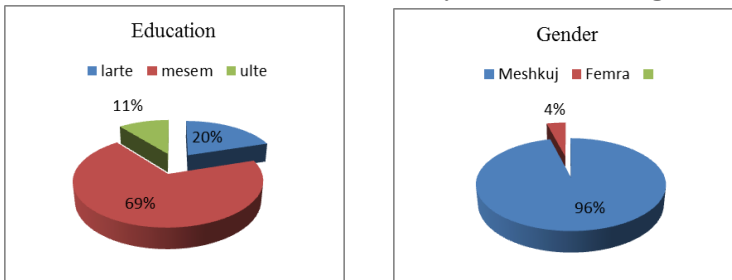
<sup>1</sup> Sznajder M. Przebórska L. Scrimgeour F. "Agritourism," 2009.

## 5. RESULTS

Based on the data collection by the municipal centers in which the survey activity (Peja, Deçan, Istog and Klina) has expanded, the respondents' demographics show that a total of 150 people were interviewed, out of which 144 were males and 6 females or expressed in percentage over 96% of respondents are males, this difference stems from the nature of the farm work. If we analyze their education level then we see that 30 of respondents have a high level of education, 104 have medium level and 16 of them have low levels of education, while the average age of respondents is 43 years.

In order to have an overview of this, in figure 1 we have presented the data on the gender and level of education of the respondents, from which we can see that the majority of the surveyed farmers have the secondary level of education and the farms are dominated by male, so most of them are managed by males:

**Figure 1: Presentation of farmers' data by education and gender in%.**



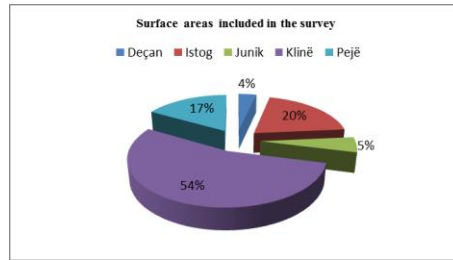
*Source: author*

So, seeing in the figure, we can understand that 69% of respondents have secondary education, 20% high school and 11% have low education.

Our survey activity is carried out in different areas of Kosovo's western region and for the result we have different spaces included in the survey. In order to present the surface

area of farms taken into consideration during the survey process, figure 2 shows the data for the areas of the farms included in the survey:

**Fig. 2. Surface areas of the farms included in the survey**



Source: author

As seen in Figure 2, we can understand that the largest areas of agricultural holdings are located in smaller municipalities where urbanization of the areas is more delayed and agricultural lands are still preserved for agricultural purposes. Expressed in percentage, Klina municipality has larger farms (54%) followed by Istogu with 20%. To understand the level of knowledge on agro-tourism or whether farmers have ever heard of agro-tourism, we have given a question to the questionnaire whether they have ever heard of agro-tourism and respondents responded as in table 1:

**Table 1: Have you ever heard of agro-tourism?**

Var.	No	Yes	Grand Total
Deçan	3		3
Istog	1	3	4
Junik		2	2
Klinë	3	4	7
Pejë	37	96	133
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>149</b>

Source: author

From the data in table 1 we can understand that over 70% of respondents have heard of agro-tourism but do not substantially recognize it as an activity, while the rest of the

surveyed farmers have never heard of agro-tourism. Desiring to understand the dependence on the listening to agro-tourism from the educational level of the surveyed farmers, we have continued to elaborate this subordinate method through log method and the results are as follows:

**Table 2: Dependence analysis according to the log model**

Dependent Variable: DEGJ				
Method: ML – Binary Logit				
Sample(adjusted): 1 149				
Included observations: 145				
Excluded observations: 4 after adjusting endpoints				
Convergence achieved after 5 iterations				
Covariance matrix computed using second derivatives				
Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	z-Statistic	Prob.
C	-1.106862	0.722873	-1.531199	0.1257
DISTR	-0.077275	0.038374	-2.013718	0.0440
ED	1.116304	0.391960	2.848004	0.0044
KONTR	0.898868	0.489615	1.835868	0.0664
PUN	2.046974	1.076620	1.901295	0.0573
Mean dependent var	0.696552	S.D. dependent var		0.461341
S.E. of regression	0.417650	Akaike info criterion		1.073922
Sum squared resid	24.42037	Schwarz criterion		1.176568
Log likelihood	-72.85936	Hannan-Quinn criter.		1.115631
Restr. log likelihood	-88.99488	Avg. log likelihood		-0.502478
LR statistic (4 df)	32.27102	McFadden R-squared		0.181308
Probability(LR stat)	1.68E-06			
Obs with Dep=0	44	Total obs		145
Obs with Dep=1	101			

*Source: author*

If we analyze the degree of probability in the model, then we can see that farmers have heard about agro-tourism depending on the distance of the market (DISTR), the state contribution (KONTR), and whether the farmer is working (PUN), therefore, at the hearing rate for agro-tourism all the variables included in the model have affected, but the most reliable value represents the farmer's education (ED). So, directly, the rate of listening to agro-tourism is related to the education of farmers. Although their farms are active and very functional in the production of agricultural products, however, not all farmers have ever had a tourist visit to those farms. Table 3 shows the answers given to the question whether farmers have ever

received a tourist in their bed, presented by gender and level of education:

**Table 3: Have you ever expected agro-tourists , by municipality, gender, and education?**

Variablat	f	f Total	m			m Total	Grand Total
	M		L	M	U		
Deçan				2	1	3	3
Jo				2	1	3	3
Istog	1	1		3		3	4
Jo				3		3	3
Po	1	1					1
Junik			1	1		2	2
Jo			1	1		2	2
Klinë				6	1	7	7
Jo				5	1	6	6
Po				1		1	1
Pejë	5	5	29	86	13	128	133
Jo	2	2	21	59	10	90	92
Po	3	3	8	27	3	38	41
Grand Total	6	6	30	98	15	143	149

*Source: author*

Although most of the surveyed farmers had heard about agro-tourism, over 70% of them never had a tourist on their farm (as in table 3). This is due to the low level of education and the lack of information on benefits that may arise from agro-tourism activities.

During the survey process, data were collected that clearly show the impact of education on the activity of agro-tourism in farms.

In this way, we can understand that as a result of the low level of education of farmers in Kosovo, we still have no awareness of this part of society about the great opportunities that opens the farm for local and foreign tourists, so the addition of additional activities to activities that occur daily on the farm. From the results of this study we can also understand that the largest number of farms that are functional and surveyed are stretched precisely to areas where economic



development and overall infrastructure are at a very low level, which implies that We also have this level of awareness in relation to agro-tourism.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

From the results obtained in this paper we can conclude that the education of farmers can be considered as a very important element in the exercise of agro-tourism activities.

As an element of such importance, the education of farmers should be advanced and thus facilitated the conversion of traditional farm activities into a profitable business for the farmer.

It remains the responsibility of central and local institutions to support farmers in this way and to open a new door to development for the country.

## **CONSULTED LITERATURE**

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