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Agrowellness Goods Distribution in the Light of Sustainability: The Consumer Perspective and the Case of Slovenia's Eastern Cohesion Region

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Abstract: This study explores the distribution of agrowellness products and services from a sustainability perspective, focusing on consumer perceptions in Slovenia's Eastern Cohesion Region. Utilizing an empirical approach through an online survey, the research assesses how sustainable lifestyle practices influence the frequency of agrowellness goods consumption and their perceived availability. The study employs structural equation modeling (SEM) to test four hypotheses, revealing that sustainable lifestyle practices positively affect the frequency of agrowellness product usage, enhancing the perception of product availability. A critical novel contribution of the research is identifying sociodemographic factors as significant moderators of these relationships, offering more profound insights into consumer behavior. Additionally, the frequency of use mediates the link between a sustainable lifestyle and perceived availability, with gender, age, education, and the place of residence as essential moderators. The findings contribute to theory and practice, offering actionable recommendations for marketing and distribution strategies to enhance the accessibility and appeal of agrowellness products. These insights provide valuable guidance for stakeholders in agriculture, rural development, and wellness tourism, with broader implications for policy development aimed at promoting sustainable lifestyles and supporting rural economies.

Keywords: agrowellness; sustainability; consumer behavior; rural development; wellness tourism; distribution; supply chain; Slovenia



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1. Introduction

The growing interest in agrowellness products stems from their ability to contribute to sustainable rural development while enhancing consumer well-being. These products, which blend wellness and agricultural tourism, are economically significant as they offer new income streams for rural areas, supporting local producers and sustainable practices. Socially, they foster healthier lifestyles and stronger connections between consumers and rural communities.

This study is particularly relevant as research on the distribution of agrowellness goods remains limited despite the increasing demand for wellness tourism and sustainable products. Understanding how sustainable lifestyles influence the frequency of use and perceived availability of these products is essential for shaping effective distribution strategies. The research focuses on Slovenia's Eastern Cohesion Region, where agrowellness goods are becoming an integral part of local rural economies.

The area studied features a diverse population with a solid connection to local traditions and sustainability practices, making it an ideal setting for this investigation. This study aims to provide valuable insights for practitioners, offering data that can inform marketing strategies and contribute to developing policies that support sustainable rural development at both local and national levels.

At the end of this research, we anticipate presenting new contributions to the distribution dynamics of agrowellness goods. These findings could be a foundation for formulating sustainable policies that boost agritourism and agrowellness, improving accessibility and fostering economic and environmental resilience in rural regions.

The specific research objectives of this study are as follows:

- To analyze how sustainable lifestyle practices influence the frequency of consumption of agrowellness goods;
- To assess the perceived availability of agrowellness products;
- To investigate the moderating role of sociodemographic factors in these relationships.

2. Literature Review

Rural tourism encompasses various types of tourist activities in rural areas or communities [1], including ecotourism, cultural tourism, adventure tourism, and agritourism [1,2]. Agritourism, as a subset of rural tourism, refers explicitly to activities directly connected with the agricultural environment, products, or accommodations [3]. It provides tourists with an authentic rural experience on a working farm, allowing them to participate in farming activities, enjoy locally produced food, and learn about agricultural practices [4].

The development of agritourism contributes significantly to the sustainable development and revitalization of rural areas [5,6]. It offers farmers an alternative source of income, enabling economic diversification and reducing their dependence on traditional agricultural practices [7]. Moreover, agritourism stimulates growth in the other sectors of the rural economy, such as crafts, local shops, and restaurants [8], creating a multiplier effect that boosts overall economic activity, employment opportunities, and local revenues [9].

In addition to its economic benefits, agritourism is crucial in preserving cultural heritage, traditional practices, and picturesque rural landscapes [10,11]. It also encourages the responsible use of natural resources and supports biodiversity conservation efforts [12]. Furthermore, agritourism empowers rural women by providing them with opportunities for entrepreneurship and income generation [13]. However, several challenges hinder the full realization of agritourism's potential. These include fragmented promotion efforts, limited entrepreneurial drive among some farmers, and financial constraints [1]. To harness the full benefits of agritourism as a tool for sustainable rural development, it is crucial to address these challenges through targeted policies, support mechanisms, and capacity-building initiatives [5].

Wellness is "a special state of health comprising an overall sense of well-being which sees man as consisting of body, spirit, and mind and dependent on his environment" [14]. This holistic view emphasizes body, mind, and spirit harmony, with fundamental elements like self-responsibility, physical fitness/beauty care, healthy nutrition, relaxation, mental activity, and environmental sensitivity [14].

A comprehensive wellness model thus spans multiple physical, mental, spiritual, and environmental dimensions. Key offerings include fitness activities, healthy cuisine, relaxation and meditation programs, cultural/educational pursuits, and therapies [14,15]. Increasingly, a connection to nature and the local community is also essential [15].

People are motivated to engage in wellness tourism for diverse reasons like recreation, relaxation, escapism, improving the quality of life, and social interaction [15,16]. Importantly, motivations appear to be linked to individuals' commitment to a well-being lifestyle. Those with healthier habits tend to have more apparent reasons for visiting, while less health-conscious guests lack distinct motivations [16].

Wellness tourism is a promising avenue for rural areas to diversify their offerings and attract new markets [17,18]. A segment of tourists motivated by relaxation, escape, and nature-based experiences appears to align well with rural destinations [19]. However, successfully developing wellness tourism requires stakeholder coordination, innovative practices, and a clear understanding of target markets [17].

Romão, Machino, and Nijkamp [17] developed a comprehensive framework for wellness tourism development in rural regions. They propose that wellness tourism can serve

as an “integrative diversification” for rural areas, complementing the existing tourism offerings. The model considers three spatial levels (the wellness facility, the destination, and the broader region) and identifies the resources, services, stakeholders, and market characteristics relevant at each level. Coordination between private and public stakeholders and innovative practices are crucial for successfully developing and integrating wellness tourism into a region’s overall tourism dynamics.

Pesonen and Komppula [19] investigated the potential of rural tourism as a form of well-being tourism in Finland. Through the cluster analysis of survey data, they identified a distinct “well-being” segment among rural tourists. This segment emphasizes relaxation, escape from everyday life, comfort, and hassle-free vacations. They value privacy, a lack of schedules, calmness, and spending time in nature. The authors concluded that peaceful rural settings with natural beauty offer an ideal environment for wellbeing-motivated tourism, even without luxurious elements.

Aluculesei and Avram [18] explore the opportunity for developing rural well-being tourism in the Puglia region of Italy, particularly considering the COVID-19 pandemic. They note that rural well-being tourism combines rural tourism activities with a focus on holistic well-being. The authors suggest that the concept may be especially relevant for post-pandemic tourism, as people seek out less crowded, nature-based destinations for relaxation and stress relief.

Agritourism synergistically provides wellness benefits to both tourists and rural communities. For tourists, the opportunity to engage with a healthy natural environment and traditional agricultural practices can have restorative effects on mental well-being [20,21]. The image of agritourism destinations as healthy and restorative places builds place attachment and loyalty [21]. At the same time, agritourism contributes to rural settlements’ sustainability and “health” by preserving traditional culture, diversifying income sources, and valorizing the rural environment [21]. There is a mutually reinforcing relationship where agritourism simultaneously supports individual tourists’ well-being and rural areas’ long-term vitality. Companies respond by marketing “wellness” products and experiences [22]. In tourism, natural environments that provide restoration are becoming significant draws, especially in organic agritourism, where health is a core value [21]. However, challenges remain in genuinely delivering wellness. “Healthy” branding can be misleading if not backed by fundamental changes [22]. Truly supporting wellness requires a holistic commitment, whether through transparent tracking systems [23] or designing destinations around restorative experiences [21]. As wellness becomes an increasingly critical selling point, agricultural and tourism operators must engage with its principles to deeply meet evolving consumer expectations.

Lawrence and Burch [22] discuss the growing “wellness” phenomenon in the food industry, as companies increasingly market themselves as promoting healthy lifestyles. They argue that this shift is driven by consumer demand for healthier products, government public health concerns, and food companies’ need to remain competitive as supermarkets gain power through own-brand products.

Vizza et al. [23] propose an information system to track agricultural products and guarantee traceability in the food supply chain. They argue that this system can support citizen wellness by ensuring effective control mechanisms, the quick management of critical points, and accessible information. The ability to track the whole food process is seen as a guarantee of safety that increases consumer confidence.

Rezaei et al. [20] specifically look at the mental health benefits of agritourism in South Korea. They found that visitors to agritourism sites perceived considerable improvement in their immediate mood compared to a control group who stayed home. There was also a significant interaction between self-reported well-being and agritourism activities that combined positively and affected mood. This suggests that agritourism can boost positive mood and improve mental health.

Xue and Shen [21] take a broader view, exploring how environmental restorative perception (ERP) impacts loyalty to agritourism destinations through place attachment and

healthy image. Their study in Taiwan found that agritourism's non-toxic and organic sustainable environment has a restorative perception that attracts tourists looking to improve their health through travel. ERP positively impacted place attachment, healthy image, and loyalty.

Ciolac et al. [6] examine agritourism as a factor for sustainable development that improves the "health" of rural settlements in the Apuseni Mountains of Romania. They argue that agritourism supports rural areas' economic, social, and environmental sustainability while providing health benefits to tourists. Agritourism allows urban dwellers to escape to a quiet, healthy rural environment and engage in traditional agricultural activities. It can help preserve rural culture and lifestyles while diversifying the local economy.

There is immense potential for the synergizing of agritourism and wellness tourism. By connecting tourists with the rural environment and way of life, rural tourism can positively impact mental health and contribute to sustainable rural development. Destinations should promote the wellness benefits of agritourism to attract health-conscious tourists. Further research can continue to explore how agritourism enhances the well-being of tourists and local communities.

The distribution of wellness products and services is a crucial aspect of agritourism, as it connects agricultural producers with consumers seeking unique, health-promoting experiences. As Katsoni and Dionysopoulou [24] note, agritourism encompasses a range of activities, from farm stays and rural tours to the sale of locally produced food and wellness products. Understanding the information search behavior of agritourists is also crucial to developing effective distribution strategies. In their study, Katsoni and Dionysopoulou [24] investigated the behavior patterns of agritourists in Arcadia, Greece, and found that the purpose of the trip influences how tourists seek information. Katsoni and Dionysopoulou [24] also discovered that agritourists rely heavily on recommendations from friends and family and the internet when researching their trips. This highlights the importance of word-of-mouth marketing and online presence for agritourism businesses.

Effective distribution channels and supply chain management are essential for delivering these products and services to the market and promoting rural development. Recent studies have highlighted the importance of diverse marketing channels for family farmers engaged in agritourism. Verano et al. [25] assessed the inclusion of family farmers in short and long marketing channels in Goiás, Brazil, finding that encouraging both channel types can provide more opportunities for these producers. According to Verano et al. [25], short channels, such as farmers' markets and direct sales to consumers, allow for closer connections between producers and consumers, while long channels, like commodity markets, can offer greater market reach.

Efficient supply chain management is crucial for successfully distributing wellness products in agritourism. Levino et al. [26] analyzed the supply chain of jaboticaba fruit produced by a cooperative in Alagoas, Brazil, identifying issues such as difficulties in transportation and distribution, a lack of storage facilities, and the need for product composition analysis. Levino et al. [26] recommend conducting market research, analyzing production costs, seeking institutional support, and obtaining the necessary certifications and labels to access new markets.

Traceability systems can also play a significant role in the distribution of wellness products in agritourism. Vizza et al. [23] proposed an information system to model the entire food supply chain and allow the traceability of agricultural products like milk, fruit, and vegetables. Vizza et al. [23] argue that by tracking food through all the production, processing, and distribution phases, as well as marking documentation, such systems can help monitor food safety and increase consumer confidence in the wellness products they purchase.

The concept of sustainable development plays a crucial role in the distribution of agrowellness products, as it seeks to integrate environmental, economic, and social goals. Klarin [27] traces the evolution of sustainable development, emphasizing how it has adapted to modern global challenges while retaining its core principles. The Millennium

Development Goals, for instance, highlight sustainability as a necessity for human survival. Manioudis and Meramveliotakis [28] call for a return to classical political economy to enrich sustainable development by incorporating historical, interdisciplinary, and class-based perspectives. This theoretical approach aligns well with the principles guiding agrowellness distribution, as it promotes long-term environmental and societal benefits while addressing local development.

Research Gap and Study Objectives

The distribution of wellness products and services in agritourism requires a multi-faceted approach considering diverse marketing channels, consumer information search behavior, efficient supply chain management, and traceability systems. By optimizing these factors, agritourism businesses can increase market access, boost consumer confidence, and promote wellness while contributing to rural development. Despite researchers' interest in agritourism and wellness, a lack of interest was given to the field of the distribution of agritourism products and services and to the perception of these factors affecting distribution from the perspective of the consumer, which can be understood through the concept of the availability of agrowellness goods. Therefore, the main aim of this study was to investigate these relationships, especially in the context of the availability of agrowellness as a new concept both in theory and practice. This study also has three specific objectives:

- (a) To assess the relationship between sustainable lifestyle performance, the frequency of consumption of agrowellness goods from the local rural environment, and the perception of their availability from the consumer perspective;
- (b) To measure the mediating roles of the frequency of the usage of agrowellness goods from the local environment on the link between sustainable lifestyle performance and agrowellness goods availability;
- (c) To test the moderating role of the sociodemographic profile of consumers in previously perceived relationships.

This study has both theoretical and practical perspectives. On the one hand, it investigates the potentially significant influences of the sustainable lifestyle, which increases the frequency of the usage of agrowellness goods from the local environment and positively impacts the perception of the factors of agrowellness goods availability. The presented study suggests how the perception of a sustainable lifestyle and the usage of agrowellness service can affect the perception of the key factors of agrowellness goods distribution. Also, the results of this study can help practitioners from the fields of agriculture, rural development, and logistics, focusing on primary aspects that could affect the efficiency of short-supply agrowellness supply chains. To fill the mentioned research gaps, four hypotheses put forward by similar studies [21,25,29] are projected.

Hypothesis 1. *Sustainable lifestyle performance will positively influence the frequency of the usage of agrowellness goods.*

Hypothesis 2. *The higher level of the frequency of the usage of agrowellness goods will increase the positive perception of the availability of agrowellness goods.*

Hypothesis 3. *The sociodemographic profile has a statistically significant moderating role in the relationship between the usage of agrowellness services and the perception of its availability.*

Hypothesis 4. *The frequency of the usage of agrowellness goods mediates the association between sustainable lifestyle performance and the perception of the availability of agrowellness goods.*

Figure 1 shows the proposed research model.

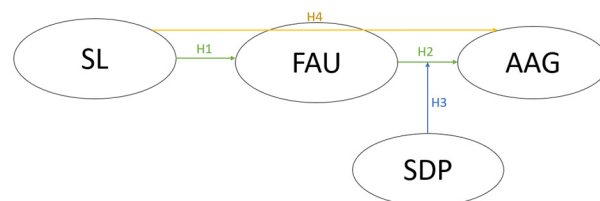


Figure 1. The proposed research model. Note: SL = sustainable lifestyle; FAU = frequency of agrowellness goods usage; AAG = availability of agrowellness goods; SDP = sociodemographic profile of the consumer.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Sampling and Data Collection

For the purposes of this research, a quantitative survey method in the empirical part involved conducting an online survey. The objective of the survey was to examine wellness tourism services in the rural areas of the Eastern Cohesion Region of Slovenia and to define the needs, desires, and expectations of the local population (or domestic tourists) regarding farm tourism and maintaining a healthy lifestyle through local goods. Additionally, the sustainable habits of Slovenians and the current barriers that hinder the access, distribution, and transfer of goods from the local countryside were investigated.

The online survey was conducted over three months, from 1 March 2024 to 31 May 2024, as a part of the project “Model of Sustainable Agrowellness Goods Distribution in Slovenian Countryside for Greater Community Well-being”. Before conducting the survey, the designed questionnaire was sensibly divided into five sections to ensure the appropriateness and accuracy of the questions. Each section was designed to comprehensively cover the research objectives and included a mixture of several types of questions, providing both quantitative and qualitative data for analysis.

The procedure used to obtain the sample of participants followed a convenience sampling method, which involved distributing the survey online through a variety of social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, as well as community networks and wellness-related forums that attracted individuals interested in rural tourism and wellness services. The use of online distribution enabled a wide reach, ensuring that individuals from the Eastern Cohesion Region were targeted, though it also introduced potential sampling bias due to the online nature of the survey, which could exclude those without regular internet access. Additionally, to ensure that the survey was answered by individuals relevant to the study’s objectives, an eliminatory question was included at the start of the survey: “Do you practice using well-being goods and services from the rural environment?” Only the respondents who answered affirmatively to this question were allowed to proceed with the rest of the survey, thereby ensuring that the collected data were focused on the participants engaged with agrowellness goods.

Missing values in the responses were managed using list-wise deletion, where any incomplete surveys were excluded from the final analysis. This ensured that the dataset used for statistical testing was complete and reliable, though it reduced the overall sample size slightly. Out of the total 738 responses received, 93% of the participants provided complete responses that were included in the final analysis. Data screening procedures were also implemented to detect any potential outliers and ensure the data’s suitability for the subsequent statistical analysis.

3.2. Measurements

The survey questionnaire, developed following an extensive literature review, comprised five thematic sections and included twenty-seven questions. Of these, seven were closed-ended (multiple-choice) questions, six were semi-closed (allowing for alternative responses), seven were evaluative (Likert scale) questions, and six were open-ended questions.

The first section of the questionnaire addressed the general tourism habits and needs of the local residents of Slovenia. This section consisted of three questions related to the

frequency of engaging in tourism activities, reasons for choosing a tourist destination, and the mode of transportation selected for reaching the destination. The second section focused on rural wellness offers, activities in nature, individual habits, and preferences for local products. It included nine questions about choosing wellness services in rural or urban areas, the advantages of rural wellness, the frequency of specific activities in the local rural environment, personal lifestyle habits (exercise, healthy eating, cycling, etc.), the consumption and purposes of local organic food products, the use and purpose of natural cosmetics, and barriers to maintaining a healthy lifestyle. The third section comprised three questions evaluating individual habits and lifestyles. These questions were presented in a tabular format using a Likert scale, where the participants rated the extent to which certain statements applied to them on a scale of 1–5. The fourth section included five questions regarding the awareness of the term “agrowellness”, the importance of developing agrowellness offerings in rural Slovenia, the accessibility of agrowellness goods, and the role of the local community and initiatives in using local products. The fifth section consisted of seven questions concerning the demographic information of the participants (gender, age, education, the region of residence, willingness to pay for agrowellness offerings, and the choice of companions).

Sustainable lifestyle perceptions (SL) were measured using three subdimensions developed by Quoquab et al. [30]. Some of the items were partly modified to ensure they fit the presented aims of this study. The subdimensions used in this study were care for environmental well-being, quality of life, and care for future generations. The frequency of agrowellness goods usage (FAU) was measured as a discrepancy between using a particular wellness good in general and its usage in the rural environment. Based on the study developed by Dilletta et al. [15], all the agrowellness goods and services were grouped into four subdimensions: sport and recreation, wellness nutrition, wellness services, and mental wellness. The perception of agrowellness goods (AAG) availability was measured using the 8-item scale developed from the literature review focused on distribution as a part of marketing and supply chain strategy and proposals by Levino et al. [26]. This scale included the perception of assessing the physical accessibility (item 1), accessibility on the internet (item 2), their relevance (item 3), and the ease of obtaining information (item 4) and purchasing agrowellness goods (item 5). It also evaluates the ease of communication with providers (item 6) and the encouragement to make repeat purchases (item 7) after initial consumption (item 8). The last part of the survey included the sociodemographic profile of the respondents: gender, age, the level of education, and the place of residence.

3.3. Data Analysis

The initial phase of the data analysis involved thorough data screening to identify the presence of outliers, assess missing values, and evaluate the overall suitability of the data for subsequent analyses. This preliminary step was crucial in ensuring the integrity and reliability of the dataset. After the deletion of missing values, on the final dataset of 684 participants, Harman’s single-factor test was conducted to evaluate common method variance. Following this, descriptive statistics analysis was performed to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents, providing insights into the sample’s composition, and contextualizing the results.

The next phase of the analysis involved Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM), which were crucial for examining the proposed research hypotheses and the relationships among the variables. Before proceeding with these analyses, the dataset was tested for multivariate normality using Mardia’s test. The assessment of multivariate normality in this study revealed a significant Mardia’s coefficient, suggesting potential non-normality; however, this finding is sensitive to sample size and may not provide a practical assessment in the context of SEM. To enhance our evaluation, kurtosis values for individual variables were examined, finding that those exceeding 3.00 indicated non-normality, prompting the use of robust estimation methods in the SEM analysis to ensure the reliability of our results.

The data analysis was conducted using SPSS 29 for descriptive statistics and preliminary analyses, while AMOS 29 was utilized for CFA and SEM providing a framework for conducting the necessary statistical tests for a comprehensive examination of the relationships among the variables and validating the research model.

4. Results

4.1. Profile of Respondents

Table 1 provides an overview of the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents ($n = 684$). The gender distribution shows a higher proportion of female respondents (78.5%) compared to male respondents (21.2%), with a small percentage (0.03%) identifying as other. Age-wise, the largest group falls within the 30–39 age range (35.8%), followed by 18–29 (21.2%), 40–49 (22.7%), 50–59 (13.0%), and 60+ (7.3%). In terms of education, most respondents hold a higher education degree (56.1%), followed by those with a Master's or Doctoral degree (25.1%), and those with elementary or secondary education (18.7%). Regarding the place of residence, a significant portion of the respondents reside in rural areas (51.5%), while 33.3% live in urban areas and 15.2% in suburban areas. These sociodemographic details provide a comprehensive understanding of the respondent profile, essential for interpreting the study's findings.

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of respondents ($n = 684$).

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	144	21.2
Female	536	78.5
Other	4	0.03
Age		
18–29	145	21.2
30–39	245	35.8
40–49	155	22.7
50–59	89	13.0
60+	50	7.3
Level of education		
Elementary or secondary school	128	18.7
Higher education degree	384	56.1
Master's or doctoral degree	172	25.1
Place of residence		
Urban	228	33.3
Suburban	104	15.2
Rural	352	51.5

4.2. Measurement Model

Harman's single-factor test was employed to assess common method variance. Separate Exploratory Factor Analyses (EFAs) were conducted for each group of questions. After rotating the solutions, group SL generated three constructs, group FAU generated four constructs, and AAG generated a single construct. The initial factor in all the EFAs accounted for between 34.7% and 67.2% of the total variance, indicating that common method variance was not a significant issue.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was utilized for measurement. All the items were retained as their factor loadings exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.5. The overall model fit was satisfactory according to the CFA results: $\chi^2(140) = 113.256$ ($p < 0.001$), $\chi^2/df = 1.473$, comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.837, goodness of fit index (GFI) = 0.833, root mean square residual (RMR) = 0.039, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.047. The factor loadings ranged from 0.711 to 0.841, explaining a significant portion of the variance. Additionally, all the constructs had composite reliability above 0.68, indicating

good convergent validity. Discriminant validity was also confirmed, as all the average variance extracted (AVE) values were higher than the squared interfactor correlations.

4.3. Structural Model

Structural equation modeling with a maximum likelihood method was used for the validation of the model presented in Figure 1. According to the presented results, the model shows a reasonable fit: $\chi^2 = 148.800$, $df = 349$ ($p < 0.001$), $\chi^2/df = 426.361$, CFI = 0.889, RMR = 0.049, and RMSEA = 0.079.

In Table 2, the hypothesis testing results are presented. The SL perceptions are positively related to FAU (GAMA = 0.427, $p < 0.01$). Also, FAU is positively related to AAG (GAMA = 0.556, $p < 0.01$). In this phase, Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 are accepted. It can be concluded that if a person perceives all the dimensions of his lifestyle as more sustainable, it means that it will affect the higher frequency of agrowellness service usage. Also, the higher frequency of agrowellness service usage will positively affect the perception of the availability of agrowellness goods.

Table 2. Verification of the research hypothesis.

Hypothesis	R ²	Sig.	Result
H1	8.337	0.01	Accepted
H2	10.556	0.01	Accepted
Hypothesis	β	Sig.	Result
H3			Accepted
H3a: gender	0.15	0.01	Accepted
H3b: age	−0.12	0.05	Accepted
H3c: level of education	0.2	0.01	Accepted
H3d: place of residence	0.18	0.05	Accepted
Hypothesis	<i>t</i> -value	Sig.	Result
H4	0.337	0.01	Accepted

To test Hypothesis 3, the analysis demonstrating a statistically significant moderating effect of the sociodemographic profile (gender, age, the level of education, and the place of residence) on the relationship between the frequency of agrowellness goods usage and their perceived availability was used. The interaction terms for these sociodemographic variables with the frequency of usage were significant, with coefficients as follows: gender ($\beta = 0.15$, $p < 0.01$), age ($\beta = -0.12$, $p < 0.05$), the level of education ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$), and the place of residence ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.05$) confirming the hypothesis that the sociodemographic profile significantly moderates the relationship between the usage of agrowellness services and the perception of their availability. For example, the positive coefficient suggests that females and other individuals with higher education levels experience living in a suburban and rural environment perceive a stronger link between their usage frequency and the perceived availability of agrowellness goods, while the negative coefficient for age ($\beta = -0.12$) indicates that older individuals may perceive this relationship differently.

As the amount of mediation indicates the indirect effect [31], the Sobel test was used to investigate the significance level of the mediating effect of FAU on the relationship between SL and AAG. The results presented in Table 2 show a statistically significant mediating effect ($t = 3.337$, $p < 0.01$) which ensures that Hypothesis 4 should be accepted.

5. Discussion

The distribution of agrowellness products is closely tied to agritourism because both promote sustainable rural development and wellness. Agritourism offers visitors agricultural experiences and access to local wellness products like organic foods and natural

cosmetics. By effectively distributing these products, agritourism businesses enhance the tourist experience, supporting local economies and sustainability efforts. This integration makes agrowellness goods a crucial part of agritourism, providing a holistic experience that promotes well-being while supporting rural communities.

The findings of this study, which examined the relationship between sustainable lifestyle performance, the frequency of usage of agrowellness goods, and the perception of their availability from a consumer perspective, are significant in multiple contexts. Interpreted considering previous studies and the presented hypotheses, the presented results offer a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics at play.

The first hypothesis proposed that a sustainable lifestyle would positively influence the frequency of agrowellness goods usage. The results confirmed this hypothesis, indicating that the individuals who engage in sustainable practices are more likely to frequently use agrowellness goods. This finding aligns with the existing literature that emphasizes the connection between sustainable behavior and the consumption of products that align with these values. For instance, Quoquab et al. [30] highlighted that people who prioritize environmental well-being, quality of life, and care for future generations tend to make conscious consumer choices that support sustainability. The study's results suggest that the integration of sustainability into daily life translates into greater demand for agrowellness goods, which are perceived as aligning with sustainable principles.

The second hypothesis posited that a higher frequency of agrowellness goods usage would lead to a more positive perception of their availability. The findings supported this hypothesis, demonstrating that the frequent users of agrowellness goods tend to perceive these products as more readily available. This result can be interpreted through the lens of consumer familiarity and habitual behavior. The more frequently individuals use these goods, the more aware they become of their sources and distribution channels, thereby enhancing their perception of availability. This is consistent with consumer behavior theories suggesting that repeated interaction with a product category increases consumers' perception of its accessibility. Several studies corroborate these findings. Verano et al. [25] explored the inclusion of family farmers in various marketing channels and discovered that increased interaction with both short and long marketing channels fosters a stronger perception of product accessibility among consumers. Their findings suggest that as consumers engage more frequently with products through diverse channels, their familiarity with them and their distribution networks grows, leading to heightened availability. Furthermore, Xue and Shen [21] examined how environmental restorative perceptions impact loyalty to agritourism destinations. They found that frequent visitors develop a stronger attachment and familiarity with the destination, which in turn enhances their perception of the availability and accessibility of the wellness products offered there. This aligns with the notion that habitual engagement with a product or service category can lead to increased perceptions of accessibility and availability.

The third hypothesis examined whether sociodemographic factors moderated the relationship between the usage of agrowellness services and the perception of their availability. The results revealed statistically significant moderating effects related to age, education, and income levels. These findings align with previous research that has shown that demographic variables often influence consumer behavior and perceptions. For example, higher-income and better-educated individuals may have more access to information about agrowellness goods and thus perceive them as more available. This suggests that marketing and distribution strategies for agrowellness products need to be tailored to different demographic groups to enhance their effectiveness. Several studies support these findings. Pampel et al. [32] explored the role of socioeconomic status in health behavior. They found that individuals with higher income and education levels tend to engage more with health-related products and services, which increases their perception of availability. Their research highlights that better-educated consumers are often more informed and have greater access to resources, enabling them to perceive health-related products as more accessible. Similarly, Haws et al. [33] investigated how demographic factors such as income and

education influence the perceptions of green products. Their study revealed that consumers with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to perceive green products, including agrowellness goods, as readily available due to their greater access to information and purchasing power. This finding aligns with the hypothesis that sociodemographic factors significantly moderate the relationship between product usage and perceived availability. Moreover, Sharma and Jha [34] examined the impact of sociodemographic variables on the consumption of organic products, finding that income and education levels played a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions of product availability. Their research indicated that wealthier and better-educated individuals were more likely to perceive organic products as available and accessible, further supporting the moderating effects observed in the context of agrowellness goods. These studies collectively validate the hypothesis that sociodemographic factors, particularly age, education, and income, moderate the relationship between the usage of agrowellness services and the perception of their availability. They emphasize the importance of tailoring marketing and distribution strategies to different demographic groups to ensure that agrowellness products are perceived as accessible by all the population segments.

The final hypothesis explored the mediating role of the frequency of agrowellness goods usage in the relationship between sustainable lifestyle performance and the perception of availability. The results indicated a significant mediating effect, implying that the positive impact of a sustainable lifestyle on the perception of agrowellness goods availability is partially channeled through the frequency of usage. This finding underscores the importance of habitual engagement with agrowellness products in shaping consumers' perceptions of market conditions. It also suggests that initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable lifestyles may indirectly enhance the perceived availability of sustainable products by encouraging more frequent use. Several studies support this mediating role of usage frequency. Vermeir and Verbeke [35] examined how sustainable lifestyle choices influence the consumption of sustainable products. They found that the frequent usage of these products mediates the relationship between sustainability attitudes and the perceptions of product availability. Their study demonstrated that individuals with a strong commitment to sustainability are more likely to frequently engage with sustainable products, enhancing their perception of these products' availability in the market. Similarly, Joshi and Rahman [36] investigated the factors influencing the consumption of sustainable goods. They identified the frequency of usage as a key mediator between consumers' pro-environmental attitudes and their perceptions of product accessibility. Their research highlights that as consumers engage more regularly with sustainable products, their understanding and perception of the availability of these goods improve, reinforcing the importance of habitual consumption. Another relevant study by Ghazali et al. [37] explored the role of sustainable consumption behaviors in shaping the perceptions of market accessibility. They found that the frequency of purchasing sustainable goods mediates the relationship between environmental consciousness and perceived availability. The study suggests that individuals who frequently purchase sustainable products, such as agrowellness goods, are more likely to perceive them as accessible due to their established purchasing habits and familiarity with distribution networks.

6. Conclusions

6.1. Theoretical and Practical Implications

The results of this study have important implications for both theory and practice. The confirmation of the proposed hypotheses contributes to the theoretical understanding of how sustainable lifestyles influence consumer behavior in the context of agrowellness goods. This study expands the existing models by highlighting usage frequency's mediating role and moderating the influence of sociodemographic factors. These insights can inform future research exploring similar relationships in different contexts or with other product categories. From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that businesses involved in producing and distributing agrowellness goods should consider strategies

that encourage frequent use among consumers. This could involve loyalty programs, educational campaigns about the benefits of agrowellness goods, and efforts to increase the visibility of these products in the marketplace. Additionally, the study highlights the need for targeted marketing efforts that account for different demographic groups' varying perceptions and needs. For instance, younger consumers or those with higher education levels may require different communication strategies than older or less-educated individuals.

This study contributes to the growing body of research on agrowellness by providing insights into how sustainable lifestyle practices influence consumer behavior. Identifying the role of sociodemographic moderators in shaping consumption patterns extends the understanding of sustainability-driven market behaviors. The findings also suggest that the availability and consumption of agrowellness products are interconnected, providing a framework for future research on consumer behavior in the context of sustainable rural development.

The research aligns with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 15 (Life on Land). The study highlights the potential of agrowellness products to drive sustainable rural economies by promoting environmentally responsible consumption and supporting local producers. To this end, the findings suggest the need for policies that enhance the accessibility of agrowellness products through targeted marketing, support for local supply chains, and initiatives that promote sustainable consumption behaviors. Additionally, policies integrating wellness tourism into rural development strategies could further align with SDG goals, ensuring economic viability and environmental sustainability in rural regions.

6.2. Limitations and Recommendations for the Future Research

This study has some limitations. The first of them presents its reliance on self-reported data collected through an online survey, which may introduce bias due to respondents' subjective perceptions or social desirability tendencies. The participants might overstate their involvement in sustainable practices or wellness activities to align with socially accepted behaviors, leading to inflated measures of sustainability and wellness engagement. Additionally, the online nature of the survey could exclude individuals without internet access or those less comfortable with digital platforms, potentially resulting in a sample that is not fully representative of the broader population, particularly rural residents who may have limited online connectivity. Furthermore, the use of convenience sampling limits the ability to generalize the findings to the entire Slovenian population, as the respondents were not randomly selected.

One of the key limitations of this study is the uneven distribution of respondents in terms of gender, age, and education, which could potentially limit the generalizability of the findings. A higher proportion of women respondents was observed, which may reflect general societal trends where women are more actively engaged in decisions related to health, wellness, and sustainable consumption. However, this gender imbalance might skew the results toward preferences and behaviors more commonly associated with women, underrepresenting male perspectives on agrowellness and sustainable habits. Similarly, most respondents being in the 30–39 age group is appropriate given that this segment often prioritizes maintaining a healthy lifestyle and sustainability. Nevertheless, this focus on a single age group may limit insights into the agrowellness preferences of younger or older populations, who may have different attitudes and behaviors toward rural tourism and agrowellness services.

Another limitation relates to the overrepresentation of highly educated respondents, which, while ensuring that the sample is informed and relevant to the study's focus on sustainability, might narrow the diversity of perspectives. Individuals with higher education are more aware of sustainable practices and may more readily engage in agrowellness activities, potentially leading to more favorable perceptions of agrowellness goods. This could create a bias in the data, reducing the potential for insights into the barriers faced

by individuals from different educational backgrounds who may be less familiar with or less inclined to adopt such practices. A more balanced distribution across educational levels in future studies could provide a broader range of insights and increase the overall representativeness of the study findings.

Several avenues for future research emerge from this study. Firstly, further research could explore the long-term effects of sustainable lifestyle practices on the consumption of agrowellness goods. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how these behaviors evolve and influence market trends. Secondly, there is a need to investigate the role of digital platforms and social media in shaping the perceptions of agrowellness goods availability, particularly in the context of younger demographics who rely heavily on online information sources. Moreover, future studies could examine the effectiveness of specific marketing interventions to increase the frequency of agrowellness goods usage and how these interventions impact overall sustainability outcomes. Expanding the research to different geographic regions would provide a more global perspective on the relationship between sustainable lifestyles, product usage, and market perceptions, potentially revealing regional differences that could inform localized marketing and distribution strategies.

This study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing the usage and perception of agrowellness goods from a consumer perspective. The findings underscore the importance of sustainable lifestyle practices and highlight the role of demographic factors in shaping consumer behavior. As the market for agrowellness goods continues to grow, understanding these dynamics will be crucial for businesses and policymakers aiming to promote sustainable consumption patterns.

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