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Cultivating success: personal, family and societal attributes affecting women in agritourism

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ABSTRACT

The public's burgeoning interest in authentic place-based experiences and local foods, as well as farmers' interest in increasing their incomes continue driving the development of agritourism. Although women often initiate agritourism, scant information identifies the factors contributing to or hindering their success. Therefore, this study combines feminist and systems approaches to identify the factors affecting women achievements in their functions as farmers and entrepreneurs and in various aspects of their lives. With such an aim, 216 women farmers in North Carolina (USA) were surveyed in 2017. Descriptive and inferential statistics of data collected indicate that women felt moderately successful in their farmer and entrepreneur roles, while self-fulfillment and business continuance appeared as the most important dimensions of their success. Significant models indicate that attributes at the personal, farm household, and society levels predict women's perceived functional success and the importance of different life aspects to their success. Study results move the literature of women in agritourism beyond entrepreneurial motivations by providing a thorough understanding of how gendered nuances in agriculture affect farm women's success in a holistic manner. This study also contributes to the sustainability of the agritourism practice by identifying attributes that increases chances of success among women farmers.

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Introduction

Family farms are seeking to advance their household incomes by reallocating farm resources (land, labor, or capital) to develop new on-farm enterprises that can allow them to respond to emerging market opportunities and capture customers more directly (Barbieri et al., 2008; Meert et al., 2005). An on-farm enterprise that continues increasing prominence in the United States of America (USA) involves the offering of education and recreation to visitors (e.g., school tours, corn mazes, wineries), usually referred as agritourism (Gil Arroyo et al., 2013). The increase of agritourism operations emerges from supply and demand forces occurring in parallel. From the supply side, farmers are venturing into agritourism mainly due to economic motivations (McGehee & Kim, 2004; Nickerson et al., 2001; Ollenburger & Buckley, 2007). On the demand side, the public's increased interest in (re)connecting with local food systems, especially among urban dwellers, is encouraging travel to working farms (Kline et al., 2016; Schilling et al., 2012).

Ontological and epistemological advances in the scholarship of agritourism have occurred along with its sophistication in the practice (Barbieri, 2020). Such paralleled progress has consolidated agritourism as a type of agricultural enterprise occurring on working agricultural settings, rather than rural landscapes (Gil Arroyo et al., 2013). This agricultural dependence has stimulated the development of a wide range of tourism offerings throughout the world where localized uniqueness emerges from the farm's resources and the surrounding cultural and natural landscapes (Barbieri & Streifeneder, 2019; Gao et al., 2014). Agritourism research is predominantly framed within utilitarian lenses which stress the different economic, socio-cultural and environmental benefits that agritourism delivers to farmers, visitors, and the greater society (Barbieri, Stevenson, & Knollenberg, 2019). Altogether, these benefits support the greater sustainability of agritourism as compared to other agricultural enterprises (Barbieri, 2013). Agritourism increases farm profits, creates jobs, preserves farmlands, conserves natural and cultural heritage, boosts local economies, and stimulates the consumption of local and sustainably-produced foods, to a name a few (Brune et al., 2020; Kline et al., 2016; LaPan & Barbieri, 2014; Schilling et al., 2012; Veeck et al., 2006). Still more investigation on issues related to agritourism development and management is needed to increase its sustainability (Yang, 2012; Phelan & Sharpley, 2012).

Agritourism sustainability can be enhanced by further examining and then supporting the success of women operators. More often, women drive agritourism development not only as the initiators, but also as the ongoing managers who constantly seek innovations to maintain visitors' interests (McGehee et al., 2007). This may be due to their historic role in re-purposing farm resources to contribute to farm survival (Anthopoulou, 2010; Gasson & Winter, 1992; Wright & Annes, 2016). Despite women's importance in agritourism, evidence indicates that their efforts are not fully rewarded. A study conducted across the USA showed that women in agritourism make less gross income than their male counterparts (Barbieri & Mshenga, 2008). Although not directly investigated, potential reasons for the gap in agritourism economic returns between genders could be women's limited access to agricultural and financial networks (Che et al., 2005), and their expected domestic roles as caregivers (Anthopoulou, 2010; Gasson & Winter, 1992). The hegemonic masculinity still prevailing in some rural areas and within agricultural policies could also explain this economic gap as disproportionate access to resources advances men's opportunities for agricultural engagement and entrepreneurial success (Bock, 2015; Halim, 2016; Little & Jones, 2000). As a social construct, hegemonic masculinity (re)produces beliefs that "tend to legitimize patriarchy as the apparent 'natural' order of things" (Vavrus, 2002, p. 357). Main patriarchal practices prevailing in agriculture and rural entrepreneurship include prejudices toward changing gender roles within the family (e.g., caregiving vs. breadwinning) and the farm (e.g., physical vs. soft tasks), gender-based inequalities to access resources (e.g., local networks, subsidies), and perceived limited skills to undertake agricultural and entrepreneurial tasks (Anthopoulou, 2010; Bock, 2004; Carter, 2017; Halim, 2016).

The economic underperformance of women in agritourism could also be attributed to gendered differences in entrepreneurial motivation. Women in agritourism prioritize providing employment for family members and giving back to the community to a greater extent than their male counterparts (McGehee et al., 2007). Those priorities also determine women's notion of success as having a more comprehensive approach beyond economic indicators (Halim et al., 2020). Research in business success has long focused on measuring the profitability and growth of businesses, where men are commonly found to be more successful than women. This financial success undervalues other factors, such as one's presence in the community and mentoring of future agricultural operators (Aldrich, 1989). However, the similar survival rates between women and men owned firms suggest that profit and growth may not be the most accurate indicators of success among women (Kalleberg & Leicht, 1991). This has prompted a robust research line to understand gender differences on the motivations driving business development, with key findings of women prioritizing personal growth and social contributions at the expense of financial goals (Buttner & Moore, 1997; Carter et al., 2003; Greene, Hart, Gatewood, Brush, & Carter et al.,

2003). Yet, the literature has called for a more thorough investigation of the extent to which women perceive their success, particularly in the context of patriarchal industries, and how their success transforms patriarchal societies (Halim et al., 2020; Snyder-Hall, 2010).

While the literature on women in agriculture and agritourism in the USA has expanded in recent years, more research-based education on how to support women as agritourism operators is needed to increase their chances of success and to achieve gender equity in agriculture. Given the existence of gender comparison studies pointing out existing gaps, a feminist approach is suitable to identify factors enabling or hindering the success of agricultural women in view of patriarchal systems dictating norms restraining women's behaviors and beliefs (Ahl, 2006; Snyder-Hall, 2010). Although information on challenges related to gender roles and the hegemonic masculinity of entrepreneurial agriculture is available in the literature (Anthopoulou, 2010; Bock, 2004, 2015; Carter, 2017; Little & Jones, 2000), limited information exists on the context of agritourism related to women's success (Halim et al., 2020). In filling such a knowledge gap, it is critical to recognize the interplay of the many factors that may affect women's performance (Eger et al., 2018; Mooney, 2016). Thus, this feminist quantitative investigation will move forward current knowledge in agritourism by identifying the attributes of the farmer (values), farm household (family dynamics, farm business), and society (trends, challenges) that exert an influence on women's success. Doing so, will provide pertinent information to support women operators in fortifying their agritourism enterprises sustainably.

Literature review

Constructing women's success: functional and life-aspects considerations

Success is a complex construct that can be evaluated in multiple ways. One way is focusing on the extent to which individuals perceive achievement in a defined role (e.g., caregiver, farmer) they hold, which is known as *Functional Success*. However, a set of factors, such as personal values, family attributes or cultural norms can shape the extent of perceived functional success (Eccles, 1987, 1994). Specifically, the dissonance between fulfilling roles traditionally considered masculine and their feminine identity can affect the extent of women's functional success (Horner, 1972). This is the case of women in agritourism, whose functional success as farmers and entrepreneurs confronts the historically dominant male representations in the practice of agriculture and business and requires re-defining these roles in the current agricultural context (Sachs et al., 2016; Wright & Annes, 2016). Thus, the literature has called for a more thorough investigation of the extent to which women perceive their functional success, particularly in the context of patriarchal industries, and how their success transforms patriarchal societies (Snyder-Hall, 2010).

Likewise, masculine approaches centered on profits and growth have dominated the assessment of business success (Aldrich, 1989; Kalleberg & Leicht, 1991). Yet, evidence suggests that women have a more holistic vision of business success that also accounts for non-monetized *life-aspects* such as personal growth and social contributions (Carter et al., 2003; Walker & Brown, 2004). Although most agritourism studies recognize that farmers pursue both internal (e.g., family connections) and external (e.g., market opportunities) goals (Nickerson et al., 2001; Ollenburg & Buckley, 2007; Tew & Barbieri, 2012), very few studies have accounted for gender differentiation in this pursuit. As such, the literature calls for further scrutiny beyond gendered motivations (McGehee et al., 2007) and the degree to which internal factors in terms of personal fulfillment (e.g., pursuing happiness) and social contribution (e.g., broad community impact) effect women's sense of holistic success (Halim et al., 2020).

Success among women in agriculture

In the context of agriculture, success incorporates perceptions of farmer's social contributions and personal achievements. Social contributions relate to the farmer's sense of responsibility toward the community, including the public (Walker & Brown, 2004). While social contribution has little relevance in determining the success of women in traditional businesses (Buttner & Moore, 1997), it is very important for women in agricultural businesses because it gives them the opportunity to expand their personal connections, educate customers, and promote cultural traditions and heritage (Anthopoulou, 2010; Gasson, 1973). Social contribution is also very important to the success of women in agritourism. Women tend to emphasize the opportunity that agritourism brings to educate visitors on issues related to food and farming (McGehee et al., 2007; Wright & Annes, 2016) and to mentor young employees (Halim et al., 2020).

Perceptions of personal achievements as an indicator of women's success in agriculture includes several components. First, it means breaking the hegemonic gendered ideology of both entrepreneurship and agriculture (Brandth & Haugen, 2011; Stead, 2017) by seeking recognition for women's on-farm contributions from their male counterparts and from the wider community (Driga et al., 2009; Wright & Annes, 2016). In turn, such recognition is necessary for women to immerse themselves in community networks that enable agritourism success (Che et al., 2005). Personal achievement also comes with the self-fulfillment of one's deepest desires (Buttner & Moore, 1997; Greene et al., 2003). The latter could be described as an overall feeling of satisfaction and enjoyment from work (Halim, 2016; Markantoni & van Hoven, 2012), or more specifically in terms of work-life balance (Walker & Brown, 2004) or of professional growth (Buttner & Moore, 1997; Halim, 2016).

Influencers of success of women in agritourism: a systemic approach

The use of systemic approaches to examine agricultural issues is essential given the interrelatedness among the farmer, farm household and community (Dogliotti et al., 2014), and to account for the mix of internal and external factors exercising pressure on the farm business and farmer's lifestyle (Ikerd, 1993). As such, systemic approaches have been valuable to ensure that each aspect of agriculture (e.g., labor, land) is assessed when farms shift with entrepreneurial diversification (Giampietro, 1997). Building on agricultural systemic approaches, Barbieri (2017) developed the Agritourism System's Approach that seeks to capture the interconnections among the entrepreneurial farmer (as the system's nucleus), within expanding concentric circles (*layers*) representing the farm household (including both the family dynamics and business). Thus, holistic evaluations of agritourism should take into account aspects from each layer as they can come together to either facilitate or limit the success of agritourism ventures (Barbieri, 2017).

At the farmer (nucleus) level it is important to take into account the symbolic values and self-identity of farmers. These values and identities have formed throughout the historical evolution of agriculture in the USA (Burton, 2004) and are changing due to major industry (e.g., high-mechanization) and political (e.g., selected subsidies) forces (Burton & Wilson, 2006). Although research efforts have been devoted to gain a deeper understating of the evolving farmer's identities (e.g., producer, steward) and roles (Ferrell, 2012), limited information is available on women's identities on the interaction of their numerous farm roles with these identities. Women's identity on the farm are oftentimes tied to her role in the farm household as mother, wife or nurturer, making her family caregiver role as primary and farmer as secondary (Anthopoulou, 2010; Gasson & Winter, 1992). In agritourism, farmer identities may also shift as women take more prevalent responsibilities in business decision-making (Bock, 2004; Brasier et al., 2014).

Given the interdependence between business profit growth and household utility maximization within family farming, the *farm household* construct encompasses aspects of both, the farm business and the farm family (Benjamin, 1994). As such, factors at the farm household layer

affecting women's success may include those associated with family dynamics as well as those related to the business assets (Barbieri, 2017). Agritourism operations become more complicated because of the need to reallocate family and business resources across different enterprise lines (Barbieri et al., 2008; Schilling et al., 2014). The administrative burdens that agritourism bears to the farm household represent increased time dedicated to record keeping, which is often placed on the woman in the family (Whatmore, 1991). In addition, the work seasonality of agritourism can increase the challenge of finding reliable labor to work on the farm (Halim, 2016; Kline & Milburn, 2010). Suess-Reyes and Fuetsch (2016) also suggested family dynamics related to inter-generational authority and adaptability within the farm business should be further investigated.

Societal traits (e.g., gendered systems, social trends) can hinder or facilitate the success of women in agritourism. Some farming communities uphold practices that perpetuate both, the patriarchal nature of agriculture and gendered expectations in the farm family (Little & Jones, 2000; Wright & Annes, 2014). Patriarchal agricultural systems tend to ostracize women operators implementing managerial changes (Carter, 2017), which obstructs their ability to access pooled resources (e.g., knowledge) from community networks (Wang, 2010). Ostracism is especially impactful for women in agritourism because access to local networks and resources are critical for agritourism success (Che et al., 2005; Li & Barbieri, 2019). Gendered expectations can challenge women in agriculture as they are often responsible for the domestic chores of the family (caregiving role) in addition to their involvement in farm tasks (Bock, 2004; Dogliotti et al., 2014; Gasson & Winter, 1992; Whatmore, 1991). Gendered expectations particularly affect women in agritourism because the additional workload to accommodate farm visitors adds to women's existing family and agricultural responsibilities (Anthopoulou, 2010; Halim, 2016).

Several societal trends currently taking place in agriculture are influencing the success of women in agritourism. Although women have always participated in many farming tasks, their increased presence as primary operators is promoting their strategies for progressing out of their hidden place and aiding their move toward more agency, especially in local foods production and sustainable agriculture (Ball, 2014; Hoppe & Korb, 2013). Yet, the impact of women's leadership in sustainable agriculture and community based food system organizations has not reached local, state or national governments as these continue developing and enforcing masculine policies that inherently challenge women's success (Alston, 2003; Bock, 2015). This context of women's increased agricultural prominence within masculine dominant systems calls for the (re)evaluation of women's situation through feminist lenses to uncover how agricultural trends and gendered challenges are affecting their abilities to attain this success.

Data and methods

Study purpose and epistemological framework

Based on the extant literature, this study was designed to contribute to the understanding of the success of women in agritourism addressing three specific objectives. Given that agritourism is considered a form of entrepreneurial farming (Barbieri et al., 2008; Tew & Barbieri, 2012), the first objective is to evaluate women's perceived success in their roles as a farmer and as an entrepreneur (*functional success*). Recognizing that success is a complex construct built upon the fulfillment of various individual pursuits (Carter et al., 2003; Sachs et al., 2016; Walker & Brown, 2004), the second objective is to evaluate the importance of different life aspects to the contribution of women's success (*life-dimensional success*). Given that assessments concerning agritourism (success, failures) should be framed within a system approach comprising elements at the personal, farm household and society levels (Barbieri, 2017), the last objective is to identify farmer values, farm family dynamics and business characteristics, and societal traits associated with women's success (Figure 1). In this study, references to 'women' purposely reflects the

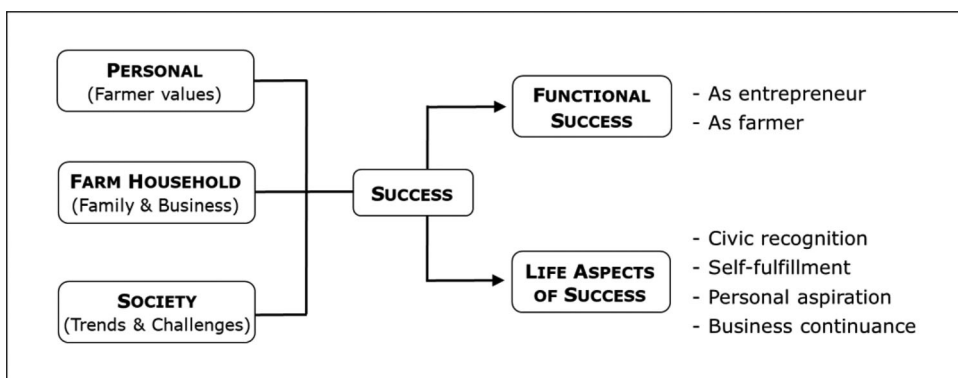


Figure 1. Study research model.

socially-constructed notion of gender beyond virtue of biological sex, denoting how roles for women and men are enacted and perceived according to social norms (Mooney, 2020).

This study, designed as descriptive and relational in nature, was framed within a feminist approach that allows challenging social norms that neglect or negate women's experiences beyond the mere description of women's condition or between-gender differences (Aitchison, 2000). Adopting a feminist approach is particularly important for this study because the extant entrepreneurial literature tend to make between-gender comparisons superficially, overlooking cultural standards of masculine power and ideologies (Stead, 2017). Having a more inquisitive perspective is especially critical in research involving agricultural contexts where women have long been relegated to the private sphere (Alston, 2003). More specifically, this study adopts a radical or critical feminist paradigm as the authors posit patriarchy as the social structure that have created gendered social roles (Mooney, 2020) and caused women's subordination and oppression in the private and public spheres within their lives (Aitchison, 2000, Parry et al., 2013).

By positioning this study within a critical feminist lens, the authors explicitly seek the political change of improving women's condition in society (Aitchison, 2000) through the identification of the factors constraining and enabling the success of women in agritourism. In brief, adopting a critical feminist approach is especially important in this study to highlight and examine women's roles in entrepreneurial and agricultural contexts that are often overlooked and misunderstood (Brandth, 2002; Midgley, 2006; Walker & Brown, 2004), and to account for the continued existence of agricultural and social patriarchal systems (Halim, 2016; Snyder-Hall, 2010). This critical feminist approach of the agritourism context that incorporates socially-constructed gendered norms (challenges and opportunities) at the personal, farm household, and society levels responds to the call to advance the investigation of gender by using multi-level (micro, meso, macro) approaches (Mooney, 2020).

Sampling and survey instrument

The theoretical study population was women working on agritourism farms in North Carolina (NC), which actual number and characteristics are unknown. Given that a list of such population is not readily available, study participants were identified through snowball sampling. This non-probability sampling technique starts with identifying an initial group of people fitting the study criteria (i.e., being a woman, a farmer, and involved in agritourism), who along with their participation are asked to share the survey instrument with more possible participants or suggest contacts to the research team (Babbie, 2013). The study's initial list was constructed following a

systematic internet search for NC agritourism farms using key words (e.g., corn mazes, u-pick) and from specialized listings (e.g., NC County Visitor Bureaus). The initial sample frame included 243 farms, which included the contact information of farmers without any gender reference. Then, study participants were asked to refer the survey to other women farmers they may know either by forwarding the survey link directly to them or by providing their contact information to the research team. To expand the sample, the research team asked selected agriculture and agritourism organizations (e.g., Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture, NC Agritourism Networking Association) and agents of the NC Cooperative Extension to promote the survey and encourage participation among their constituents.

Informed by the literature, a survey instrument was developed to collect information on participants' perception of success through two types of indicators. General assessments of functional success (i.e., extent of success tied to an individual's role as a farmer and as an entrepreneur) were queried through five-point unipolar scales to capture the cumulative presence of success (thus no need of neutral point) from "not at all successful" (1) to "extremely successful" (5). The level of importance of 19 life aspects contributing to women's success (Buttner & Moore, 1997; Halim, 2016; Walker & Brown, 2004) was queried through a series of five-point Likert scales in a bipolar mode which opposing anchors (1 = very unimportant; 5 = very important) and neutral option (3 = neither) are suitable to capture participants' attitudes. These indicators represent aspects of women's personal achievement (e.g., similar recognition as male farmers, pursuing happiness) and social contribution (e.g., mentoring young employees; setting an example for other women farmers).

The survey also collected information on a suite of personal, farm household and societal characteristics that may affect the success of women in agritourism to account for the intertwined relationships across farmers, farm family and business, and community occurring in agricultural enterprises, including agritourism (Barbieri, 2017; Dogliotti et al., 2014; Suess-Reyes & Fuetsch, 2016). At the personal level, respondents were queried on the cumulative relevance of a mix of farmer values to capture women farmers' identities (Burton, 2004; Burton & Wilson, 2006; Brasier et al., 2014). Specifically, value assessments of nine items denoting conservationist, productivist, and civic-minded identities were gathered (McGuire et al., 2015) through a series of five-point unipolar Likert scales (1 = not at all valuable; 5 = extremely valuable). Farm household information collected included indicators of the family dynamics (e.g., number of generations in farming), farm economic standing (e.g., farm gross sales), and extent of agritourism involvement (e.g., seasonality) that previous studies identified as determinants of success (Che et al., 2005; Li & Barbieri, 2019; Schilling et al., 2014; Tew & Barbieri, 2012; Wang, 2010). The survey also queried the extent to which societal traits either constrain or facilitate the success of women farmers in agritourism (Ball, 2014; Bock, 2004; Brasier et al., 2014; Carter, 2017; Hoppe & Korb, 2013; Little & Jones, 2000) through four-points unipolar scales to capture their cumulative effect in reality (1 = not at all; 4 = very much). Constraints included gendered traits related to women's caregiver role (6 items) and the patriarchal agricultural system (8 items) while facilitators were related to public awareness (4 items) and the changing social fabric (3 items) that were compiled from the literature (Anthopoulou, 2010; Halim, 2016; Halim et al., 2020; Wright & Annes, 2014; Whatmore, 1991). Socio-demographic attributes (e.g., age, level of formal education) were also queried.

Data collection and statistical analysis

Data were collected using printed and electronic questionnaires in parallel to account for participants' response preferences, streamline time efficiency for data input, and reduce expenses (Dillman et al., 2009). Both formats had identical content and word choices; yet, the online version included logic-branching patterns to skip sections that were not applicable to respondents. Prospective participants were invited to participate using online and mailed communications

upon availability of appropriate contact information. An incentive of a chance to win one of five \$50 gift cards was used to encourage participation. Data were collected in early 2017 and spanned three months. A total of three e-mail reminders, a postcard and a second round of surveys were sent to non-respondents. A total of 180 valid responses were obtained, from which 140 respondents were from the initial sampling list (59.3% response rate). Levene's Test for Equality Variance conducted between mailed ($n = 75$) and online ($n = 65$) respondents of key variables supported merging both datasets. Similar tests conducted between early and late responses provided assurance of non-response bias (Armstrong & Overton, 1977).

Given the snowball sampling technique used, several respondents did not fit the population criteria (e.g., women farmers not involved in agritourism, male agritourism operators). Thus, statistical analysis included only 116 cases of women farmers involved in agritourism. First, descriptive statistics were conducted to profile respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, personal values, perceived success, and factors enabling or constraining their perceived success. Then, exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation was used to reduce the life-aspects contributing to women's success, agritourism challenges and agriculture trends to fewer dimensions to understand the dimensional structure of the constructs as well as facilitate further analysis. Eigenvalues over one and loadings over 0.5 were used as thresholds in the factor analysis; a pairwise method was used to handle missing values due to the limited number of respondents (Field, 2013). Cronbach's alphas were computed to confirm the reliability of the farmers' values dimensions (conservationist, productivist, civic minded), challenges related to gender (caregiver role, patriarchal agricultural system) and societal trends facilitating agritourism success (public awareness, social fabric). Aggregated means of each of the later dimensions (values, challenges, facilitators) were computed for further analysis.

Finally, a series of multiple linear regressions were used to identify the extent to which personal values, farm family attributes and societal traits (independent variables) predicted functional success and importance of life-aspects in women's success (dependent variables). Specific independent variables included the aggregated means of the personal values dimensions (productivist, conservationist, civic-minded), three descriptors of the farm family (likelihood of passing the farm on, extent of agritourism diversification, agritourism seasonality), and the aggregated means of four societal traits comprising perceived facilitators (public awareness, changing social fabric) and gendered challenges (caregiver role, patriarchal agricultural system).

Results

Respondents profile

The typical respondent was a middle-aged ($M = 49$ years old) and highly educated woman (Table 1). A relatively large proportion of respondents (35.9%) were young women (less than 45 years old) while most (55.7%) were middle aged (between 45 and 64 years old); only 8.4% were of retirement age (65 years old). Over two-thirds (74.8%) of respondents reported at least a four-year college degree and 32.2% held a post-graduate degree. The vast majority (90.1%) of respondents lived with their spouse or significant other. A relative small proportion (8.1%) lived with at least one child six years old or younger; one quarter (25.2%) reported living at home with at least one child of at least 16 years old. The largest proportion of responding women work on the farm either full-time (42.3%) or part-time (17.7%); they also reported, although to a lesser extent, off-farm employment either full-time (12.0%) or part-time (10.3%). Although most respondents (52.6%) were first generation farmers, half (50.8%) reported that they would likely or very likely to pass the farm on to the next generation. Most respondents (52.8%) indicated making less than \$50,000 in gross farm sales in 2016; a relatively small proportion (16.3%) reported farm gross income of at least \$250,000.

Table 1. Respondent's socio-demographic and farm family characteristics.

Farmer & Farm Family Indicators	Number	Percent
<i>Farmer's Age</i> (n = 106)		
Less than 35 years old	15	14.2%
35–44 years old	23	21.7%
45–54 years old	29	27.4%
55–64 years old	30	28.3%
65 years old or older	9	8.4%
<i>Mean (in years)</i>		(49.0)
<i>Farmer's Level of Education</i> (n = 115)		
High school graduate or less	0	0.0%
Some college	16	13.9%
Technical degree (2-year degree)	13	11.3%
Four-year college degree	49	42.6%
Post graduate studies	37	32.2%
<i>Household Composition</i> (n = 111)^a		
Spouse or significant other	100	90.1%
Children 6 years or younger	9	8.1%
Children 7–15 years old	26	23.4%
Children 16–20 years old	16	14.4%
Children 21 years or older	12	10.8%
<i>Type of Employment</i> (n = 116)^a		
Full-time farming	74	42.3%
Part-time farming	31	17.7%
Full-time off-farm job	21	12.0%
Part-time off-farm job	18	10.3%
Homemaker	16	9.1%
Retired	11	6.3%
Other	4	2.3%
<i>Generations on the Farm</i> (n = 116)		
First generation	61	52.6%
2 generations	9	7.8%
3 generations	17	14.7%
4 generations or more	26	22.4%
Do not know	3	2.5%
<i>Likelihood of Farm Succession</i> (n = 116)		
Very likely	39	33.6%
Likely	20	17.2%
Undecided	17	14.7%
Unlikely	15	12.9%
Very unlikely	17	14.7%
Do not know	8	6.9%
<i>Farm Gross Income in 2016</i> (n = 110)		
Less than \$1,000	3	2.7%
\$1,000–9,999	20	18.2%
\$10,000–49,999	35	31.9%
\$50,000–99,999	20	18.2%
\$1,00,000–249,999	14	12.7%
\$250,000–499,999	11	10.0%
\$500,000 or more	7	6.3%

^aAdds to more than 100% because participants could check more than one response.

The survey captured a mélange of agritourism operations regarding maturity, seasonality, number of visitors and economic relevance (Table 2). In terms of years involved in this industry, 42.1% were emerging agritourism farms with less than five years of receiving visitors while 31.6% have been doing so for at least ten years ($M = 9.0$ years). Most (52.2%) have limited agritourism offerings with three or less different types of activities. As for seasonality, 20.0% offer agritourism for less than four months per year while 34.5% do so year round ($M = 7.9$ months per year). Agritourism variability was likewise diverse in terms of number of visitors; while 26.3% hosted less than 150 visitors on their farm in 2016, 40.0% indicated hosting at least 1,000 visitors ($M = 3,550$ visitors). Consistent with the number of visitors reported, 33.1% reported that all or most of their farm revenues come from their agritourism activities while only 5.2% indicated not

Table 2. Agritourism profile of participating farmers.

Agritourism Indicators	Total	Percent
Years Offering Agritourism ($n = 114$)		
Less than 2 years	12	10.5%
2–4 years	36	31.6%
5–9 years	30	26.3%
10–19 years	22	19.3%
20 years or more	14	12.3%
Mean (in years)		(9.0)
Number of Agritourism Activities Offered ($n = 113$)		
1–3 activities	59	52.2%
4–6 activities	44	38.9%
7–10 activities	10	8.9%
Mean (in activities)		(3.7)
Agritourism Seasonality - Months per Year ($n = 110$)		
Less than 4 months	22	20.0%
4–6 months	19	17.3%
7–11 months	31	28.2%
12 months (year round)	38	34.5%
Mean (in months)		(7.9)
Number of Visitors in 2016 ($n = 95$)		
Under 150 visitors	25	26.3%
150–499 visitors	23	24.2%
500–999 visitors	9	9.5%
1,000–4,999 visitors	20	21.1%
5,000 or more visitors	18	18.9%
Mean (in number of visitors)		(3,550)
Proportion of Farm Revenues from Agritourism ($n = 114$)		
All	11	9.6%
Most	27	23.5%
Some	47	40.8%
Very little	24	20.9%
None	6	5.2%

receiving revenues from agritourism. Respondents also reported offering a variety of farm recreation and hospitality, agricultural education, and outdoor recreation activities (Table 3). Overall, the most commonly offered activities were educational activities, such as classes, workshops, and school tours (81.4%), followed by festivals or events (53.9%) and farm based recreational activities (45.2%).

In terms of farming values, the most valued practices among participants were being active in the community ($M = 4.48$) and minimizing soil erosion ($M = 4.25$) which represent indicators of different value dimensions (Table 4). Reliability tests showed a moderate to strong internal consistency of the overall farmers' values scale ($\alpha = 0.722$) and of each of the three dimensions: civic minded ($\alpha = 0.774$), conservationist ($\alpha = 0.776$) and productivist ($\alpha = 0.618$). Taken by dimensions, results indicate that responding women highly regard civic-minded ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 0.797$) and conservationist ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.899$) values. Specifically, the majority indicated that being active in their community (62.8%), maintaining organic matter (55.8%) and minimizing soil erosion (52.1%) were extremely valuable to them as farmers. The productivist dimension ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.860$) was the least regarded; yet most respondents indicated that obtaining the highest yields per acre was very or extremely valuable (57.0%).

Women's success

Women felt at least moderately successful in their roles (*functions*) as farmers and entrepreneurs (Table 5). About half of respondents indicated feeling at least very successful as a farmer (42.3%; $M = 3.42$) and entrepreneur (45.7%; $M = 3.41$). Respondents considered different aspects of their own lives contributing to their sense of overall success (Table 6). More specifically, remaining

Table 3. Agritourism activities offered by participating women farmers.

Agritourism Activities (n = 115)	Number	Percent ^a
Farm Recreation and Hospitality		
Festivals or events	62	53.9%
Farm-based recreational activities	52	45.2%
Meals	33	28.7%
Overnight stays	18	15.7%
Non-farm recreational activity	9	7.8%
Agricultural Education		
Educational activities	92	81.4%
Farm hands-on activities	51	44.3%
Observation of agricultural processes	26	22.6%
Outdoor Recreation		
Nature observation activities	36	31.3%
Physically active activities	15	13.0%
Wildlife extractive activities	11	9.6%
Summer camps	6	5.3%
Other		
Other activities	6	5.3%

^aAdds to more than 100% because participants could check more than one response.

Table 4. Farming values among responding women.

Values by Dimensions (n = 115) ^a	Not at all valuable	Slightly valuable	Moderately valuable	Very valuable	Extremely valuable	Mean ^b	S.D.
Civic-minded ($\alpha = 0.774$)							
Be active in your community	0.0%	3.5%	8.0%	25.7%	62.8%	4.48	0.792
Be a leader in your community	3.4%	6.3%	15.2%	31.3%	43.8%	4.05	1.081
Participate in farm-related organizations	0.9%	8.7%	22.6%	36.5%	31.3%	3.89	0.980
Composite Mean						4.13	0.797
Conservationist ($\alpha = 0.776$)							
Maintain organic matter	5.3%	3.5%	15.9%	19.5%	55.8%	4.17	1.149
Minimize soil erosion	1.8%	1.8%	18.6%	25.7%	52.1%	4.25	0.940
Minimize nutrient runoff	2.8%	11.9%	16.5%	26.6%	42.2%	3.94	1.149
Composite Mean						4.12	0.899
Productivist ($\alpha = 0.618$)							
Have the highest yields per acre	8.8%	4.4%	29.8%	31.6%	25.4%	3.61	1.172
Use the latest technology	4.5%	19.3%	32.1%	23.9%	20.2%	3.36	1.143
Have the most up-to-date equipment	9.8%	33.0%	36.7%	12.5%	8.0%	2.76	1.059
Composite Mean						3.26	0.860

^aOverall reliability $\alpha = 0.722$.

^bMeasured on a 5-point unipolar scale, ranging from 'Not at all valuable' (1) to 'Extremely valuable' (5).

mentally creative ($M = 4.75$), pursuing happiness ($M = 4.73$) and building long lasting relationships with customers ($M = 4.73$) were the most important life aspects to their sense of success. Conversely, receiving similar recognition as male farmers ($M = 3.78$), being an "agritourism" expert ($M = 3.78$) and receiving community recognition ($M = 3.75$) were the least important aspects contributing to their sense of success, yet still important. Factor analysis of the life aspects contributing to women's sense of success resulted in a significant model of four factors (total variance = 52.8%; $\alpha = 0.835$; KMO = 0.791; $p < 0.001$). Being an expert in some aspect of farming, remaining mentally creative, having flexibility in work hours, and passing the farm to the next generation within the family were removed from further analysis because did not load in any factor or showed multiple loadings.

The first factor was named *Civic Recognition* because it captured women's involvement in different communities, such as the farming community and women farmers, as well as their broader community (variance = 28.3%; eigenvalue = 5.383; $M = 4.11$). The second factor, *Self-fulfillment* described the overall feeling of satisfaction and enjoyment that women value in different aspects of their lives, such as happiness and having good work-life balance (variance = 10.1%;

Table 5. Indicators of functional success among responding women.

Functional Success ($n = 117$)	Not at all successful	Slightly successful	Moderately successful	Very successful	Extremely successful	Mean ^a	S.D.
As a farmer	0.9%	10.3%	46.6%	30.2%	12.1%	3.42	0.866
As an entrepreneur	0.9%	15.5%	37.9%	32.8%	12.9%	3.41	0.933

^aMeasured on a 5-point unipolar scale, ranging from 'Not at all successful' (1) to 'Extremely successful' (5).

Table 6. Rotated factor matrix of the importance of life aspects contributing to women's success.

Success by Factors ($n = 117$) ^a	Mean ^b	Factor Loadings	Explained Variance	Eigenvalue
<i>Civic Recognition</i>	4.11		28.3%	5.383
Giving back to community	4.50	0.559		
Being part of the local farming community	4.34	0.683		
Setting an example for other women farmers	4.30	0.718		
Gaining respect from other farmers	4.01	0.800		
Receiving similar recognition as male farmers	3.78	0.679		
Being recognized by my community	3.75	0.792		
<i>Self-fulfillment</i>	4.62		10.1%	1.925
Pursuing happiness	4.73	0.752		
Having a good work-life balance	4.60	0.757		
Family supporting my farming career	4.52	0.658		
<i>Personal Aspirations</i>	4.34		8.3%	1.576
Educating the public about farming	4.64	0.751		
Having an active lifestyle	4.59	0.658		
Being an "agritourism" expert	3.78	0.588		
<i>Business Continuance</i>	4.41		6.0%	1.147
Building long-lasting relationships with customers	4.73	0.703		
Earning a good income from the farm	4.34	0.532		
Mentoring young employees	4.15	0.535		

^aTotal variance explained: 52.8%; KMO = 0.791; overall $\alpha = 0.835$.

^bMeasured on a 5-point Likert bipolar scale, ranging from 'Very unimportant' (1) to 'Very important' (5).

eigenvalue = 1.925; $M = 4.62$). The *Personal Aspirations* factor included elements related to individual's ambition such as being physically active and becoming an agritourism expert (variance = 8.3%; eigenvalue = 1.576; $M = 4.34$). The final factor, *Business Continuance*, comprised three items that contribute to the viability of the business in terms of customers, employees and farm income (variance = 6.0%; eigenvalue = 1.147; $M = 4.41$).

Responding women perceived that there are societal patterns hindering their success as farmers resulting from their expected *Caregiver Role* ($\alpha = 0.868$, $M = 3.22$) and the *Patriarchal Agricultural System* ($\alpha = 0.767$, $M = 2.98$), although the latter to a lesser extent (Table 7). In order, the more pressing challenges related to their ability to balance farm and household tasks ($M = 3.54$) and off-farm and on-farm work ($M = 3.45$), expectations as caregivers ($M = 3.36$), and receiving cooperation from their spouse/partner ($M = 3.34$). Women felt least challenged by in-group support in terms of knowledge sharing from parents ($M = 2.66$) and the number of women famers ($M = 2.39$). On the contrary, respondents perceived that current societal trends, in terms of increased *Public Awareness* ($\alpha = 0.697$, $M = 3.66$) and the evolving *Social Fabric* ($\alpha = 0.816$, $M = 3.56$), are facilitating the success of their agritourism ventures (Table 8). The most impactful trends were the demand for local farm products ($M = 3.77$), public interest in local agriculture ($M = 3.73$), and access to social media ($M = 3.72$).

Farmer, family and society attributes associated with women's success

Simultaneous multiple linear regressions regressing farmer values, farm household characteristics and societal traits on women's functional success resulted in two significant models (Table 9) pertaining to their perceived success as a woman farmer ($R^2 = .197$, $p = .048$) and as a woman entrepreneur ($R^2 = .637$, $p < .001$). When controlling for other variables, positive associations

Table 7. Societal challenges affecting the success of women farmers.

Societal Challenges (<i>n</i> = 115) ^a	Not at all	Very little	Some	Very much	Mean ^b	S.D.
Caregiver Role ($\alpha = 0.868$)					3.22	
Balancing farm & household tasks	1.8%	10.0%	20.9%	67.3%	3.54	0.750
Expectations as a caregiver	7.2%	7.2%	27.9%	57.7%	3.36	0.902
Cooperation from spouse/partner	10.9%	7.3%	19.1%	62.7%	3.34	1.016
Demand of child care	12.8%	9.2%	25.7%	52.3%	3.17	1.053
Falling short on caring for the family	7.3%	13.6%	30.9%	48.2%	3.20	0.937
Falling short on others' expectations	16.7%	18.5%	32.4%	32.4%	2.81	1.072
Patriarchal Agricultural System ($\alpha = 0.767$)					2.98	
Managing off-farm & on-farm work	3.6%	11.8%	20.9%	63.6%	3.45	0.841
Physical demand of farm-work	1.8%	10.8%	43.2%	44.1%	3.30	0.734
Access to grants	9.0%	18.0%	25.2%	47.7%	3.12	1.007
Ability to inherit farmland	14.0%	11.2%	29.0%	45.8%	3.07	1.066
Availability of farmers' networks	6.3%	21.6%	34.2%	37.8%	3.04	0.924
Lack of respect towards farmers	19.6%	13.1%	29.9%	37.4%	2.85	1.131
Knowledge sharing from parents	21.9%	21.0%	26.7%	30.5%	2.66	1.134
Number of farmers of the same gender	30.8%	23.4%	21.5%	24.3%	2.39	1.164

^aOverall reliability of gendered challenges was $\alpha = 0.879$.^bMeasured on a 4-point unipolar scale ranging from 'Not at all' (1) to 'Very much' (4).**Table 8.** Societal trends facilitating agritourism success.

Societal Trends (<i>n</i> = 115) ^a	Not at all	Very little	Some	Very much	Mean ^b	S.D.
Public Awareness ($\alpha = 0.697$)					3.66	
Demand of local farm products	0.0%	1.7%	20.0%	78.3%	3.77	0.465
Public interest in local agriculture	0.0%	1.8%	23.0%	75.2%	3.73	0.482
Access to social media	0.0%	1.8%	24.6%	73.7%	3.72	0.489
Farmers seeking direct markets	0.9%	4.4%	39.5%	55.3%	3.49	0.627
Social Fabric ($\alpha = 0.816$)					3.56	
Women's involvement in farming	0.0%	7.0%	29.8%	63.2%	3.56	0.625
Entrepreneurial mindset of young farmers	0.0%	4.4%	36.0%	59.6%	3.55	0.581
Women's leadership in agritourism	0.9%	6.1%	34.2%	58.8%	3.51	0.655

^aOverall reliability was $\alpha = 0.792$.^bMeasured on a 4-point unipolar scale ranging from 'Not at all' (1) to 'Very much' (4).

were found for conservationist values with women's success as farmers ($\beta = .219, p = .057$) and civic-minded ($\beta = .440, p < .001$), and productivist values ($\beta = .402, p < .001$) as entrepreneurs. The existing patriarchal agricultural system was perceived as negatively impacting the success of women as farmers ($\beta = -.216, p = .090$) and entrepreneurs ($\beta = -.340, p = .002$). On the contrary, trends on public awareness of agriculture were perceived as an enabler of women's success as entrepreneurs ($\beta = .177, p < .082$).

Significant models (Table 10) were also obtained on the extent to which farmer values, farm household characteristics and societal traits were perceived to affect the life aspects of women's success in terms of civic recognition ($R^2 = .461, p < .001$), personal aspirations ($R^2 = .252, p = .006$), self-fulfillment ($R^2 = .197, p = .045$), and business continuance ($R^2 = .297, p < .001$). When controlled for other variables, the Civic-minded and Productivist values were positively associated with the importance of Civic Recognition ($\beta = .308, p = .001$; $\beta = .242, p = .007$, respectively) and Business Continuance ($\beta = .248, p = .018$; $\beta = .222, p = .030$, respectively) in women's sense of success. In addition, the stronger the Productivist value the stronger the sense of fulfillment on Personal Aspirations ($\beta = .269, p = .011$). The extent of agritourism diversification exerted a negative impact on Civic Recognition ($\beta = -.229, p = .021$) while a positive one on Personal Aspirations ($\beta = .272, p = .020$). Regarding societal trends, positive associations were found between the changing social fabric and the sense of women's success in terms of Civic Recognition ($\beta = .278, p = .006$) and Self-fulfillment ($\beta = .276, p = .023$) and the patriarchal agricultural system and Personal Aspirations ($\beta = .242, p = .048$).

Table 9. Farmer, family and societal attributes associated with women's functional success.

Independent Variables	Functional Success (standardized β and significance)	
	As a Farmer	As an Entrepreneur
Farmer Values		
Conservationist	0.219*	−0.138
Civic-minded	0.158	0.440***
Productivist	0.127	0.402***
Farm Family Attributes		
Likelihood of passing the farm on	0.153	0.127
Extent of agritourism diversification	−0.052	0.058
Months per year of agritourism activities	−0.049	0.124
Societal Traits		
Caregiver role	0.056	0.066
Patriarchal agricultural system	−0.216*	−0.340**
Public awareness	0.170	0.177*
Changing social fabric	−0.092	−0.016
Model Statistics		
<i>R</i>	0.444	0.637
<i>R</i> ²	0.197	0.406
<i>df</i>	10	10
<i>F</i>	1.967	5.468
<i>p-value</i>	0.048	<0.001

* $p < 0.100$.** $p < 0.050$.*** $p < 0.001$.**Table 10.** Farmer, family and societal attributes associated with women's life aspects of success.

Independent Variables	Life Aspects of Success (standardized β and significance)			
	Civic Recognition	Personal Aspirations	Self- Fulfillment	Business Continuance
Farmer Values				
Conservationist	0.079	−0.030	0.184	0.099
Civic-minded	0.308*	0.151	0.019	0.248*
Productivist	0.242*	0.269*	0.057	0.222*
Farm Family Attributes				
Likelihood of passing the farm on	0.125	0.092	0.107	0.156
Extent of agritourism diversification	−0.229*	0.272*	−0.057	−0.088
Seasonality of activities	0.098	−0.026	−0.037	−0.009
Societal Traits				
Public awareness	0.076	0.065	0.020	−0.010
Changing social fabric	0.278*	0.011	0.276*	0.139
Caregiver role	0.001	−0.130	0.089	0.129
Patriarchal agricultural system	0.125	0.242*	−0.013	0.073
Model Statistics				
<i>R</i>	0.679	0.502	0.444	0.545
<i>R</i> ²	0.461	0.252	0.197	0.297
<i>df</i>	10	10	10	10
<i>F</i>	6.924	2.731	1.991	3.422
<i>p-value</i>	< 0.001	0.006	0.045	0.001

* $p < 0.050$.

Discussion and implications

The young age and high education level of participants were consistent with the overall young contingent of high-skilled farmers entering agritourism (Tew & Barbieri, 2012), and the substantial number of young women entering farming (Ball, 2014; Hoppe & Korb, 2013; Sachs et al., 2016) and entrepreneurship in rural areas (Gupta & York, 2008). Such demographic composition along with the high presence of first generation full-time farmers is a major change in the narrative of women captured in the literature (Ahl, 2006; Ball, 2014; Brandth, 2002; Whatmore, 1991). Yet, women's modest perceptions of functional success found in this study stress the need to

continue efforts to eliminate remnants of agricultural patriarchal norms in which women farmers are portrayed as the business assistants (Brasier et al., 2014; Gasson, 1973; Sachs et al., 2016). This is especially important when women's functions as farmers and entrepreneurs need to be juxtaposed within a complex system of personal, community and business aspirations that define women's sense of success as this study showed.

Participants' inclination for civic and conservationist values found in this study supports women's preferences for using sustainable practices (Ball, 2014; Ferrell, 2012; Sachs, 2016) and their strong consideration for their community and the wider public (Johnson et al., 2016; Wright & Annes, 2016). These results reaffirm the existence of gendered agricultural paradigms in which women prioritize smaller scale production to ensure production quality and customers' satisfaction (Anthopoulou, 2010; Halim, 2016). At the same time, these results expand women's agricultural values beyond idealism as participants also value taking actions to enhancing the wellbeing of their community, the farming environment, and their business (Sachs et al., 2016). Women's emphasis on business continuance found in this study concurs with their historic dedication to provide for the farm family by finding ways to supplement incomes and make ends meet (Bock, 2004; Sachs et al., 2016). Recognizing respondents' aspirations for community welfare, conservation and agrarian productivism is important as they were found to predict women's success in their roles as farmers and entrepreneurs, as well as contribute to their personal, community and business aspirations.

This study's results confirmed that social values in agricultural settings uphold patriarchal ideals. Caregiving expectations are still a challenge for women farmers, even to a greater extent than the patriarchal agricultural system, supporting the additional burden women experience because farm tasks add to their household responsibilities (Ball, 2014). Yet, women's caregiver role did not appear to influence their perceived success, which contributes to the evidence that farm women are shifting identities in farm household dynamics from the private (farm family caregiver) into the public (farm business operator) realm of agriculture (Brasier et al., 2014). It may also indicate that although women recognize these challenges, they are not internalizing the impact on their success because they are used to negotiating these challenges within their personal or family realms. As such, the dynamics of societal structures in women's success need to be further explored to elucidate ways to disrupt the masculine hegemony of farming and entrepreneurship in the construction of femininity in rural contexts (Bock, 2015; Brasier et al., 2014; Little & Jones, 2000; Sachs et al., 2016).

Respondents' high levels of diversified agricultural production were expected as this variety entices visitors' participation (Barbieri et al., 2008; Tew & Barbieri, 2012) and allows farm women to move beyond production for family sustenance (Alston, 2003; Ferrell, 2012; Hoppe & Korb, 2013). This is in line with the positive association found with women's personal aspirations. Yet, the negative association with women's perception of civic recognition could be related to the resistance of agricultural communities to accept agricultural changes, such as entrepreneurial diversification led by women (Carter, 2017). Notably, participants recognized that changing societal trends are conducive to their entrepreneurial success and contribute to their community recognition and their self-fulfillment. Having more accepting community fellows (e.g., more open to agriculture entrepreneurship) is critical for the sustainability of agritourism as the lack of community acceptance is a major challenge hindering the economic viability of women in agritourism (Halim, 2016).

Study implications

This study's findings contribute to the scholarship and practice of women in agritourism. Scholarly, this study advanced the existing knowledge on agritourism performance beyond farmers' motivations and goals (Tew & Barbieri, 2012; McGehee et al., 2007) and overall

entrepreneurial performance (Walker & Brown, 2004). Adopting a critical feminism perspective allowed juxtaposing factors operating at the micro (farmer), meso (family), and macro (society) levels (Mooney, 2020) to dissecting how women farmers perceive success based on their distinct yet interrelated roles as farmers and entrepreneurs. Specifically, this study identified that farmer values, farm household attributes, and societal traits determine women's success in their farmer and entrepreneurial roles as well as their different life-dimensions constructing their holistic perceptions of success. Worth noting, this study's incorporation of farmer values to examine women's success moves forward the post-productivist research agenda (Burton, 2004; McGuire et al., 2015) finding that civic-related values are of particular importance to women farmers' perceived success. This finding also adds to the existent evidence of agritourism as a sustainable tourism venture (Barbieri, 2013) taken that women farmers in this study seek to expand the benefits of agritourism beyond their individual farms and beyond economic indicators.

Adopting a feminist lens from a critical standpoint also allowed positing gendered norms associated with patriarchal systems prevailing in agriculture and overall society as underlying factors (Halim, 2016; Snyder-Hall, 2010) that need to be identified, and thus change, to improve women's condition in society (Aitchison, 2000; Mooney, 2020; Parry et al., 2013). The omnipresent effect of the patriarchal system has been consistently reported in the agriculture (Sachs et al., 2016), entrepreneurial (Buttner & Moore, 1997; Greene et al., 2003) and tourism (Ferguson & Alarcon, 2015; Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2015) literature. This study extended the existing knowledge of the limitations women in agriculture face beyond economics, most commonly gravitating around accessing grants and land, by identifying women's struggles related to the social perceptions of what constitutes "agriculture" and women's place in such social structure. This information is critical to (re)design outreach efforts disseminating the many strategies women have used to overcome gendered challenges and succeed in the field, and to increase awareness of the still existing gendered biases. It is also advisable to encourage young women farmers to undertake leadership roles within their local and state agricultural or business associations and in policymaking positions to increase their community recognition. Educational programs tailored to women farmers can help to increase gender equality and women's leadership in agriculture when designed around problem-solving discussions and network building.

Study limitations and insights for future research

Caution is advised when generalizing study results and its implications beyond NC in view of a few study limitations and delimitations. First, the absence of a directory of women in agritourism in NC prevented determining the size and access of the study population, thus the proportion surveyed. The research team placed special effort to recruit women farmers across all the state from different statewide and regional organizations (e.g., NC Cooperative Extension, Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture) on top of an intensive web-search. Yet, a closer examination of the respondents indicates a high presence of young, highly educated, and first generation farmers that may have affected the results related to the caregiver role and the patriarchal agricultural system. These results call for further investigation regardless if such a high presence is related to an over-representation in the study sample or a reflection of the evolving social fabric of agricultural entrepreneurs (Ball, 2014; Gupta & York, 2008; Hoppe & Korb, 2013; Sachs et al., 2016).

Specifically, future research could examine the extent to which young woman farmers with college education are better equipped to voice and challenge patriarchal norms in their communities. Likewise, further investigation could also be useful to identify advantages that new entrants to agriculture, especially women, have in innovating agriculture entrepreneurship (e.g., agritourism) as the extant literature mainly focuses on barriers (e.g., limited access to local networks). Finally, it would be of utmost importance to examine the extent to which different family life cycle stages (e.g., childless, pre-school children at home) intervene in women's perceptions

and attainment of success, which this study did not capture. Filling those knowledge gaps can elucidate on ways to support women's success in agritourism, which ultimately is conducive to community development in a sustainable manner.

Secondly, it is also important to bear in mind that the examination of women's challenges and opportunities in this study was delimited to the innermost layers—farmer, farm household, society—of the agritourism systems approach. Moving forward, future studies should also include the outermost layers defined by the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental tenets of sustainability that may exert additional pressure on farmers. For example, the strengthening of social justice grassroots movements currently happening across the USA may empower women farmers to bend patriarchal norms and more actively seek a public presence in entrepreneurship. This potential impact could be re-examined in contrast with the impact of different feminism waves (e.g., women's vote, rights on family planning) in the USA. Finally, extrapolating results beyond NC should be done with caution due the contextual nature of agriculture and agritourism in particular, as both activities depend on physical (e.g., climate, soil) and cultural (e.g., consumer preferences) attributes. For example, this study could be replicated across regions with different geopolitical schemes (e.g., social vs. capital macro-schemes) as the prevailing tacit norms (e.g., caregiving gender roles) and explicit regulations (e.g., level of child-care subsidies) can influence women's success.

Conclusion

This study applied feminist (Aitchison, 2000; Alston, 2003) and systems (Barbieri, 2017) approaches to gain a holistic understanding of the success of women in agritourism taking into consideration their farmer and entrepreneurial roles as well as different aspects of their lives.

Altogether, study results contribute to the current literature of women in agriculture, their roles on the farm and in the household, challenges within the current patriarchal agricultural system, and opportunities with the current societal trends. The application of feminist approaches in agricultural-related studies are critical to compensate for a sector where masculine purviews and practices prevail (Brandth, 2002). Considered as a form of entrepreneurial farming (Barbieri et al., 2008), the literature on agritourism framed within feminism is extremely limited. As such, this feminist-framed study was suitable to provide insights to strive for gender equity by informing agritourism-related policy to foster more prosperous and equitable rural development.

Furthermore, the application of the agritourism systems approach (Barbieri, 2017) to women farmers contributed to existing agricultural holistic frameworks that examine the farm in its entirety and delineate how interdependent elements affect the individual farmer as well as the overall farm health and survival (e.g., Dogliotti et al., 2014; Ikerd, 1993). By applying this systemic approach within a feminist lens, this study further advanced existing knowledge of the patriarchal systems affecting women beyond negative impacts (Bock, 2015). Furthermore, adopting a critical standpoint allowed identifying opportunities that women can capitalize on to nullify the effects of such dominant systems. Thus, both approaches enabled the identification of the gendered norms and nuances that span the private and public lives of women in agritourism and revealed how these infiltrate their different farmer and entrepreneurial roles. Specifically, results elucidate the dynamics women navigate to contribute to their different life aspects of their own success, their farm family and business, and to the farming community and wider public. In doing so, this study expands the empirical data on the subordination of women in agritourism and agribusiness, which is useful to reduce between gender disparities that prevent moving forward the quest of sustainability.

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