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Digital destination development: Ecotourism in comparison to Agritourism

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Problemstatement and Relevance

- **supply and demand** influence the development of tourism products and services (Sharpley, 2006)
 - **ecotourism** as a significant **travel trend** (Khanra et al., 2021)
 - **agritourism** as an attractive **travel option** for **ecotourism consumers** (Leuthold, 2001)
- ⇒ (digital) tourism platforms to further **increase the attractiveness** of farm vacations/agricultural events and **strengthen sustainability**



Source: UaB Austria – Siedlerhof

Theoretical background of the study I

Ecotourism

- **as nature-based tourism** (UNWTO, n.d.)
- travel must, for example, **preserve and protect the natural landscape** (UNWTO, n.d.)
- **responsible, environmentally behavior** of ecotourists (Sharpley, 2006)
- **focus:** getting to know new landscapes and farm vacations (Leuthold, 2001)

Agritourism

- **accommodation directly on the farm** (Stotten et al., 2019)
- **participation in daily life** (Stotten et al., 2019)
- contributes to the **preservation of agricultural land** (Schilling et al., 2006; Veeck et al., 2006)
- **authenticity and sustainability** play an important role (Liang, 2017)

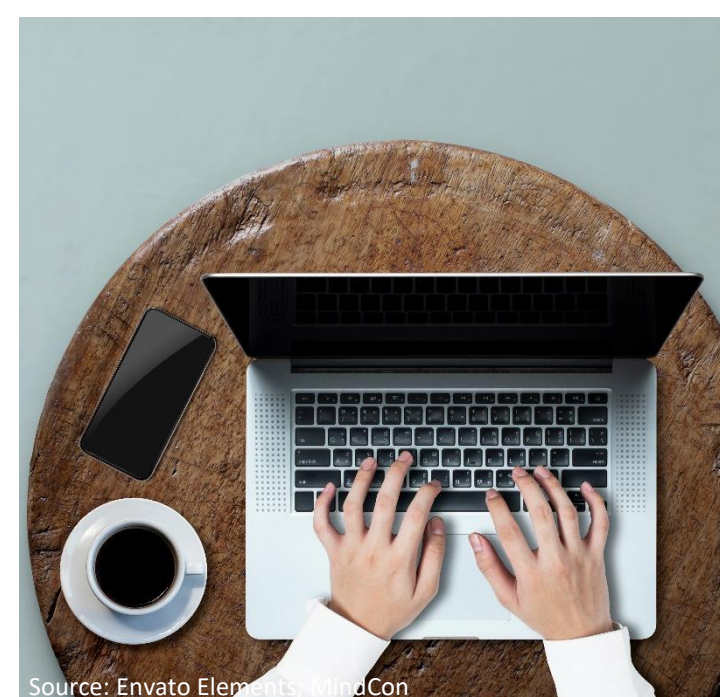


Source: Envato Elements; MindCon

Theoretical background of the study II

(Digital) Interfaces/Smart Data Management

- in response to the future challenges of agritourism (Pikkemaat et al., 2019)
 - **suitable digitalization concepts** to promote sustainability (Buhalis et al., 2023) and personalized offers (Choi et al., 2021; Lee & Jan, 2023)
 - **sufficient information** that needs to be **constantly updated** (Şengel et al., 2021)
- ⇒ **ecologically sustainable tourism strategy** leads, for example, to the **preservation of traditions, the protection of biodiversity and the promotion of coexistence** (Ristić et al., 2019)



Aim of the study

Mixed method:

- systematic literature review
- 41 semi-structured interviews
- 5 focus groups with 41 participants

in Vorarlberg and Tyrol between 2022 and 2023

The **research questions** are:

What are the similarities and differences between ecotourism and agritourism?

Which concept is better suited to the sustainable development of smart data management between agriculture and tourism?

The **aim** of this study is:

- (1) to compare both concepts to determine whether agritourism is an exemplary form of ecotourism and
- (2) to determine which concept is more suitable for digital interface and SDM in the existing digital destination infrastructure

Coding tree and Key statements

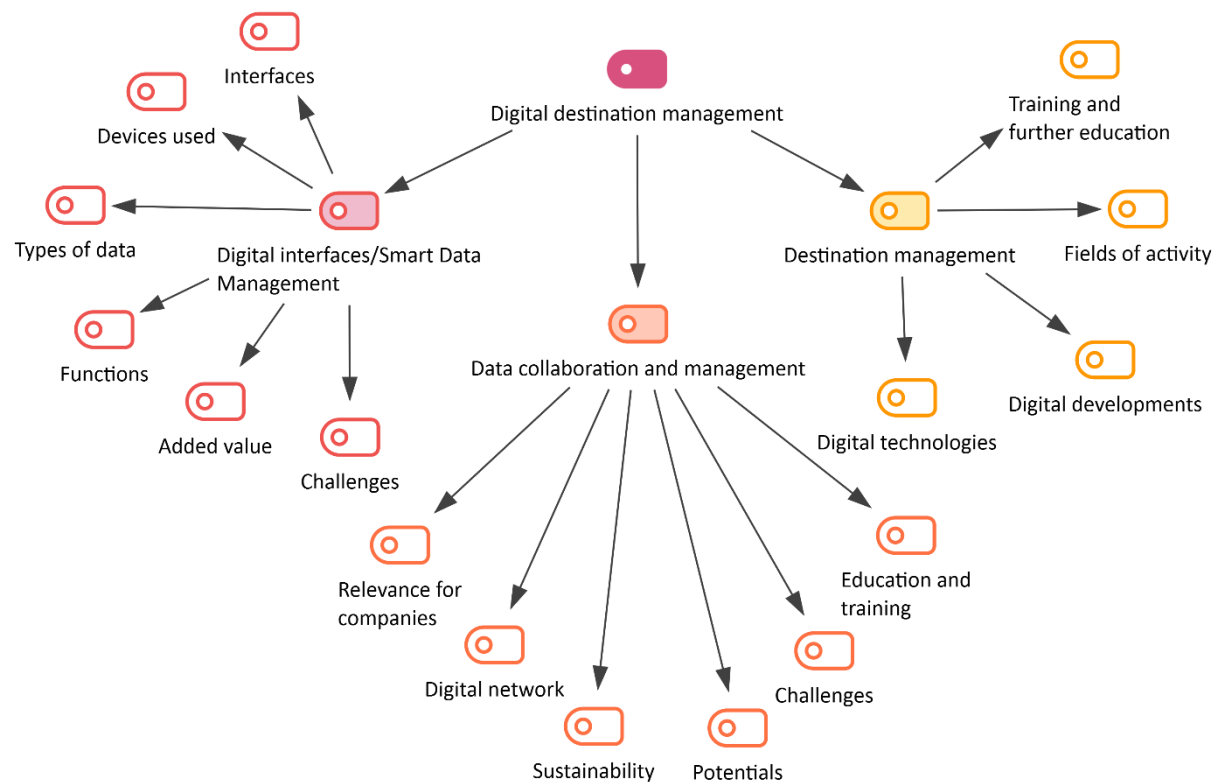


Figure 1: Coding tree of digital destination management (created with MAXQDA-2024)

"The employees who work with it are completely overwhelmed when it comes to actually using and utilizing this data for further development, for innovation, for increasing efficiency, for optimization. [...] And that's where external partners [...] come into play." (Ex1)

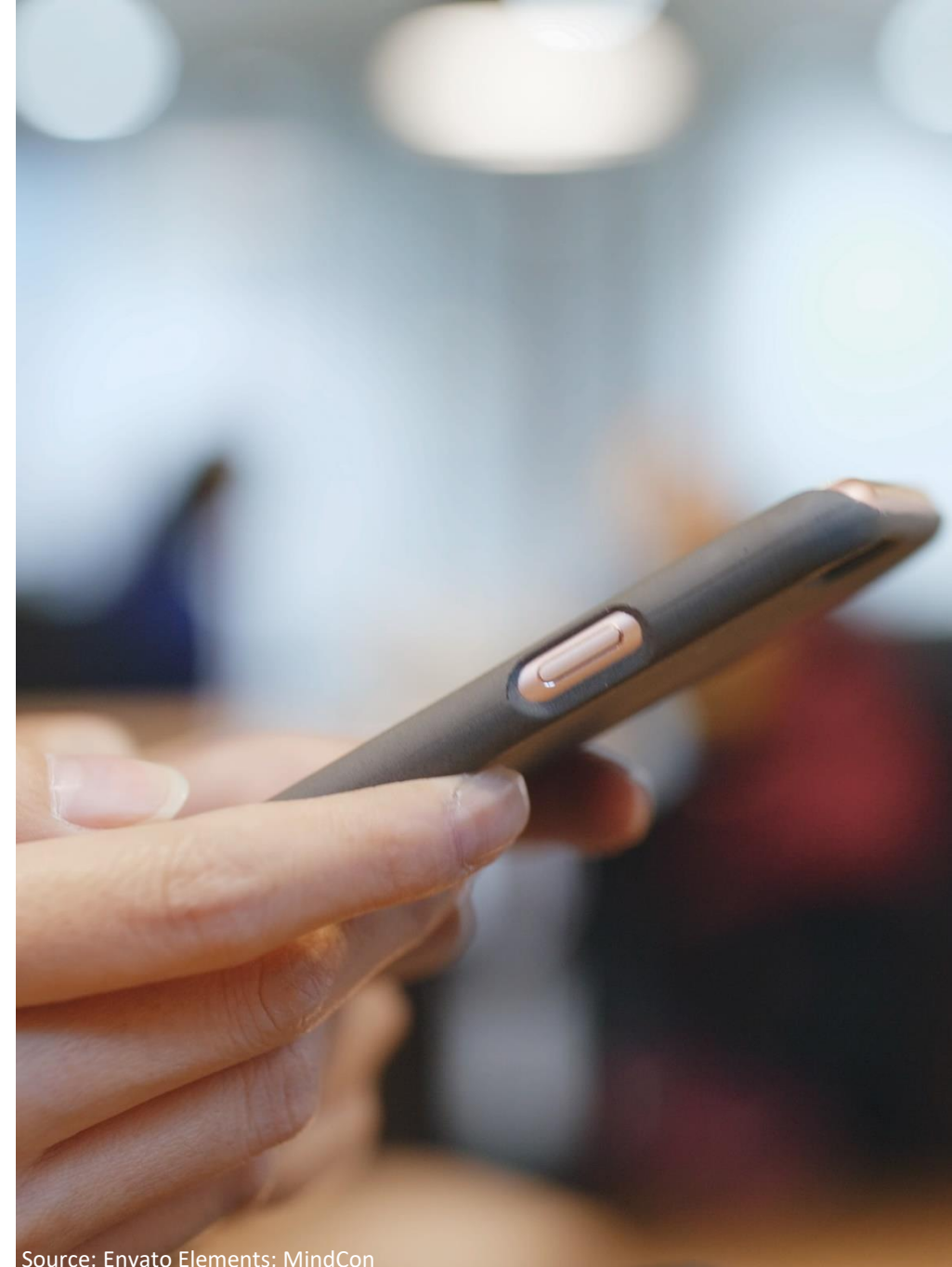
"Of course, it's much better for the guest if [...] [he/she can] book it directly, because then [...] [he/she] can see ok, we're going there, we're doing this [...]." (B2)

"[...] because of course it is very well received when tourism and agriculture work 'hand in hand' and the whole thing meshes well, so to speak, and also indirectly again that common goals are pursued in the sense that [...] both sides simply benefit from it, [...] I think that is very, very important." (P6)

Main results I

Digital interfaces/Smart Data Management

- digitalization can be helpful and beneficial for agritourism and ecotourism
- common interfaces to improve cooperation (e.g., platforms, apps)
- simple, clear, efficient and supportive design of digital interfaces
- data from products, farms and customers
- digital and organizational interfaces and (smart) data management are important



Source: Envato Elements; MindCon

Main results II

Data collaboration and management

- data exchange is essential for offering personalized services
- data management is crucial for collaboration
- shared digital network helpful
- challenges: updating effort, time, lack of expertise
- important: training and education



Source: Envato Elements, MindCon

Main results III

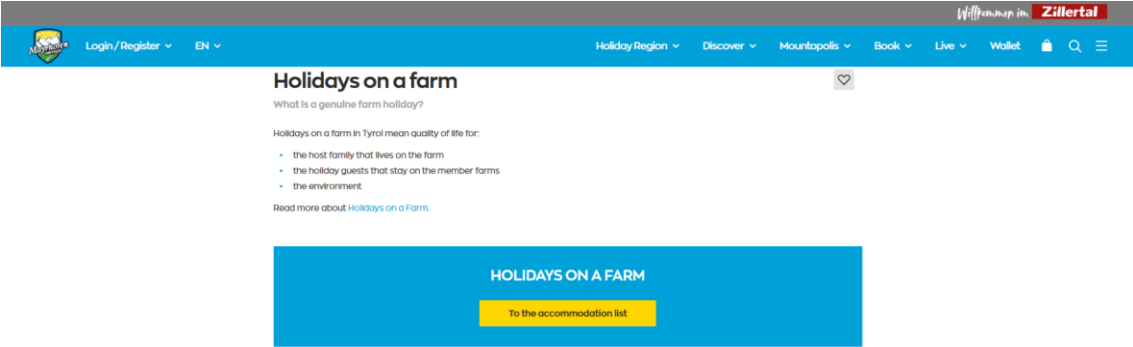
Destination management

- as support for digital collaboration between agriculture and tourism
- aim: comprehensive, digital marketing of agritourism and ecotourism products and services
- tasks: distribution of information, marketing, presentation of offers
- important: training and further education



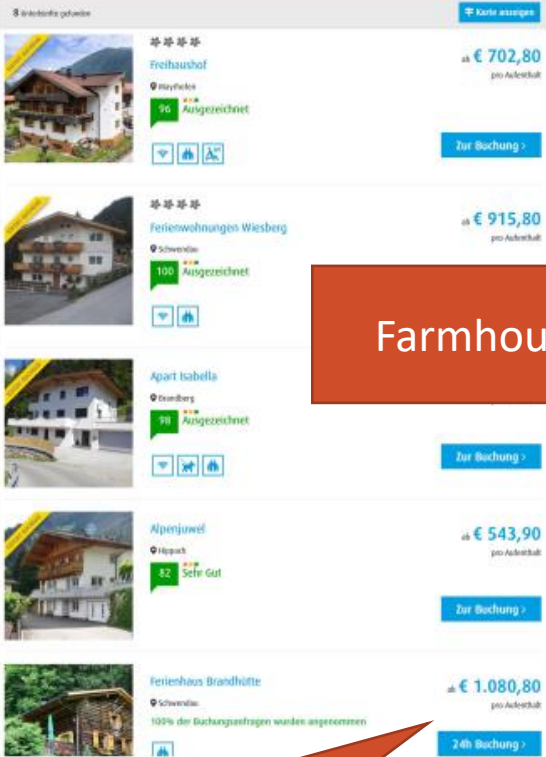
Source: Envato Elements; MindCon

Agritourism offers on digital platforms I



Farmhouses

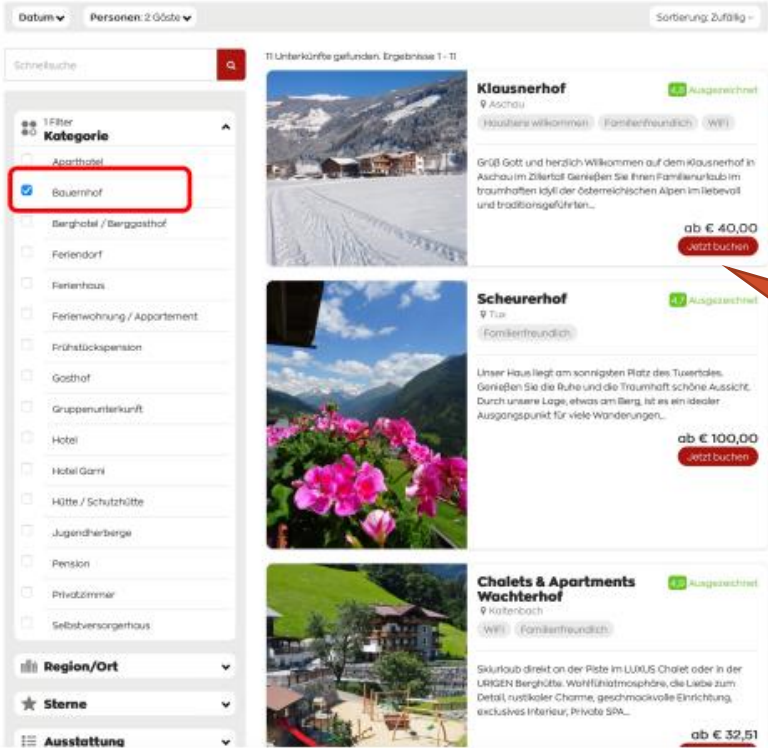
mayrhofen.at



Farmhouses

To the booking

myzillertal.app



Book now

Source: own screenshots from <https://www.mayrhofen.at/en> and <https://www.myzillertal.at/en>

Agritourism offers on digital platforms II

Description

The SchauBauernhof makes it possible to see the first and therefore most important step in the development of high-quality FOOD: Animals in a species-appropriate environment.

The special feature:

It's about being aware of where our FEATURES come from and how we deal with them, as well as understanding the importance of the origin of our FEATURES.

Hay milk of goats, Sheep and cow

organic chickensour honey supplier, the bee

Mini tractors and employment opportunities for young guests

cozy lounging areas...

Book now

Source: own screenshots from <https://www.mayrhofen.at/en>

Agritourism offers on digital platforms III

myzillertal Login/Register EN Shop Map Vouchers Wallet MyMoments

tastings and culinary showroom

noble drops & fine flavours – for the delicate palate

You love to participate in tastings and wines or other fine liqueurs are your passion? Discover suitable experiences in the region! Whether with friends at your home or directly on site with the master distiller. Have fun finding enjoyable offers!

Here you can taste the finest and the tastiest...

- FROM €18.00 Breakfast at Sylvana's Wohlfühl Hotel
- FROM €15.00 Tasting of fine brandies and liqueurs - Genuss.Brennerer.Fankhauser
- FROM €179.00
- FROM €139.00

myzillertal Login/Register EN Shop Map Vouchers Wallet MyMoments

Hof Neuhaus, Appartements - Wechselberger

Show all 4 images

Description

Our family-run house is located in the district of Burgstall, about 1 km outside of Mayrhofen.

Our distillery - Schnapps distilling...

Already since times around Maria Theresia on our hereditary farm with the good fruit of our scattered fruit meadows most diverse schnapps are distilled.

With our new state-of-the-art distillery, we now produce high-quality Zillertal brandies

LOCATION

ab EUR 55.00

Book now

Jetzt buchen

Help & Support

Source: own screenshots from <https://www.myzillertal.at/en>

Agritourism offers on digital platforms IV

The screenshot shows the 'my-Regio.shop' website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the logo 'Willkommen im Zillertal' and various menu items: 'Login/Registrieren', 'DE', 'Ferienregion', 'Entdecken', 'Mountopolis', 'Buchen', 'Live', and 'Wallet'. Below the navigation bar, the 'my-Regio.shop' logo and a search bar are visible. The search bar contains the text 'Suche' and shows '17 Ergebnisse'. Two search results are displayed:

- Lecker Fleisch - Familie Fankhauser**: Wir sind ein kleiner Bergbauernhof am Zellberg und haben uns auf die Direktvermarktung von Fleisch-...
- Hof Edenlehen**: Käse, Wurstspezialitäten, Gutscheine

The background of the website is a map of the Zillertal region in Austria, showing various towns and geographical features. Two red callout boxes are overlaid on the map:

- A box on the left says 'Searching for regional products'.
- A box on the right says 'Searching while moving the map'.

Source: own screenshot from <https://www.mayrhofen.at/en>

Ecotourism offers on digital platforms

The screenshot shows the website for Mayrhofen, featuring a navigation bar with options like 'Login/Register', 'EN', 'Holiday Region', 'Discover', 'Mountopolis', 'Book', 'Live', and 'Wallet'. The main content area is titled 'Sustainable holidays in Zillertal' and includes a sub-header 'Be.Mindful.' and a paragraph about environmentally-friendly holidays. Below this is a section 'Where to go for a sustainable holiday?' with text about mountaineering villages and farm holidays. A carousel of three images follows: 'GINZLING IN ZILLERTAL', 'NATURE PARK PARTNER BUSINESS', and 'HOLIDAYS ON A FARM'. At the bottom, there is a section 'Arrive by Rail' with text about train travel and an image of a train station.

Willkommen im **Zillertal**

Mayrhofen

Login/Register ▾ EN ▾

Holiday Region ▾ Discover ▾ Mountopolis ▾ Book ▾ Live ▾ Wallet 🔒 🔍 ☰

Sustainable holidays in Zillertal


Be.Mindful.

Those planning to enjoy an environmentally-friendly holiday will find plentiful opportunity to spend time in harmony with nature in the Mayrhofen-Hippach Holiday Region. Options range from **A for arrival** by train to **Z for the Zillertal Activcard**.


Where to go for a sustainable holiday?

Sustainable holidays in the mountains are watchwords favoured by our mountaineering villages. Ones that harbour the very roots of winter sport, whilst carefully maintaining ancient tradition. Strict criteria issued by the Austrian Alpine Association's Initiative place high demands on the individual villages, ensuring they never lose their distinguishing attributes. The [mountaineering village of Ginzling](#) is a member of the Mountaineering Villages Initiative.


You can also get closer to nature while staying at one of our [Nature Park partner businesses](#), during a [Farm Holiday](#), or an overnight stay in one of the numerous [Mountain Huts & Alpine Lodges](#).



GINZLING IN ZILLERTAL
The mountaineering village | 999 m - ca. 400 inhabitants




NATURE PARK PARTNER BUSINESS
What are your benefits?



HOLIDAYS ON A FARM
What is a genuine farm holiday?

Arrive by Rail

Travelling by train is an environmentally friendly alternative and one that is easier on your nerves. No traffic jams and no rush.



Source: own screenshot from <https://www.mayrhofen.at/en>

Conclusion

- agritourism and ecotourism focus on the preservation of landscapes
- agritourism focuses on agriculture
- ecotourism is broader (includes e.g., nature parks, eco-museums)
- strengthening **cooperation** through several **digital interfaces and apps**
- **myZillertal-App** can act as an interface for both agritourism and ecotourism offers



Source: Envato Elements, MindCon

Funding bodies:



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For the future (digital) development of destination management, is a uniform concept desirable to link agritourism and ecotourism more closely?

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Regional Development