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2021-08-05

Deposited version:

Accepted Version

Peer-review status of attached file:

Peer-reviewed

Citation for published item:

Dias, Á., González-Rodríguez, M. R. & Patuleia, M. (2021). Retaining tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs for destination competitiveness. *International Journal of Tourism Research*. 23 (2), 701-713

Further information on publisher's website:

[10.1002/jtr.2436](https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2436)

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Retaining Tourism Lifestyle Entrepreneurs for Destination Competitiveness

Abstract

Due to their representativeness in the universe of tourism businesses and the potential to generate innovation, tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs (TLEs) play an essential role in the competitiveness of tourism destinations. Despite this vital importance, the antecedents of innovation generated by these entrepreneurs and their willingness to stay at the destination are still under-explored. Findings from a survey of 178 TLEs, indicate that the context influences community attachment, and affects indirectly innovation and willingness to stay. Community attachment has a positive influence on entrepreneurial self-efficacy, innovation and willingness to stay. A transition of the context results to developing economies was also taken into consideration. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Keywords: Lifestyle entrepreneurship; Local knowledge; Destination Competitiveness; Creative Tourism; Partial Least Squares.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs (TLEs) represent a very expressive group in the universe of businesses operating in the tourism sector. They can be defined as ‘tourism business owners who are actively pursuing a different lifestyle’ (Bosworth & Farrel, 2011, p. 1475), meaning that they are regulated by financial and non-financial indicators (Thomas et al., 2011). There is also evidence that these entrepreneurs play an essential role in the destinations’ sustainability and innovation (Shrivastava & Kennelly, 2013; Yachin, 2019). Because they are embedded in the local community they have, on the one hand, a central concern with the preservation of the way of life, culture and environment of the places where they develop their activity (Bosworth & Farrell, 2011; Morrison, 2006). On the other hand, their community attachment allows them to access local knowledge that is unique and difficult to imitate (Hoarau, 2014). Additionally, this proximity facilitates the network with local stakeholders (Czernek, 2017). The facilitated access to the local community and networking enables them to offer more genuine and differentiated experiences bounded to the place (Richards, 2011), allowing to respond to the growing demand by tourists for products and services with characteristics associated with the place (Arias & Cruz, 2018). As such, these experiences constitute the basis of their competitiveness in relation to large companies and entrepreneurs from other locations (Mottiar, 2007). In this way, local knowledge and tourism resources become a source of global competitiveness (Dias et al., 2020b; Guercini & Ceccarelli, 2020). Previous research has recognized that TLEs are not only better than large companies in product and service innovation (Shaw & Williams, 2004), but also creating niche markets (Koh & Hatten, 2002), and promoting destination diversification (Bosworth & Farrell, 2011). As Ryan et al. (2012) state,

they act as triggers of destination change and innovation. In this way, destinations benefit from the existence of these entrepreneurs both by attracting tourists seeking genuine and immersive experiences (Bredvold & Skålén, 2016) and by the spillover effect of innovation generated in these small-scale businesses (Zhang et al., 2015).

Despite this prominent role, TLEs still remains an underexplored topic in academic research (Sun & Xu, 2019; Thomas et al., 2011). By pursuing lifestyle objectives, TLEs cannot be analysed using the same lenses of other business (Bosworth & Farrell, 2011; Carlsen, Morrison, & Weber, 2008). In particular, there is a need to extend existing knowledge about the TLEs innovation antecedents, particularly in the mechanisms leading to the integration of local knowledge into innovation processes (Hjalager et al., 2018; Yachin, 2019). Furthermore, given that TLEs runs unstructured businesses, its activities are pointed out as entrepreneurial *bricolage* (Arias & Cruz, 2018). Nevertheless, TLEs do not disregard business performance in running their business (Wang et al., 2019). Instead, they use their own individual indicators, associated to their perception of entrepreneurial self-efficacy. However, the way entrepreneurial self-efficacy influences decisions to innovate and to stay in a certain destination remains scarcely explored. In essence, these gaps stem from the fact that entrepreneurship in tourism is much centred in the person (Steyaert, 2007), and not considered as a process, as Fu et al. (2019) suggest, with less attention being paid to the dependent variables like innovation (Hoarau, 2014) and TLEs willingness to remain in a specific destination (Guercini & Ceccarelli, 2020). In this sense, this research aims to know the background of the innovation generated by TLEs. Given the importance of this innovation in tourist destinations, a second objective is to evaluate the factors that simultaneously influence the willingness to stay in a specific one.

The contributions of this research are fourfold in the context of TLEs research. First, it presents empirical results concerning the role that the context presents as a background to innovation and willingness to stay. Second, the innovation antecedents of these entrepreneurs are still little explored (c.f. Dias et al., 2020b; Thomas et al. 2011; Yachin, 2019). Thus, an empirical relationship is established between community attachment and innovation and willingness to stay. Third, this study introduces research on willingness to stay, as well as the role that context, community attachment and entrepreneur self-efficacy have in this retention of entrepreneurs. This is a subject scarcely discussed previously. Finally, this research addresses previous performance as a background in innovation, thus contributing to a better understanding of the factors that contribute to the motivation of entrepreneurs to innovate and invest in a particular destination, which has important implications for the success of destinations.

This article is structured as follows. In the following section (2) the theoretical framework is developed and the conceptual model and its hypotheses are presented. The methodology is presented in section 3. Section 4 presents the results of the empirical study, which are discussed in section 5. Finally, the conclusions are presented in section 6, as well as the limitations and avenues for future investigations.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In a context of growing competition between destinations, there is a tendency to imitate the most successful solutions, leading to a homogenization of the attraction factors, with the consequent loss of competitiveness (Richards, 2011). The search for solutions to this problem is often directed towards creativity (De Bruin & Jelinčić, 2016), which depends on the ability of

the destination to attract and retain entrepreneurs who thrive in this innovative spirit and have a local spillover effect (Carlsen et al., 2008). Specifically, TLEs are considered a source of this creativity and, additionally, develop business models that are more likely to incorporate elements of sustainability than large companies (Shrivastava & Kennelly, 2013).

TLEs are attracted to a specific place due to lifestyle factors (Sun & Xu, 2019; Zhang et al., 2015). However, to our best knowledge, no previous research identified the role of the local context in retaining those entrepreneurs. On this vein, our conceptual model starts with the context as a retention factor to be considered. Narrowing the perspective, the next step is to identify the organizational factors that influence this willingness to stay. In fact, previous studies recognize that after the attraction to the place there is a period of integration within the local community (Lai et al., 2017). So this community attachment seems to be an important factor for TLEs (Bredvold & Skålén, 2016) not only as a way to materialize their lifestyle and self-identity conceptualization, but also as a way to support their business (Dias et al, 2020b).

In addition, we argue that the business should also be viable. It should provide sufficient income to be able to sustain the desired lifestyle (Su et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2015) In the specific case of the TLEs, the concept of viability is not necessarily financial as in other entrepreneurs, as such the entrepreneur's self-assessment (entrepreneurial self-efficacy) is a recommended measure for business performance (Fu et al., 2019).

As outcomes of our conceptual we followed Fu et al. (2019) framework by considering innovation and willingness to stay which represent important dependent variables to reach the objectives of this study. By developing an activity linked to the lifestyle they intend to have, the experiences and products offered by TLEs materialize the characteristics of the place where they develop their activity (Guercini & Ceccarelli, 2020). This local knowledge is usually tacit and difficult to imitate (Hoarau, 2014), and is accessible because the TLEs are embedded in the local community (Bredvold & Skålén, 2016). This ability to transform local knowledge into innovation represents a core capability because it allows differentiation from competitors (Carlsen et al., 2008; Cooper, 2015). Thus, for policy makers TLEs are the lifeblood of the tourism sector (Thomas et al., 2011).

Based on these arguments, we argue that retention of TLEs cannot be dissociated from its innovative capacity. Figure 1. presents the concatenated model that schematizes the proposed hypothesis model regarding innovation and retention of entrepreneurs in a given destination. The constructs and relationships are developed in the following sections.

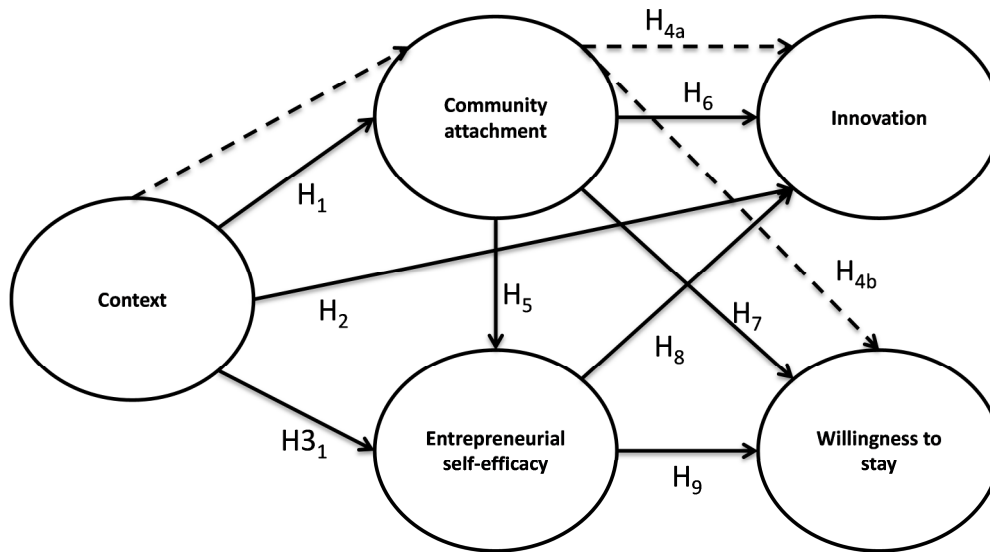


Figure 1. Conceptual model
 Note: The dashed line represents the indirect effects

2.1. The context as an antecedent of innovation and willingness to stay

The context encompasses the economic, socio-cultural and infrastructure dimensions of a destination (Fu et al., 2019). The study of the activity of entrepreneurs cannot be dissociated from the context in which they develop their business (Yachin, 2019). This context is a determining factor both in terms of fostering the competitiveness of their business and stimulating innovation (Sun et al., 2019). As such, the destination acts as a precedent for innovation, providing an environment conducive to the development of activity and the exploitation of opportunities (Komppula, 2014).

TLEs values quality of life and the local environment as factors in determining the location of their business (Sun & Xu, 2019). For this reason, the choice of location is not necessarily based on rational criteria (Morrison, 2006). Consequently, the location may not bring together the ideal production factors due to distance from suppliers and the market (Arias & Cruz, 2018). In the TLEs activity, this may not necessarily be a problem since these entrepreneurs are not necessarily profit seekers (Shaw & Williams, 2009). At the same time, the place also provides them with location-specific advantages associated with traditions and historical, cultural and social elements (Korsgaard et al., 2015).

The essential role that local knowledge plays in the TLEs competitiveness (Cooper, 2015) translates into the ability to offer new products and services associated with the characteristics of the place (Morrison, 2006) targeted at a growing group of tourists seeking genuine experiences (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000; Koh & Hatten, 2002; Ryan et al., 2012). In this regard, the local context is also essential to promote innovation (Martínez-Román et al., 2015; Weidenfeld et al., 2010). The existence of a stimulating atmosphere (Richards, 2011), a culture of entrepreneurship (Hoarau, 2014) and a minimally interesting market with future potential (Sun & Hu, 2019) are factors that benefit the development of lifestyle businesses and, simultaneously, create a context of cooperation and shared values that stimulate innovation.

These same factors also contribute to attract entrepreneurs to a certain place (Zhang et al., 2015). However, they do not constitute a sufficient condition for willingness to stay. TLEs can be classified according to their financial interest in the business they develop, i.e., between those who aim for profit designated as business oriented and those who prioritize the lifestyle designated as lifestyle oriented (Wang et al., 2019). As argued by Lai, et al. (2017), the ‘first’ attraction is lifestyle, then, through “interactions with the area for a period of time, the area has become home to a sense of place attachment, self-identity, and community” (p. 172). However, these anchors work if business expectations are met (Lai et al., 2017). As such, regardless of the orientation of the business, it is necessary to have a balance between profit and the lifestyle that is intended to be followed (Su et al., 2020) and that allows the entrepreneur to make a living from the business place (Zhang et al., 2015). From a business perspective, although non-financial objectives are important in the short term because small initiatives will not yield profit in the early stages, in the long term the business must be sustainable (Fu et al., 2019). Thus, the context is considered to have a direct effect on innovation and business performance but not on willingness to stay. Additionally, we argue that the context contributes to a better business environment, increasing the willingness to stay in a certain destination. But the effect can also be indirect by providing a greater link to the community through a better climate of cooperation that stimulates innovation and the willingness to stay. These relationships are formulated in the following hypothesis:

- H₁. The context has a direct effect on community attachment.
- H₂. The context has a direct effect on innovation.
- H₃. The context has a direct effect on entrepreneurial self-efficacy.
- H_{4a}. The context has an indirect effect on innovation through the mediating effect of community attachment.
- H_{4b}. The context has an indirect effect on willingness to stay through the mediating effect of community attachment.

2.2. Community attachment and TLEs outcomes

The study of entrepreneurship in the context of TLEs cannot ignore the social environment (Thomas et al., 2011). In addition, as the boundary between personal life and the work of TLEs is blurred (Sun & Xu, 2019), it is easier to establish the social connections which are the main source of opportunities for these entrepreneurs (Yachin, 2019). Thus, the concept of embeddedness is of particular importance in the context of TLEs (Bosworth & Farrell, 2011; Bredvold & Skálén, 2016), facilitating the acquisition of local knowledge (Valtonen, 2009).

Since innovation in tourism is particularly complex and uncertain because it involves multiple actors who contribute to the realization of the experience (Hall, 2019), there is no full ownership of the total experience (Cooper, 2015). The traditional value chain gives way to an intricate network of agents, companies and organizations (Richards, 2011). However, by being embedded locally, TLEs benefits from a higher level of cooperation and trust between them and community stakeholders, facilitating the innovation process involving multiple partners (Czernek, 2017; Hoarau, 2014), making local embeddedness a unique social exchange system (Higuchi & Yamanaka, 2017). Thus, social interaction plays an essential role in innovation (Hoarau, 2014). Zhang et al., (2015) found that endogenous networking relationships promote the spillover effect of innovation and knowledge. Community networking favours the creation

of a shared environment in which knowledge is repeatedly tested, selected and preserved (Guercini & Ceccarelli, 2020).

Community attachment increases the ability to learn from others because it generates more trust and the development of shared values, promoting a common ground for cooperation (Weidenfeld et al., 2010), which promotes access to local knowledge, which represents the source of the competitive advantage of TLEs (Mottiar, 2007). But it also increases the participation in local activities, which represent an important source of innovation for these entrepreneurs (Marchant & Mottiar, 2011).

TLEs innovation is related to the supply of products and services associated with the place (Guercini & Ceccarelli, 2020). This type of offering is particularly valued by a growing niche market composed of tourists seeking more participatory and creative experiences (Richards, 2011), putting greater pressure on the entrepreneurs' innovation (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000). Thus, innovation results from the ability to materialize the encounter between the place and the experience (Anderson, 2012), stimulating co-creation processes (García-Rosell et al., 2019; Schilar & Keskitalo, 2018) and blurring the boundary between production and consumption of experiences (Richards, 2011). However, the implications of community attachment also include other dimensions like entrepreneurial self-efficacy and willingness to stay. For example, Kibler et al. (2015) found that the degree and nature of the entrepreneur's attachment to the place influences their sustainable behaviour and support their intentions towards a particular place. And Hallak et al. (2015) suggested that entrepreneurs, who have strong psychological bonds to a particular place, will develop higher levels of beliefs in their entrepreneurial capabilities. As such, we hypothesize:

H₅. Community attachment has a direct effect on entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

H₆. Community attachment has a direct effect on innovation.

H₇. Community attachment has a direct effect on willingness to stay.

2.3. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy, innovation and willingness to stay

TLEs are generally characterised by resource and skill constraints (Ioannides & Petersen, 2003) and traditional risk aversion (Cooper, 2015). Innovation is thus highly dependent on its ability to capitalize on opportunities (Hjalager et al., 2018) and results mainly from informal processes (Cooper, 2015), but is appropriate given the limited availability of resources (Czernek, 2015). In this sense, innovation is often understood as instrumental, resulting from the identification of opportunities considered sufficiently relevant to the business (Cooper, 2015).

The ability to capitalize on opportunities is related to the accumulated experience (Bosworth & Farrell, 2011; Mottiar, 2011; Yachin, 2019), and previous performance (Eckhardt & Shane, 2010). This means that the innovation generated by TLEs is practice-based and context-specific (Hoarau, 2014), resulting from self-learning and trial-error processes (Arias & Cruz, 2018), which highlights the importance of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and accumulated knowledge in the success of entrepreneurial activity and innovation (Wang et al., 2019). Hallak, et al. (2015) also found that higher levels of entrepreneurial self-efficacy are more likely to set higher goals for their businesses. Thus, a higher degree of perceived entrepreneurial self-efficacy generates more investment in innovation (Bosworth & Farrell, 2011), placing it as an antecedent of innovation (Martínez-Román et al., 2015). Furthermore, entrepreneur perceived

performance reinforces their lifestyle choice and willingness to stay in a particular location (Getz & Carlsen, 2000). As such:

- H₈. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy has a direct effect on innovation.
- H₉. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy has a direct effect on willingness to stay.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Data collection and sample

This study is based on a non-probabilistic sample of 178 Portuguese Tourism Lifestyle Entrepreneurs (TLEs) business owners. The option to use a convenience sample was due to the lack of an official database to determine the total of the universe. As such, a purposive sampling technique was adopted to ensure that the respondents were effectively Tourism Lifestyle Entrepreneurs⁷. Since this is a highly informal activity that cuts across a wide range of activities, official and professional sources do not identify whether the entrepreneurs are lifestyle entrepreneurs or not. Therefore, the participants were approached in several entrepreneurship events that occurred in various parts of the Portuguese territory. The following inclusion criteria were used in the sample:

- The business is related to the tourism activity;
- The criteria underlying the business operation include lifestyle elements as indicated by Bosworth and Farrell (2011);
- The businesses are owned by independent owners and not by large companies or franchising networks.

The questionnaire was developed based on the literature review and validated in two stages. First, the scales were evaluated by three tourism academics for content validity. Second, a pre-test was performed on a small sample of five TLEs to validate the adequacy of the terminology used.

Selected participants were invited to answer a hand-delivered questionnaire. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured to increase participants' confidence and to prevent them from taking on the role of the 'good respondent' by choosing the ideal response options instead of the real ones. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the sample.

Table 1. Sample characteristics

Gender	65% male 35% female
Age	8% less than 30 years 13% between 31 and 40 years 29% between 41 and 50 years 44% between 51 and 60 years 6% more than 61 years
Origin	62% were born in the same place where they operate their tourism business
Firm size	70% less than 9 employees 17.5% between 11 and 20 employees 12.5% more than 21 employees

Average years of business operation 6.25 years in average, s.d. 4.99 years. Minimum: 1 year; maximum: 41 years.

The sample presents similarities with the Portuguese and global entrepreneurship indicators. Recent data from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM, 2020) revealed the ratio female/male is 0.62 which is close to the equivalent proportion in the sample (0.56). The dimension percentage of micro firms (less than 9 employees) is close to the Portuguese average in the tourism sector, which is 86% (Banco de Portugal, 2020). Regarding the age of the entrepreneurs, our sample aligns with previous studies. Getz and Carlsen (2000) found that tourism entrepreneurs start businesses when they are middle aged or older. One interesting fact about the sample is that 62% were born in the same place where they operate their tourism business. One possible explanation is related to the specificities of the businesses run by TLEs, evidencing a strong link to the place and to the culture-based experiences they offer.

3.2. Variables

The study adopted pre-existing scales. As such, community attachment was measured using four items that were adapted from Besser and Miller (2001). Innovation four-item scale was adapted from Kropp et al. (2006). Willingness to stay was using four items adapted from Lalli (1992). These three scales used a Likert-type scale, where 1=strongly disagree, and 7=strongly agree. Entrepreneur self-efficacy four item scale was adapted from Zhao et al. (2005) by asking entrepreneurs to identify their degree of confidence on a semantic differential scale (1- no confidence to 5- complete confidence). To measure context no adequate scale was found for the reality of TLEs. In this sense and based on the literature review, the following aspects were identified as contextual dimensions for the development of lifestyle businesses: the existence of a stimulating atmosphere (Richards, 2011), a culture of entrepreneurship (Hoarau, 2014), the existence of complimentary institutions (hospitals, schools...) and market future potential (Sun & Xu, 2019). These items were converted into a four-item scale anchored from 1 = not important at all to 7 = very important.

4. RESULTS

The conceptual model was tested using partial least squares (PLS) through SmartPLS 3 (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015). PLS structural equation (PLS-SEM) modelling was found to be adequate for the research objectives and as an estimation method, allowing exploring causal relationships. PLS-SEM is considered a key multivariate analysis method in several areas (Ringle et al., 2012) and appropriate when composite indicators are used in formative conceptualization (Sarstedt et al., 2016) which is the case of this study.

To assess the quality of the model we use the recommendations of Hair et al. (2017) for each individual indicator (see Table 2). Hence, the standardized loadings are all greater than 0.6 and significant at $p < 0.001$, validating the individual indicator reliability. Cronbach's alpha values are above 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 2. Composite reliability, average variance extracted, correlations, and discriminant validity checks.

Latent Variables	α	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4	5
(1) Community attachment	0,746	0,814	0,690	0,831	0,445	0,483	0,572	0,426
(2) Context	0,716	0,831	0,624	0,313	0,790	0,300	0,352	0,117
(3) Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy	0,720	0,815	0,527	0,341	0,222	0,726	0,997	0,609
(4) Innovation	0,792	0,809	0,523	0,400	0,231	0,706	0,723	0,603
(5) Willingness to stay	0,797	0,865	0,620	0,312	0,076	0,477	0,475	0,787

Note: α - Cronbach Alpha; CR - Composite reliability; AVE - Average variance extracted. Bolded numbers are the square roots of AVE; Below the diagonal elements are the correlations between the constructs. Above the diagonal elements are the HTMT ratios.

The convergent validity has also been tested. The CR presents values higher than 0.7 and the AVE for all indicators are higher than 0.5 as suggested by (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Regarding the discriminating validity we used the Fornell and Larcker criterion, i.e. that the square root of AVE for each construct is higher than the highest correlation between the constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). We also used the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) (Henseler et al., 2015). The values of this indicator are within the suggested parameters (less than 0.85) (Hair et al., 2017; Henseler et al., 2015). With all these indicators within the recommended values, we consider that there is evidence of discriminant validity.

The conceptual model also has suitable values. First, the non-collinearity of the model was tested (Hair et al., 2017), with VIF values ranging from 1.19 to 2.37, i.e. below the critical value of 5 (Hair et al., 2017). The coefficient of determination R^2 of the endogenous variables (community association, entrepreneurial Self-efficacy, Innovation, and willingness to stay) are 10.1%, 13.1%, 52.9%, and 25.3%, respectively, exceeding the value of 10% (Falk & Miller, 1992).

The results summarized in Table 3 show that the context has a positive significant effect on community attachment ($\beta = 0.322, p < 0.001$), this result provide support for H1. The direct effects of the context on innovation ($\beta = 0.034, n.s.$) and on entrepreneur perceived self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.131, n.s.$) are not significant. Thus, the results do not support H2 and H3. The direct effects community attachment on entrepreneur self-efficacy, innovation and willingness to stay are positive and significant ($\beta = 0.306, p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.170, p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.172, p < 0.01$, respectively), supporting H5, H6, and H7. The effects of entrepreneur self-efficacy on innovation and willingness to stay are also positive and significant ($\beta = 0.643, p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.425, p < 0.001$, respectively), which supports H8 and H9.

Table 3. Structural model assessment.

Path	Path coefficient	Standard errors	t statistics	p values
Context → Community attachment	0.322	0.065	4.805	0.000
Context → Innovation	0.034	0.057	0.626	0.531
Context → Entrepreneur self-efficacy	0.131	0.079	1.605	0.109
Community attachment → Entrepreneur self-efficacy	0.306	0.079	3.824	0.000

Community attachment → Innovation	0.170	0.074	2.294	0.022
Community attachment → Willingness to stay	0.172	0.081	2.069	0.039
Entrepreneur self-efficacy → Innovation	0.643	0.067	9.526	0.000
Entrepreneur self-efficacy → Willingness to stay	0.425	0.078	5.401	0.000

Table 4 shows the results of the mediation hypotheses (H4a-H4b). We followed Hair et al. (2017; p. 232) recommendations to test the mediation, by using a bootstrapping procedure to test the significance of the indirect effects (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

Table 4. Bootstrap results for indirect effects.

Indirect effect	Estimate	Standard errors	<i>t</i> statistics	<i>p</i> value
Context → Community attachment → Willingness to stay	0.098	0.032	2.926	0.003
Context → Community attachment → Innovation	0.054	0.026	2.030	0.042

The indirect effects of the context on entrepreneur self-efficacy and on innovation via mediator community attachment are significant with ($\beta = 0.098$; $p < 0.001$) and ($\beta = 0.054$; $p < 0.01$), respectively. These results provide support for the mediation hypotheses H4a and H4b, respectively.

To explore the data in greater depth, we use the SPSS (Version 27) to estimate the correlations between context items and the model constructs (Table 5). Of the four contextual items the culture of entrepreneurship shows a significant correlation with all the constructs except community attachment. The stimulating atmosphere evidenced a significant correlation just with entrepreneur self-efficacy. No correlation was found with the items existence of complimentary institutions and market future potential and the four constructs.

Table 5. Correlations between context items and the model constructs.

	Market future potential	Culture of entrepreneurship	Stimulating atmosphere	Complimentary institutions
Willingness to stay	0,018	,199*	0,182	0,167
Community attachment	0,109	0,160	-0,015	0,067
Innovation	-0,050	,242**	0,174	0,037
Entrepreneur self-efficacy	0,103	,319**	,201*	0,048

** The correlation is significant at level 0.01.

* The correlation is significant at level 0.05.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Factors influencing the retention of tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs

First, the results obtained make it possible to recognise the role that the context plays in the community attachment, in innovation and in the willingness to stay in a particular tourist destination. However, the independent influence of each contextual item points provides a more fine grained analysis, since culture of entrepreneurship and stimulating atmosphere showed significant correlations with those three constructs. This finding aligns to the concept of creative atmosphere proposed by Richards (2011) has a key attraction and retention factor. However, contextual results from the multivariate analysis suggests that context must be understood a combination of a creative atmosphere, a local culture of entrepreneurship, the existence of complimentary institutions (like hospitals or schools...) and the market future potential. By creating a more favourable environment for the development of TLEs business, many of which incorporate a certain degree of innovation (Richards, 2011), the context not only provides a more favourable environment for innovation but also encourages entrepreneurs to stay in the destination. Fu et al. (2019) refer that the destination is an antecedent of TLEs success. However, it is possible to see that this relationship is not direct as the results indicate. With regard to innovation, the indirect influence of the context is materialized through the community attachment. In other words, it is not the context that directly promotes innovation as De Bruin and Jelinčić (2016) and Tan,et al. (2016) suggest. Our results show that the issue is more complex. The context promotes a greater community attachment, which in turn stimulates innovation. As explained by Richards & Marques (2012), TLEs follows a certain lifestyle in a specific creative atmosphere, as a consequence, it promotes high levels of interaction conducive to creativity (Drake, 2003). It can therefore be seen that this study contributes to the existing knowledge about ELT, since the role of context as a background had not been empirically tested. Some studies on SFT refer that context plays an important role in the development of competitiveness factors (c.f. Cooper, 2015; Czernek, 2017; Fu et al., 2019) although they do not present this causal relationship.

Regarding the indirect relationship between context and willingness to stay, the results show the community attachment promotes this link. This finding is in line with previous research that recognises that the delivery of everyday experiences, typical of TLEs (Maitland, 2010) and the integration into the local stakeholder network (Yachin, 2019) create a more conducive climate for the development of TLEs activities, increasing their willingness to stay.

The results also allow us to identify the direct implications of the community attachment on entrepreneur self-efficacy, innovation and willingness to stay. The relationship with entrepreneur self-efficacy had already been identified before (c.f. Cooper, 2014; Czernek, 2017), revealing the essential role that relationships with the community and local stakeholders play both in accessing local knowledge (Dias et al., 2021; Yachin, 2019), on which the competitiveness factors of the TLEs are based (Hoarau, 2014) and in facilitating networking and distribution channels (Yachin, 2019).

There are two reasons why the community attachment influences innovation. The first is related to co-creation processes (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009) where the value generated by the experiences results from a cooperative process (Romero & Molina, 2011). In this way, the creation of networks within the community allows to gain the trust of the various stakeholders, including to the point of involving them in the realization of the experiences, further increasing the basis on which co-creation is carried out. The second reason is related, in the context of TLEs, to the blurring of the boundary between production and consumption of experiences

(Lampel & Germain, 2016; Sun & Xu, 2019). For them, work and personal life are not divided (Sun et al., 2019) which facilitates, on the one hand, a greater climate of cooperation and, on the other, a proximity to visitors allowing to gain more information about their needs and expectations. At this level, this study contributes to the knowledge about TLEs by establishing an empirical relationship between community attachment and innovation and willingness to stay. The innovation background of these entrepreneurs is an area still under explored in the literature as recognized by Thomas et al. (2011) and Yachin (2019). In addition, TLEs research that focuses on willingness to stay is even sparser, if not non-existent. Several studies address the problem of the origin of entrepreneurs, evaluating their behaviour whether they are locally born or migrated to the place (c.f. Carlsen et al., 2008; Komppula, 2014), however, according to our best knowledge, there is no study on the retention factors of entrepreneurs.

A final finding of this study concerns the relationship between self-efficacy and innovation and willingness to stay. The satisfaction of the entrepreneur with his business is essential for a greater investment in innovation and the intention to stay in the destination. This satisfaction goes beyond the financial results, as these entrepreneurs are motivated by other factors related to the lifestyle they intend to have or follow (Bredvold & Skålén, 2016; Shaw & Williams, 2009). In this sense, previous business performance is essential to motivate the entrepreneur to be innovative and to want to stay at the destination. This is an important contribution of this study, as innovation is traditionally understood as a performance precedent (c.f. Fu et al., 2019; Sun & Xu, 2019). The findings suggest that the inverse relationship is also important.

5.2. Factors influencing the retention of tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs

This study was conducted in a developed country where some contextual conditions are considered as for granted. However, in other situations (e.g. developing economies), the contextual dimension must include other dimensions that precede those used in this study. For example, Haber and Reichel (2007) found that developed countries offer more incentive structures for business start-ups than developing countries, and Dias et al. (2020a) identified other characteristics of the place that contribute to foster tourism entrepreneurship, such as competences development, financial support, access to market channels, and the existence of a shared vision within local community. As such, external entities to the community play an important role to provide basic resources and capabilities to communities in developing countries (Sørensen & Jensen, 2015), allowing overcoming the entrepreneurs' lack of skills (Jaafar et al., 2011).

Furthermore, in developing countries, some risks associated with tourism should be cautioned such as conflicts of interest and social exclusion. This alerts to the importance of "baseline studies on tourism awareness prior to tourism development" (Porter et al., 2018, p. 162). To avoid these risks community involvement in tourism development projects represent a key issue (Lindström & Larson, 2016). Thus, community involvement and the participation of external entities are important contextual conditions for tourism entrepreneurship, meaning that, for developing economies, an initial political approach must be undertaken, avoiding considering tourism as a panacea for all development problems (Chok et al., 2007). The same applies for other types of non-massified tourism. For example, Moscardo (2014) recognized that governance structures were critical to the long-term outcomes of tourism development. Porter, et al. (2018) identified the offering of tourism awareness education as an important measure for the developmental approach for remote coastal communities.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1. Overall findings

This study focused on extending existing knowledge about TLEs. This is a very significant group of tourism business owners whose specificities make it a different group of entrepreneurs from other sectors. In pursuing objectives other than financial ones, traditional models of innovation cannot simply be transposed, as Marchant and Mottiar (2011) argue. But he specifically addressed the topic of the innovation and willingness to stay antecedents. The antecedents studied were entrepreneurial context, community attachment, and self-efficacy. To test the hypotheses, a quantitative study was conducted on a sample of 178 Portuguese Tourism Lifestyle Entrepreneurs. The results allowed the identification of a set of relationships. First, the direct and positive relationship between context and community attachment were identified, as well as an indirect relationship with innovation and willingness to stay through community attachment. Furthermore, it was also found that community attachment influences positively entrepreneurial self-efficacy, innovation and willingness to stay. Finally, our results show a direct and positive relation between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and innovation and willingness to stay.

6.2. Conceptual contributions

This study contributes to the mainstream and tourism entrepreneurship knowledge. While early research on tourism entrepreneurship was focused on the personal traits of individual entrepreneurs, recent studies have been dedicated to study the factors influencing entrepreneurship activities. Specifically, this study develops an underexplored topic about one important topic about entrepreneurship in tourism. First, within entrepreneurship studies, the research on the factors influencing willingness to stay at the destination represents a key contribution, placing an important piece in the destination competitiveness framework. Second, this study integrates two dimensions usually separated in tourism innovation studies. By combining the effect of external and organizational dimensions this study frames a better understanding of the factors influencing the entrepreneurs' innovativeness. Third, this is the first study to combine innovation and willingness to stay as outcomes variables, which represent a powerful insight to destination competitiveness theory, reinforcing the idea that both constructs are an interdependent part of the destinations' efforts to differentiate and build a sustainable value proposition.

This study also contributes to the mainstream entrepreneurship literature by uncovering the link between the context and place attachment and entrepreneurial outcomes. Specifically, while the previous research is focused on the place and its influence on the entrepreneurial activity in a perspective let us call it 'passive' associated with the characteristics of the place, this study assumes the place in an 'active' dimension, being a relevant part of the innovation process itself.

This study also builds on research on poor communities and developing countries. The context to which this study refers is part of the recognition that the basic conditions that precede it (education, funding, and access to channels) already exist, but that is not necessarily true in all realities. Thus, this study provides an interconnection between the two areas that suggests how the very conceptualization of the entrepreneurial context evolves.

Following these various contributions, in line with Fu et al. (2019) this study reinforces the idea that research on entrepreneurship in hospitality and tourism is a field with wide-ranging potential for development.

6.3. Practical contributions

The results of this research provide important insights to improve tourism destination competitiveness. First, the importance of the context for retaining entrepreneurs and innovation. Investment in destination marketing is essential for the performance of these entrepreneurs. By attracting visitors and tourists, marketing strategies help to create and sustain a market for their businesses to prosper. However, this marketing should be appropriately targeted at specific segments of tourists who value creative and immersive experiences related to a particular lifestyle, not a mass market. Only in this way is it possible to develop a vibrant atmosphere that pleases both entrepreneurs and visitors. It will also be important to develop actions that contribute to strengthening the local identity and lifestyle, i.e. the community attachment. Ultimately, it is for these reasons that the entrepreneur has decided to invest in this place. For such initiatives as museums, events, fairs and other festivities can contribute to strengthen this identity and also to promote the destination and its entrepreneurs. In parallel, decision makers should also invest in creating a supportive environment for entrepreneurs, including better working and living conditions and market access, but especially a culture of entrepreneurship and stimulating atmosphere. Another important aspect to consider is related to the satisfaction of entrepreneurs with the performance of their business, or entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Thus, all initiatives that allow them to monitor their business performance and its social and environmental implications can help increase this level of satisfaction.

6.4. Limitations and future research

This research also presents some limitations that may point to avenues for future research. The first is related with the sample. The generalization of the result is limited due to the purposive sampling method applied in a single country. Further research could explore data from other countries, and, if possible, apply a probabilistic sample. The various dimensions of innovation have not been explored in this study, in particular co-creation, which is very much associated with the type of experiences of TLEs. It would therefore be interesting to understand how value can be created through cooperative processes of co-creation and how this contributes to entrepreneurial self-efficacy and innovation. It would also be interesting to understand the moderating role of the region of origin of entrepreneurs, not least because it is known that entrepreneurs from outside have more difficulty in establishing a local network of cooperation and being integrated into the community (c.f. Dawson et al., 2011). Finally, our study found that there is no direct relationship between context and innovation. It will be interesting to explore this topic and understand the reasons for this result.

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Appendix

Table A1. Construct items

Constructs and items
Community attachment (<i>1= Strongly disagree; 7= Strongly agree</i>)
I feel that I belong to this place
This place is very familiar.
This place is very important for my daily life
I live intensely this place
Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy (<i>1= no confidence; 5= complete confidence</i>)
I successfully identify new opportunities
I create new products
I think creatively
I capable of selling an idea or a new solution
I obtain financing to create/develop the business
Willingness to stay (<i>1= Strongly disagree; 7= Strongly agree</i>)
I would like to stay indefinitely in this place
I wish to follow the future development of this place
This site plays an important role in my future plans
My personal future is connected to this place
Context (<i>1= not important; 7= very important</i>). The place where I run my business has...
An stimulating atmosphere
A culture of entrepreneurship
Complimentary institutions (hospitals, schools...)
A future market potential
Innovation (<i>1= Strongly disagree; 7= Strongly agree</i>)
I solve problems in an innovative way.
I am creative in the use and control of resources.
I develop creative solutions to difficult problems.
I often develop new products and/or services