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A Systematic Literature Review of Empowering Women's Entrepreneurial Role in Agritourism, A Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy and Business Model

This is the final peer-reviewed author's accepted manuscript (postprint) of the following publication:

Published Version:
Salameh, K., Ghelfi, R., Castellini, A., Gori, F. (2026). A Systematic Literature Review of Empowering Women's Entrepreneurial Role in Agritourism, A Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy and Business Model. BIO-BASED AND APPLIED ECONOMICS, Special Issue 14th AIEAA Conference, 1-41 [10.36253/bae-19187].

Availability:
This version is available at: https://hdl.handle.net/11585/1075912 since: 2026-08-04

Published:

DOI: http://doi.org/10.36253/bae-19187

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16 September 2026

Women's Entrepreneurship in Agritourism: A Systematic Literature Review of Challenges and Coping Strategies in Rural Contexts

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This article has been accepted for publication and undergone full peer review but has not been through the copyediting, typesetting, pagination and proofreading process, which may lead to differences between this version and the Version of Record.
Please cite this article as:

Salameh K., Ghelfi R., Castellini A., Gori F. (in press). Women's Entrepreneurship in Agritourism: A Systematic Literature Review of Challenges and Coping Strategies in Rural Contexts, *Bio-based and Applied Economics* Just Accepted. DOI:10.36253/bae-19187

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Abstract

Agritourism encompassing agriculture and tourism has been widely studied in literature for decades. This field is intrinsically challenging for its operators to maintain a successful endeavour. However, the role of women in agritourism and the challenges they face are different than those confronted by men. The article presents a systematic review of the academic literature regarding the themes emerging when surveying the topic of women in agritourism and rural tourism. Scopus database was used for literature selection. The identification and eligibility processes of the selected articles for review purposes were performed following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta Analysis (PRISMA) method and seven major themes emerged. The results show that the social pillar is the most studied factor for the empowerment of women and

their long-term business success. Additionally, among other important factors, endorsements of authorities through targeted policies for gender balance are of vital importance.

Keywords: Agritourism; Women Entrepreneurship; Rural Tourism; Rural Development; Sustainability

JEL codes: B55; J16; O13

1. Introduction

Over the past decades, the role of women in agriculture has progressively evolved from that of a largely invisible family labour to that of an active economic agent and rural entrepreneur (Seuneke & Bock, 2015). Early strands of literature focused primarily on women's contributions within household responsibilities and farm continuity, whereas more recent approaches emphasize women's agency, autonomy, and entrepreneurial capacity within broader rural development processes (Shortall, 2004). This theoretical shift has been closely associated with wider debates on gender equality, empowerment, and the sustainability of rural livelihoods, highlighting women's increasingly strategic role in shaping rural economies and development pathways (Agarwal, 1997; Bock, 2015; Doss et al., 2018) as well as farm entrepreneurial paths (Seuneke & Bock, 2015).

Women contribution to agritourism activities is gaining traction globally. Those successful entrepreneurs maintain a sustainable development of rural and disadvantageous areas (Martini et al., 2020). Agritourism has emerged as a strategic space for women to combine productive and social roles through entrepreneurial trajectories. It is intertwined with the multifunctional paradigm of agriculture where farms are not only sites of food production but also as providers of social, cultural, and environmental services. This paradigm has contributed to redefining women's roles

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in rural areas, enabling the construction of new professional identities as rural and agritourism entrepreneurs (Seuneke & Bock, 2015). Nonetheless, women's success in agritourism is shaped by access to multiple forms of capital, not only financial but also social as in family and community support (Su et al., 2024; Vukovic et al., 2023). This sociocultural dimension plays a crucial role in entrepreneurial performance and resilience (Dong & Khan, 2023; Ursić et al., 2023).

Agritourism with agriculture at its core has traditionally been perceived as dominated by men's presence, making gender relations and power dynamics central analytical dimensions (Wright & Annes, 2014). Cultural norms, financial barriers, and institutional constraints have historically limited women's access to leadership and entrepreneurial positions (Gil Arroyo et al., 2019). However, changing social norms, higher education levels, and evolving succession strategies have opened opportunities for women as farm successors and agritourism entrepreneurs (Heggem, 2014; Sugimoto, 2022).

It is worthwhile looking into some official definitions of agritourism globally. The National Agricultural Library of the US Department of Agriculture defines agritourism as the following:

"Agritourism is a form of commercial enterprise that links agricultural production and/or processing with tourism to attract visitors onto a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for the purposes of entertaining or educating the visitors while generating income for the farm, ranch, or business owner" (National Agricultural Library - US Department of Agriculture). This definition is derived from the National Agricultural Law Center where it states that the field of agritourism is growing in popularity. However, it comes with its shares of challenges to its operators (The National Agricultural Law Center).

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Alternatively, rural tourism in the European Union (EU) has its origins in agritourism and farm stays. It brings benefits to rural communities yet burdens those areas. Nonetheless, not all tourism in rural areas is considered rural tourism (Šajn & Finer, 2023) where at times it is seen as complimentary to other activities that aids Gross Domestic Product (GDP) development and sustain income in times of seasonal fluctuations (UN Tourism). The European Parliament understands the importance of rural tourism in attaining sustainability of rural areas. It reduces inequality and provides opportunities for women employment. Therefore, the European Commission and upon the specific request of the Parliament is setting specific budget for agritourism under the new Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) (Šajn & Finer, 2023). This policy framework underscores the relevance of agritourism for sustainability, gender equality, and employment opportunities for women in rural regions.

The future of the agritourism sector is therefore closely linked to women's entrepreneurial participation, particularly in the context of generational renewal and succession planning, which can act as a revitalisation mechanism for rural areas (Sugimoto, 2022). Involvement in agribusiness tasks is a demanding activity and family support is of myriad importance for women (Makandwa & de Klerk, 2024). Their success relies not only on the financial bottom line but also on the positive contribution to society (Meutia et al., 2022). Small scale cooperatives in rural and mountainous areas are a viable option for women to contribute to their community (Chatzitheodoridis et al., 2016). While their motivations and goals are shared globally, some cultures are more accepting than others (Nordbø, 2022). Women's evaluation of success looks at customers' feedback as one of the essential aspects in their businesses (Halim et al., 2020).

Stakeholders support for women farm initiatives in terms of policies is as an important pillar for success (Halim et al., 2020; Schmidt et al., 2021). However, policy implementation remains the

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differentiating factor for this pragmatic success. It might be weak in some geographical areas and not yielding the intended benefit (Durán-Díaz et al., 2020). However, women's empowerment is through nourishing their education and skills to maintain an independent status as an agritourism owner (Heggem, 2014). Education and training should not be limited to them but rather extended to the whole community and government officials (Marwah, 2019).

Henceforth, this systematic literature review is aimed at analysing existing research on women's roles in agritourism, with particular attention to entrepreneurial challenges and adaptive strategies across rural contexts. By situating women's agritourism entrepreneurship within broader debates on gender, agriculture, and rural development, the review seeks to identify key thematic patterns and gaps in the literature, thereby offering a structured contribution to ongoing scholarly and policy discussions.

Agritourism and rural tourism are closely related yet conceptually distinct forms of tourism. Agritourism refers to tourism activities directly associated with agricultural operations and farm-based diversification, whereas rural tourism encompasses a broader range of tourism activities in rural areas, including agritourism. This review adopts agritourism as its primary analytical focus while drawing on the wider rural tourism literature to examine gender as well as women-related dynamics relevant to rural entrepreneurial contexts. This allows the review to situate women's agritourism entrepreneurship within broader rural tourism discussions while maintaining conceptual clarity.

The overall structure of the paper is the following: Section 2 describes the methodology adopted and the methods followed to arrive to the results listed in Section 3 which provides the main findings of the review. Section 4 comprises the discussion and concluding remarks.

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2. Materials and Methods

A systematic review of the literature was conducted for the analysis of the relevancy of articles pertaining to women's role in agritourism (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta Analysis (PRISMA) method is utilized along with the 17 items constituting a guideline checklist (Abelha et al., 2020; Shamseer et al., 2015). These tools act as a hedging method to minimize bias in the review process and ensure quality assurance throughout the literature assessment. This streamlines the work to become transparent and readily replicable (Shamseer et al., 2015).

PRISMA adheres to high standards in terms of assessing, evaluating, summarizing and disseminating evidence which are the cornerstone of a systematic literature review to optimize the research findings. It has a visual pillar that captures and simplifies the reviewed materials and identifies the reasons of inclusion and exclusion. All these aspects are depicted through a flow chart in figure 1 streamlining the steps undertaken in identifying, screening, determining eligibility and thus including and excluding each individual article for analysis purposes.

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Figure 1: PRISMA Flowchart Criteria for Inclusion and Exclusion of Literature (source: Own Elaboration)

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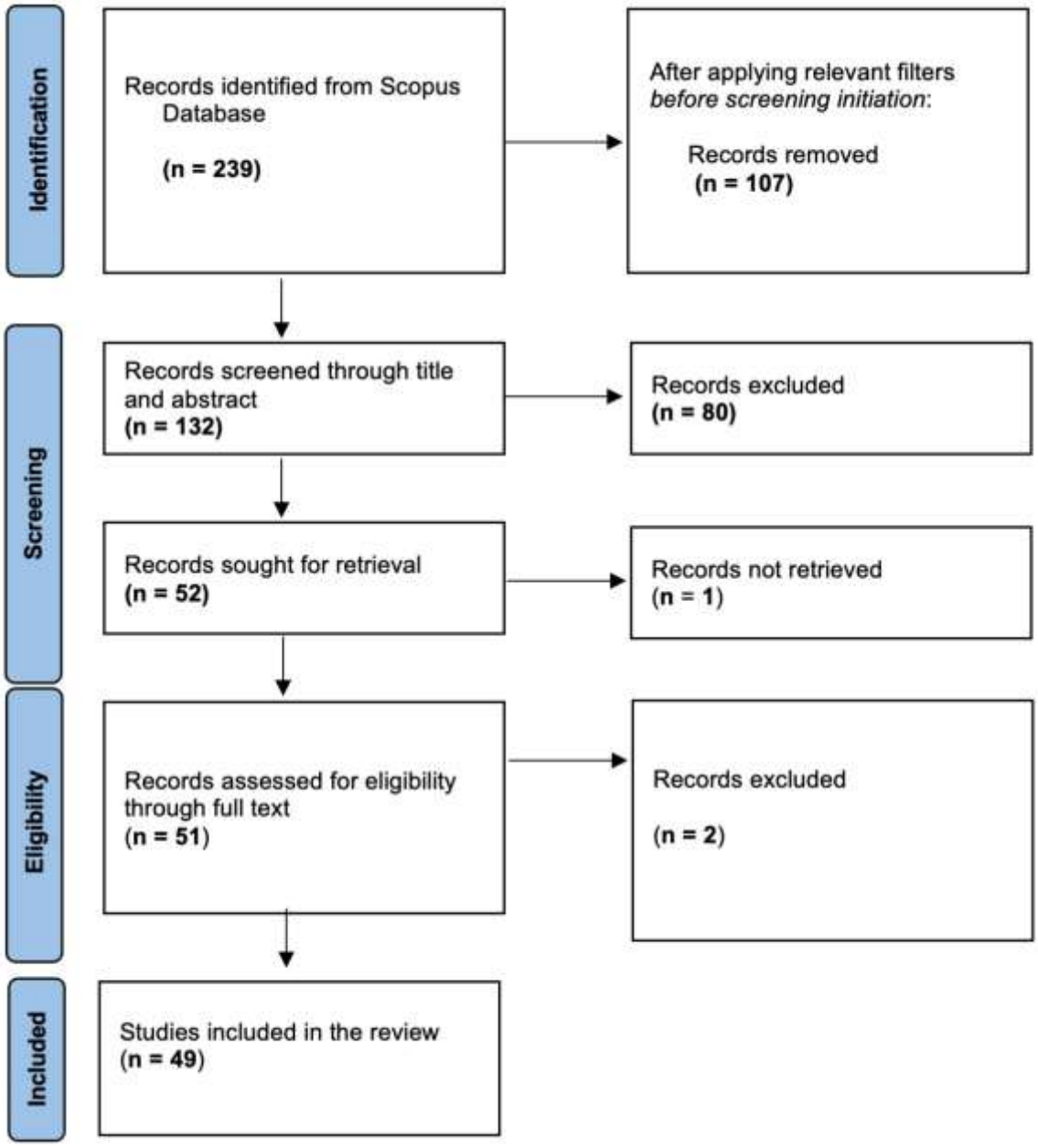

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142 Scopus is selected as the database of choice for this literature review. It contains high calibre
143 publications, peer reviewed as well as multidisciplinary which facilitates the review from multiple
144 approaches (Baas et al., 2020).

145 The keywords identified for the search through Scopus are: gender AND agritourism OR female
146 AND rural AND tourism OR wom?n AND agritourism. These keywords were chosen to

147 understand the topic of challenges faced by females in the context of agritourism and tourism in
148 rural environments. The keywords are limited for the title, abstract and keywords. The other
149 parameters for conducting the search are: The language is only English, and the documents
150 selected are articles. The extraction of literature material covers a period from 2014-2024 (up
151 until August 2024). A total of 132 articles were identified, as detailed in Table 1.

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163 Table 1. Final Search String Used in the Study

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Database	Search String	No. of Results
Scopus	(TITLE-ABS-KEY(gender AND agritourism) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY(female AND rural AND tourism) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY(wom?n AND agritourism)) AND PUBYEAR > 2013 AND PUBYEAR < 2025 AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))	132

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165 Focusing on this time window allows the review to reflect on contemporary empirical evidence.
166 The choice of the period is suggested by a methodological justification consistent with best
167 practices in systematic reviews (Furuya-Kanamori et al., 2023).

168 Inclusion and exclusion criteria were defined to ensure relevance to the research objectives. The
169 filters were: Only peer-reviewed journal articles were included. Non-English publications, non-
170 article document types, including book chapters, project reports, working papers, and others were
171 not selected. Studies not addressing women's roles, gender dynamics, or entrepreneurship in
172 agritourism or rural tourism were excluded. This criterion balances methodological rigor, while
173 ensuring transparency and replicability of the review process. Agritourism constitutes the core
174 focus of the review, while the broader rural tourism literature was incorporated to capture women's
175 roles and entrepreneurial challenges in rural settings.

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Although sustainability was not used as a keyword in the search, it constitutes an analytical dimension captured implicitly through studies. Women's entrepreneurial activities in agritourism contribute to sustainable rural development which were systematically integrated into the review.

The process for selecting the relevant articles for the literature review consists of four stages: identification, screening, eligibility and included and is depicted in Figure 1. The initial stage consisted of 239 articles identified on Scopus before applying the discussed filters. The screening stage was conducted as follows: 132 articles were reviewed based on the title and abstract information. Papers deemed not valid in relation to the main topic were excluded. Such papers have not dealt directly with the topic of agritourism and rural tourism. Therefore, those deemed not meeting the eligibility criteria were 80 articles. This resulted in 52 studies eligible for continuing to the next phases which entails going through in-depth analysis of all sections of the paper. One paper could not be retrieved. Then, two articles were excluded. One is a literature review itself, the other had only the abstract in English. Therefore, 49 articles were considered in this systematic literature review.

Moreover, the review includes secondary data retrieved from multiple sources including the European Commission reports, Eurostat and The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the National Agricultural Library of the US Department of Agriculture as well as the National Agricultural Law Center among many others.

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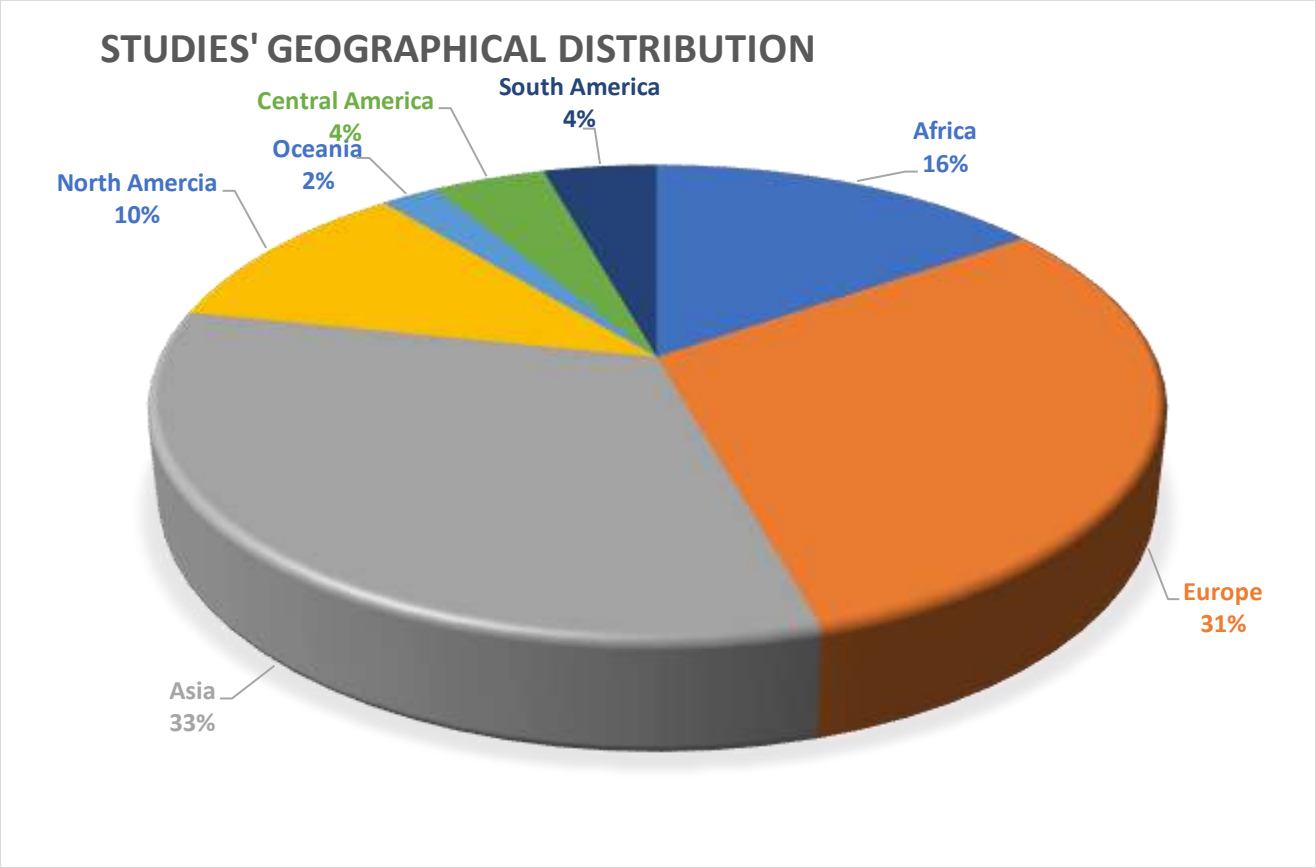
3. Results

The results are presented below based on the stages and reviews conducted.

3.1 Analysis of the Selected Literature

Figure 2: Geographical Regions Pie Chart of the Reviewed Literature (source: Own Elaboration)



The reviewed literature covers articles that are published in almost every continent. Figure 2 captures the distribution and percentages of the reviewed literature among continents. The majority are in Asia at 33% and its varied regions. As an example, Asian studies cover the ones published in Japan, China and a host of other countries as well as those in the Middle East in the Western part of the Asian Continent. The second most frequent number of published studies are in Europe

at 31% where much effort is dedicated to investigating the role of women agritourism operators and other forms of rural tourism. Then the African continent appears as another hub with 16% of the articles that is closely monitoring the topic. Also, North America with 10% followed by it Central American and Southern American parts with 4% each are also interested to comprehend women's contribution and the empowerment tactics behind it. Finally, Oceania at 2% also appears to have a contribution in the studies.

As for the trends in the years of publications, as it is evident in Figure 3, by the year 2020 the number of publications has gained traction. This signals a spiked interest in the topic among various nations globally. On average starting from 2018, the number of publications is on an upward trajectory peaking in 2020. Following this particular year, many several international events took place including the Covid-19 Pandemic and numerous wars. This may have disrupted the complete upward trend in publications as attention of academic research in agricultural economics, social sciences and other related disciplines might have shifted towards other fields than women empowerment. The apparent decline during 2017 reflects the application of screening criteria during the full-text selection phase rather than an actual decrease in scientific production.

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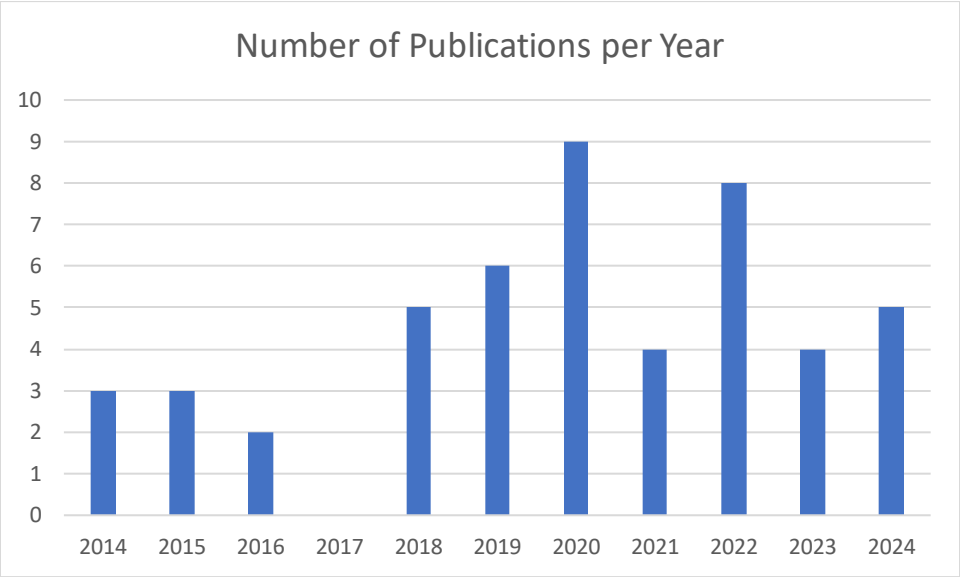
227 Figure 3: Publications Trend Annually for the Period 2014-2024



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229 The individual analysis of the selected articles revolves around the barriers and opportunities for
230 women in agritourism and rural tourism. Emerging subjects from the studies are grouped into
231 seven major categories as per Figure 4. It elaborates the themes and the frequency of occurrence
232 of each of them within the studied literature. Below are the themes and the number of articles
233 studying each of them, that is the frequency:

234 1. Sociocultural Capital, Local Networks and Cooperatives, 36 times

235 2. Financial Capital and Economic Empowerment, 26 times

236 3. Environment, Heritage and Rural Sustainability, 21 times

237 4. Autonomy, Motivations and Emancipation, 20 times

238 5. Policy Factors and Institutional Support, 12 times

239 6. Education, Training and Awareness, 12 times

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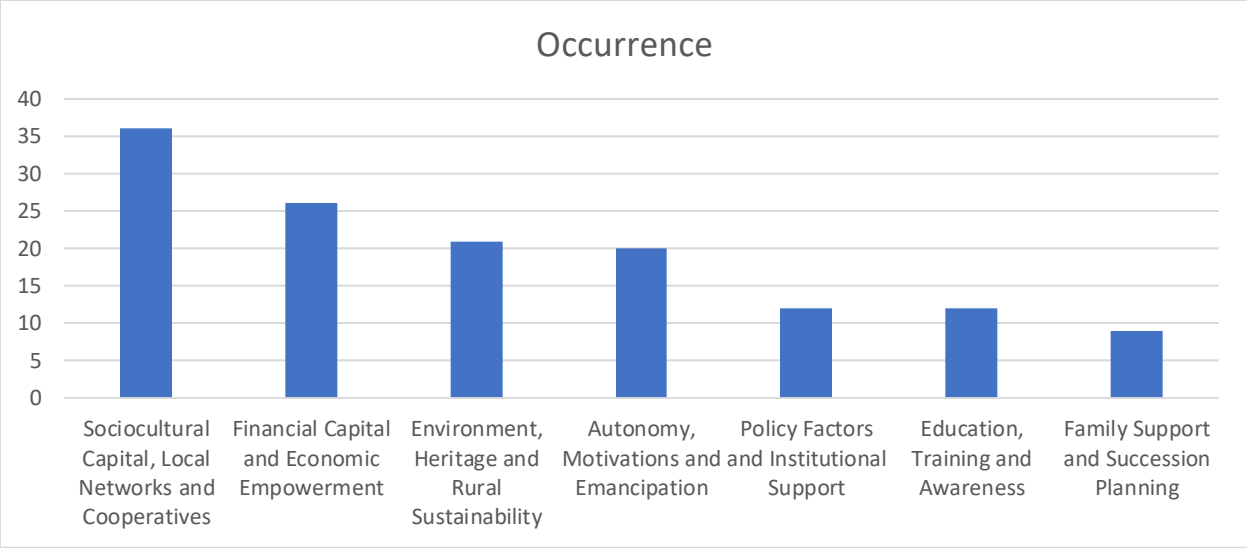
7. Family Support and Succession Planning, 9 times

Figure 4: Themes Frequencies Chart of the Reviewed Literature (source: Own Elaboration)



3.1.1 Sociocultural Capital, Local Networks and Cooperatives

The sociocultural dimension of women in agritourism is the most studied topic in the literature. It comprises the essential factors they need for their sustainable success. The number of articles is 36 and their percentage is roughly 73.4 % making it an overwhelmingly discussed topic in the selected literature. This prominence reflects the recognition that sociocultural resources are foundational to women's entrepreneurial agency and sustainability in agritourism ventures.

Social capital is understood as the set of social relationships, norms, and networks that enable individuals to access resources, exercise agency, and pursue collective and individual goals. Drawing on established theoretical perspectives, social capital can be analytically distinguished into bonding, bridging, and linking forms, which are variably mobilised by women agritourism

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entrepreneurs across contexts. Social capital is the societal impetus for women to excel in their endeavours and elevate their socioeconomic status (Obeidat & Hamadneh, 2022; Persson et al., 2022; Pike et al., 2024). It is especially prominent in marginalised regions, including Andean communities, where agritourism contributes not only to economic outcomes but also to women's social, psychological, and political empowerment (Gil Arroyo et al., 2019). It is emphasized by socioeconomic contribution to the life of the whole community (Durán-Díaz et al., 2020; Jaafar et al., 2015). Moreover, young working population rates and those of ladies add dynamism to rural areas and attract visitors (Soronellas-Masdeu et al., 2014; Tenie (Vasile-Tudor) & Fîntîneru, 2020; Uduji et al., 2021).

Bridging social capital emerges through participation in local networks, cooperatives, and community-based tourism initiatives, facilitating access to new knowledge, markets, and collaborative opportunities. Tourism initiatives in less favoured and mountainous areas often require strong collective action to remain viable (Eberline, 2022; Khazami et al., 2024; Li & Nakatsuka, 2020; Uduji et al., 2021; Yaja et al., 2023). Mountain tourism is one such type and it provides entrepreneurial opportunities for women to play an essential role in the development of such marginal areas. Local networks are equally essential for them to exchange intangible assets and grow their businesses (Alrwajfah et al., 2020). Therefore, sociocultural rural capital is a lifeline in remote areas and plays a vital role for women's active responsibility in the improvement of such zones (Ursić et al., 2023).

According to Persson et al. (2022) linking social capital, which connects women entrepreneurs to institutional actors, policymakers, and external organisations, is critical for accessing resources, legitimacy, and decision-making power. Several studies emphasise that women's entrepreneurial

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success depends on their ability to navigate and renegotiate local power relations to become autonomous decision-makers. This is further enforced by the notion of different managerial styles exhibited by the two genders (Moswete et al., 2019). While men prefer more individualistic management styles, women tend to lean towards shared management. Nonetheless, in rural tourism where wine tourism comes into play, women display a sense of autonomy and empowerment (Pato et al., 2024; Su et al., 2024). All these factors combined elevate the social and cultural status of rural areas especially when such initiatives are spearheaded by dynamic women (Annes & Wright, 2015; D'Oronzio & Pascarelli, 2016; Heggem, 2014; Khatiwada & Silva, 2015).

As for women cooperatives in mountainous regions, they are formed on a small scale. This renders them vulnerable for the long-term survival (Morgan & Winkler, 2020). Hence, continuous search for young members is indispensable and consequently the awareness among the local population for increased participation is essential (Chatzitheodoridis et al., 2016). Additionally, Self-Help Groups (SHG) is an important initiative. In Serbia, it is a sustainable tool for women in the countryside to make an impact on their community (Vukovic et al., 2023). This generates a new kind of capital that is needed for their active engagement. It is the social capital that boosts women's commitment to business in communities (Uduji et al., 2020; Tenzin et al., 2019; Dong & Khan, 2023).

Women active in community-based tourism and agritourism often act as intermediaries capable of linking multiple stakeholders and bridging social capital (Meutia et al., 2022; Navas-Camargo et al., 2018; Obeidat & Hamadneh, 2022). Even though communities are an important source of social power, education for risk-taking acumen is equally essential for women entrepreneurs to efficiently benefit from initiatives like microfinance (Bayno & Jani, 2018; Marwah, 2019; Suadi

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et al., 2019). Another successful case is women's agritourism network in Southern France for Roquefort cheese production. Tourists can experience a new dimension of rural life that is mingled with cultural and agricultural aspects (Wright & Annes, 2014). Hence, social networks constitute some of the essential elements for social learning and empowerment (Ohe, 2018). When one gender dominates in rural tourism, it becomes difficult for new ideas to emerge. Men in rural Japan are negative towards tourism. This impedes the role of women to be empowered for farm stays (Li & Nakatsuka, 2020). These findings underscore the need to consider sociocultural power relations as both enabling and constraining factors in women's agritourism entrepreneurship.

3.1.2 Financial Capital and Economic Empowerment

Along the studied literature, 26 articles have elaborated the importance of accessing financial capital. Tourism activities in rural areas aid the financial subsistence of women in these deprived belts despite cultural obstacles (Durán-Díaz et al., 2020; Gil Arroyo et al., 2019; Moswete et al., 2019; Nordbø, 2022; Su et al., 2024; Tenie (Vasile-Tudor) & Fîntîneru, 2020; Uduji et al., 2021; Vukovic et al., 2023). Some areas in Europe experience challenges in their development due to the lack of financial capital. A typical case scenario of a geographical terrain that endures this hardship would be touristic islands. Women need this capital to ensure the development of these islands (Ursić et al., 2023). Similarly, mountainous and other rural areas experience decline if no efforts were kept in place through dynamic young women members (Chatzitheodoridis et al., 2016; Soronellas-Masdeu et al., 2014). In Europe, women's share of wealth is assessed to be between 40% to 45%. However, the challenge is in the investment aspect which is significantly lower than men (European Commission, 2022). An endorsement to this is through a microfinance initiative in a village in Bali, Indonesia set to enhance fisheries and tourism sector. The credit activity to

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businesses showed that women use fewer financial resources (Suadi et al., 2019). According to Obeidat and Hamadneh (2022), in Jordan agritourism enhances the financial and social lives of women. This equally ensures business continuance as the source of motivation in farm tourism (Bhatta et al., 2020; Halim et al., 2020; Navas-Camargo et al., 2018; Savage et al., 2022). Farms' income will be diversified, a trait shared by both genders (Heggem, 2014; Shahzad et al., 2021). However, women's presence on board must be delicately planned as with less experience profitability decreases (Alrwajfah et al., 2020; Bayno & Jani, 2018; Hollas et al., 2021; Jaafar et al., 2015; Khatiwada & Silva, 2015).

Alternatively, areas near metropolitan settings experience higher contribution of women farmers. One of the most prevailing farm management undertakings is agritourism. Other activities include horticulture and small-scale livestock production (Schmidt et al., 2021). Having more women running Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) would increase their economic empowerment creating products tailored for their needs (European Commission, 2022). Women can capture the benefits of tourism in coastal areas when the right assets are present, spearheaded by capital ones (Pike et al., 2024).

However, women's access to capital resources is challenging as per the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI). On average, women in the European Union have better opportunities than those in other countries (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2023). Women's contribution to agritourism development and other forms of guesthouse-based tourism ownership is of critical importance (Bhatta et al., 2020; Moswete et al., 2019). However, at times women hold a negative view of agritourism's potential contribution, hence they would

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refrain from engaging due to unfavourable views of the tourism's economic impact (Alrwajfah et al., 2020).

3.1.3 Environment, Heritage and Rural Sustainability

The number of studies in this area is 21 emphasizing the importance of agritourism in heritage preservation. Women are interested in the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) aspect when choosing to invest. This entails social and environmental effects on top of the financial gains (European Commission, 2022). Gastronomy and wine tourism are on the rise in many destinations offering proposals in cultural heritage and the uniqueness of the place (UN Tourism). This is also true in differentiating the locality through indigenous communities (Durán-Díaz et al., 2020; Kimengsi et al., 2019). All of this is at the core of agritourism. Many women-led initiatives focus on the environmental aspects as manifested in an agricultural village in Jordan (Obeidat & Hamadneh, 2022). Another similar trait is exhibited in rural Japan (Sugimoto, 2022) and many other countries (Bhatta et al., 2020; Biernat et al., 2018; Halim et al., 2020; Marwah, 2019; Soronellas-Masdeu et al., 2014; Tenie (Vasile-Tudor) & Fîntîneru, 2020; Wright & Annes, 2014).

Some nations are aligning tourism and non-tourism programs. Thailand is positioning its Bio-Circular Green Economy Plan in line with initiatives for tourism recovery. Opportunities for agritourism and community-based tourism are sustained with new endeavours (The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2022). Also, mountain tourism is community-based. Women's management in mountainous tourism establishments is characterized by authenticity. Their entrepreneurial direction is guided by experientiality and innovation in this sector (Martini et al., 2020). Women in agritourism diversify agricultural products and establish community links (Heggem, 2014; Hollas et al., 2021; Meutia et al., 2022; Navas-Camargo et al.,

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2018; Obeidat & Hamadneh, 2022; Ohe, 2018). However, training is essential for the success and profitability of the endeavours (Durán-Díaz et al., 2020; Hollas et al., 2021; Jaafar et al., 2015). Moreover, some agricultural activities are mainly dominated by women. One task is the harvesting of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPs) around the Mediterranean Basin. The manual picking by women safeguards a sustainable activity of forest management (Taghouti et al., 2022). Thus, they are sometimes more active in farm diversification activities (Shahzad et al., 2021). This provides an edge for women as more consumers are inclined towards organic farming. Young women farmers contribute to this practice, maintaining multiple sustainability fronts. Southern Italy experiences this activity in Lucanian agriculture where these young entrepreneurs contribute to natural and sociocultural sustainability (D'Oronzio & Pascarelli, 2016). Such fingerprints in tourism establishments in mountain areas are distinctive. These management styles are propelled by a sense of innovation that focuses on customers' unique and memorable experiences (Martini et al., 2020).

3.1.4 Autonomy, Motivations and Emancipation

Women's empowerment has its cornerstone in autonomy and motivation through managing own venture. Consequently, 20 studies analyse the importance of the emancipation effects of farm tourism. It leads the way for women to establish autonomous objectives and be motivated to earn an income to feel empowered and emancipated (Annes & Wright, 2015; Obeidat & Hamadneh, 2022; Pato et al., 2024; Vukovic et al., 2023). Tradition stands as a huge barrier for women to reap the benefits of agritourism (Gil Arroyo et al., 2019). Thus, the power of recognition of their activities in rural areas has positive repercussions (Taghouti et al., 2022). Women feel engaged within a community-based activity creating potential for others, diversifying activities and limiting

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mass exodus towards cities (Halim et al., 2020; Kimengsi et al., 2019; Savage et al., 2022; Yaja et al., 2023).

The geographical region in which women perform rural tourism affects their resilience. Western ideas of entrepreneurship are widespread paving the way for a better integration of women leadership. However different cultures mean diverse challenges (Nordbø, 2022; Persson et al., 2022). Having a capacity building attitude is often sought after for the success of women (Dong & Khan, 2023; Durán-Díaz et al., 2020; Makandwa & de Klerk, 2024; Marwah, 2019; Ohe, 2018). This is highly needed in certain cultures that refrain from risk taking leading to missed opportunities (Navas-Camargo et al., 2018; Suadi et al., 2019). Therefore, tourism in general helps to maintain a balance between genders and promotes women empowerment (Su et al., 2024).

3.1.5 Policy Factors and Institutional Support

The effect of policies is addressed 12 times out of the total sample. Mainly, tradition and cultural norms in rural areas form an obstacle for women's profound contribution in cultural tourism projects (Gil Arroyo et al., 2019; Uduji et al., 2020). Changing norms for better acceptance is vital. Regional institutions lead the way through various initiatives. Local organizations can smooth the transition of societies and better acceptance of women in managerial roles of agritourism (Khazami et al., 2024). However, in some instances, their management of agritourism have a negative association to profitability (Hollas et al., 2021). This raises the question if new policies need to address this correlation or extend amendments of existing ones. In the USA, several policy questions and interventions can aid farms with women management (Schmidt et al., 2021). Policy intelligence is vital in stimulating rural development and women entrepreneurial actions (Halim et

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406 al., 2020). Nonetheless, there are some cases where policies are put in place for the aid in managing
407 rural tourism, however the implementation remains weak (Durán-Díaz et al., 2020).

408 Moreover, institutional regulations and policies including those that increase women's
409 participation are essential (Kimengsi et al., 2019; Morgan & Winkler, 2020; Suadi et al., 2019;
410 Uduji et al., 2021). Incentives in the form of fundings and skills' specific trainings are crucial for
411 them in less developed areas. This comes as a relief for these entrepreneurs instead of relying on
412 their own resources or networking to enlarge their businesses. Such entrepreneurs need support
413 from public and private sectors for the proper mitigation of seasonal variations in tourism and other
414 hurdles (Jaafar et al., 2015). Additionally, women in some areas may need political education to
415 increase their voices. This can be ensured through proper policies and their application (Marwah,
416 2019). At times, changing norms and society acceptance are the desired goals for women's
417 entrepreneurial role in agritourism. This process demands a lot of time and effort; however, the
418 results are worthwhile for the recognition of their important role and work for society (Khazami
419 et al., 2024).

420 **3.1.6 Education and Training**

421 As for the capacity training, 12 studies discussed the importance of this aspect. Education extends
422 to the whole community. Government officials need skills in dealing with sensitive topics to
423 achieve gender equilibrium particularly in rural areas (Marwah, 2019). Simultaneously, women's
424 initiatives in agricultural tourism are themselves educational tools in the farms' regions. These
425 activities and others related to fishing and tourism in coastal areas provide a space for social
426 interactions and consequential experiential learning for visitors (Suadi et al., 2019). The synergies
427 result in extensive networks providing valuable opportunities for social learnings with hands-on

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428 experience (Ohe, 2018). This renders women as desired individuals for running farms and become
429 successors for family businesses (Heggem, 2014). Moreover, avoiding sedentary situations while
430 engaging in touristic activities proved beneficial especially for women farmers (Biernat et al.,
431 2018). Also, Chatzitheodoridis et al. (2016) explains the vitality brought about with the
432 contribution of young women in mountainous areas for the dynamism. However, awareness and
433 education about the present activities need to be endorsed.

434 Another significance falls in cultural tourism which is financially beneficial to women. With
435 increased educational levels, more local people are engaged with cultural tourism which raises the
436 stakes for women's benefit (Bayno & Jani, 2018). In some instances, where agritourism related
437 ventures may not be profitable when run by a woman (Hollas et al., 2021), training and capacity
438 building becomes a matter of exceptional prominence to achieve gender balance dynamics (Durán-
439 Díaz et al., 2020). Notwithstanding the fact that access to education facilitates many opportunities
440 for women and opens new doors (Dong & Khan, 2023) while decreasing inexperience or the fear
441 of their extra burden of workloads (Tenzin et al., 2019). Rural women who maintain tourism
442 related businesses are normally less educated than their urban peers. One example is the rural part
443 of Malaysia where entrepreneurs are women in need of education and financial support for the
444 survival of their ventures. Specialized skills and knowledge in tourism needs to be tailored to them
445 via workshops (Jaafar et al., 2015). The contribution of women to lifelong learning is an indication
446 for improving their skills. In the EU on average, their participation is 12.9% (Eurostat, 2022).

447 **3.1.7 Family Support and Succession Planning**

448 The studied literature exhibit that 9 out of the 49 reviewed articles discuss the topic of family
449 support and their succession planning. The moral and financial support are very important for the

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long-term continuity of businesses. Moreover, working women face the subtle equilibrium between their professional and personal responsibilities (Pawlak et al., 2018). Agritourism management is no different. Women's need for nudges is one of the critical factors for their success. Sometimes they have the necessary knowledge and tools, however they lack the confidence in undertaking decisions for long term financing. Women are generally more conservative and opt for less risky assets, nonetheless, the silver lining in women's approach to investment is their tendency to invest in real estate (European Commission, 2022). An agritourism farm has this aspect but at the same time is a business which makes their decision a hybrid. Thus, entrepreneurial training is highly needed for women in agritourism to achieve their goals (Khazami et al., 2024). Moreover, family support is very important to balance the workload and ease concerns related to their safety in tourism businesses (Tenzin et al., 2019). The burden of family commitments increases when unbalanced pressure coming from supplementary cooperative work would yield reversed effects like increased gender inequality (Morgan & Winkler, 2020). This finding points to the importance of recognising intra-family power relations and household composition as factors influencing women's entrepreneurial outcomes, although such distinctions are only rarely disaggregated in the reviewed studies. Family support emerges as a multidimensional construct encompassing moral, emotional, financial, and labour-related assistance, all of which significantly shape women's entrepreneurial trajectories.

Another factor that necessitates the change in the conservative mindset is the succession planning of farms. The transition from one generation to the next is of myriad importance in Japan for rural revitalization. Hence, to maintain farm-inns, succession of the business from the older women's generation to the younger is one of the most sought-after activities (Sugimoto, 2022). Additionally,

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with increased education of the current farm owners and new farm diversification initiatives, daughters are desired as successors (Heggem, 2014).

Therefore, family moral support is very important in agritourism as well as craft tourism. The assistance that women experience at home is reflected at their work (Khazami et al., 2024; Makandwa & de Klerk, 2024). Women's empowerment approaches related to family and society affect their performance as entrepreneurs and farmers. Those who are well versed in their roles in agritourism have the sense of self-actualization propelling them to continue achieving higher objectives. Sustained business perpetuation is an essential motivator for a woman as an entrepreneur (Su et al., 2024). This includes preserving the family farm when feeling truly supported by their families (Halim et al., 2020).

While several studies acknowledge the importance of family support and intergenerational succession, only a limited number explicitly differentiate between household structures like single-person households, couples with or without children, suggesting that family composition is often treated implicitly rather than systematically analysed in the existing literature.

4. Discussion

Women empowerment studies have been increasing in recent years due to the multiple facets that this area encompasses and the dimensions of success validation (Halim et al., 2020; Wright & Annes, 2014). While some might be related to women's rights when considered a vulnerable group, others are for their empowerment in business and societal spheres (Obeidat & Hamadneh, 2022; Pato et al., 2024; Vukovic et al., 2023). This study pertains to the latter area and specifically in agritourism where women leaders have the perfect setting to ignite their entrepreneurial mindset through concrete action. Hence, the purpose of this review is to understand the challenges and

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barriers that women entrepreneurs face globally when attempting to run an agritourism establishment. Moreover, it touches base on rural settings and how they confront issues pertaining to tourism and agriculture. Hence gender dynamics emerge when finding a dominance of men's presence especially at higher hierarchal levels. Additionally, succession planning and culture can pave the way or set hurdles for the integration of managerial women.

Findings from the articles included in this systematic review reveal seven main areas that have both the problems and the solutions. There is no panacea to all hurdles women face. Many factors depend on the geographical and cultural settings where they live. Challenges that women face tend to increase with the rural settings of the business as well as with the lower level of development of the region and continent in which they operate their agritourism. However, addressing the root cause of the challenges, learning and exchanging knowledge across cultures is a great step in a long process for closing the gender gap, not only in agritourism but in a plethora of other sectors.

Many articles have focused on one topic while others have simultaneously investigated multiple areas. While all themes are equally important to address, some were more recurring across the studied papers than others. The Sociocultural Capital, Local Networks and Cooperatives followed by the Financial Capital and Economic Empowerment dimensions were among the most studied ones. Perhaps it is quite evident that financial resources the foundational stone for any business regardless the sector, size or gender management. While most papers addressed the funds aspect directly or indirectly, the more important area was the Sociocultural Capital, Local Networks and Cooperatives' theme. The society at large, whether conservative or progressive, plays a significant role in the success journey of women as managers. This knowledge is reiterated many times across the studies.

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This review acts as a crossroad for understanding gender roles in rural areas, that include agriculture and tourism aspects. These dimensions put the functions of women in business, family and society at large under the microscope for detailed investigation. This in turn shows the root cause of many problems our societies face and recommends relevant remedies. There is no one size fits all when it comes to such profoundly intertwined problems of women's roles. They are namely in the form of culture, values, business and society among many other causes. Hence, future research must dissect these problems individually at first and then investigate the interdisciplinary network that can either form a synergy for solutions or exacerbate the existing problems. These are mainly the seven themes that coexist to provide the recipe of success in gender dynamics. While policy factors and other aspects related to public support can create a smoother environment for better integration of women as entrepreneurs, this remains a top-bottom approach. The latter is needed for the proper functioning of businesses and societies. However, the bottom-up approach stemming from society itself and from family businesses spheres are at the core of this success.

This literature review has some limitations. It covered multiple regions globally, hence not focused on one geographical area, rendering results as generic. Also unified definitions and laws for agritourism are not always the case among countries. While some might have rigorous laws on what is considered agritourism, others are more flexible. Additionally, numerous articles focus on the role of women in remote settings and not all articles were strictly dealing with agritourism, but rather included relatable topics of rural tourism and agricultural works. To give some examples: craft tourism (Makandwa & de Klerk, 2024), countryside tourism (Vukovic et al., 2023), homestay (Tenzin et al., 2019; Yaja et al., 2023), island tourism (Persson et al., 2022; Ursić et al., 2023), other gainful activities by farmers (Shahzad et al., 2021), female farmers (Biernat et al., 2018;

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539 D'Oronzio & Pascarelli, 2016; Schmidt et al., 2021; Sugimoto, 2022), wine tourism (Pato et al.,
540 2024), ecotourism (Kimengsi et al., 2019; Morgan & Winkler, 2020), educational tourism in
541 agriculture (Ohe, 2018), cultural tourism (Bayno & Jani, 2018; D'Oronzio & Pascarelli, 2016;
542 Persson et al., 2022; Uduji et al., 2020), less favoured areas (Li & Nakatsuka, 2020) among many
543 other examples. Another limitation is the language of choice being English. This might deprive the
544 review and analysis from various sources of knowledge provided in a plethora of different
545 languages. Moreover, only Scopus database was used to find the published articles. Additionally,
546 limits of timeline (2014-2024) and study type being an article exist. Hence, some other important
547 inputs might have been isolated from the review. The findings resonate with long-standing feminist
548 rural studies conceptualising women not merely as family labour but as active agents shaping rural
549 development trajectories (Bock, 2015; Shortall, 2004). Women's engagement in agritourism
550 reflects a process of agency-building through which new professional identities and forms of
551 empowerment emerge within multifunctional rural economies.

552 Although this review does not adopt a strict developed–developing country dichotomy, the
553 literature suggests that differences in women's agritourism entrepreneurship are primarily shaped
554 by institutional maturity, access to policy support, and forms of social capital rather than by
555 geographic location alone. Studies from contexts with stronger welfare systems and agricultural
556 policies emphasise linking social capital and institutional support, whereas research from lower-
557 income or transitional contexts highlights bonding and community-based social capital as critical
558 enablers of women's entrepreneurship.

559 **5. Conclusion**

560 In conclusion, future research concerning the role of women in agritourism sets the stage for
561 incremental attainment of Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN in a

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562 particular area that is multidisciplinary (THE 17 SDG GOALS-UN). While cross-country analysis
563 assists in setting remedies for problems by sharing knowledge across borders, yet focusing on one
564 geographical area for precise results should be the next step. Investigating leadership roles of
565 women in agritourism has the potential to differentiate groups within women entrepreneurial
566 spheres. By understanding women themselves and the societies they operate in can help tackle a
567 plethora of challenges in the agritourism context. Deploying cognitive and social theories can
568 greatly assist to understand personal growth patterns of women entrepreneurs in agritourism and
569 close the literature gap in this area. Therefore, investigating attitudes, norms and perceived
570 behavioural control to attain this deeper understanding for their empowerment should be the focus
571 of future studies.
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