





Article

Measuring Sustainable Tourism Lifestyle Entrepreneurship Orientation to Improve Tourist Experience

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Abstract: This study develops a four-item scale to measure the impact of a tourism lifestyle entrepreneur on the touristic experience, and seeks to understand to what extent a tourist perceives, through what is provided, that a tourism business owner, is not a “common entrepreneur”. After an item generation, data was collected from two different surveys with 200 answers, and exploratory and confirmatory factorial analyses were performed to test discriminant and nomological validity. The correlation between the variables was significant at level 0.01 and the coefficients were positive. Cronbach’s Alpha was acceptable with a value of 0.736. The results complemented existing literature on this topic and allowed further research to measure the perception of tourists in regard to tourism lifestyle entrepreneurship. From an interdisciplinary perspective, this manuscript presents insights for entrepreneurial management, tourism marketing and business sustainability. At the end, the limitations of the study are presented, and lines of investigation outlined for future research.

Keywords: tourism lifestyle entrepreneur; sustainability; tourist’s perception; scale development



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1. Introduction

During the last few years, different authors have been studying the concept of lifestyle entrepreneurship in the tourism context and to what extent these entrepreneurs differ from others. It seems that opinions diverge and are not always consensual. However, it is possible to see that it is a topic which has been gaining increasing attention [1]. The main reason for disagreement is the variety of methods and approaches used.

Tourism entrepreneurship is not a recent field of study. In fact, the first articles were published in 1946 and the concept has adopted different highlights throughout the years. In the past, the main association was with sustainability and environmental concerns, cultural and heritage linkages, and lifestyle factors. Moreover, these factors were also a focus of the researchers, who wanted to show the strong desire of lifestyle entrepreneurs to have a good quality of life and to balance work and family life. Tourism lifestyle entrepreneurship was seen mostly in small and medium businesses that were involved in eco-tourism, sustainability, or agricultural sectors. It is not common to find research about large tourism providers when talking about tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs. As regards the present, most studies focus on technological innovation, family businesses, and digital value co-creation. The use of technology allows entrepreneurs to use consumers’ opinions and recommendations to upgrade their businesses, so as to create value together. Concerning future research, sharing economy, collaborative economy and artificial intelligence are topics to be studied. Tourism entrepreneurship is increasingly becoming a more holistic perspective, since having a direct relationship not only with the experience provided, but also with elements of innovation and technology, are matters of increasing concern. There are several paths to follow regarding future research, since tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs

are strongly family-related, so understanding more about how family firms work is of interest [2]. Yet, there are multiple options to explore the concepts involved.

Tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs are business owners that develop a firm within the tourism sector to achieve a certain lifestyle, improve their quality of life, and contribute to local development. The terminology of entrepreneurship encompasses ambition and risk-taking associated with innovation and creativity. Tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs are usually found in rural places, places having specificities wherein guests and hosts have a positive relationship based on curiosity in teaching and learning, respectively [3], and on commonly appreciated characteristics, such as a sunny climate, quality of air, tranquility, rich cultural life and landscapes [4]. Even though these entrepreneurs face other challenges in rural locations, there are opportunities to create unique tourism experiences, and to be innovative and different from the large firms [5].

There is a relationship between lifestyle entrepreneurship and life quality since these individuals create businesses based on their personal interests and values. Instead of providing a service or product, these entrepreneurs are more concerned with serving their families and communities and adding value [6]. Moreover, literature has proven that the presence of lifestyle entrepreneurs is more life-, leisure-, and family-oriented [7]. Profit and economic growth are not major concerns to these entrepreneurs, who tend to avoid notions of developing their businesses, not only because there is a lack of education regarding management and planning, but also because profit and economic growth are not the main goals. Government awareness of these types of entrepreneurs has grown, and different initiatives are being developed to improve the standards of these businesses, since a lot of reports show the importance of investing in training and staff development. On the other hand, some authors have stated that the rejection of economic growth and business development is often related to sociopolitical ideology and does not necessarily mean financial goals are forgotten, but rather that these goals focus on opportunities to target specific niche markets [8].

The involvement of lifestyle entrepreneurs with tourists has been studied through the years by different authors and from different perspectives. It is possible to find studies about the relationship between lifestyle entrepreneurship and place attachment [9], articles about how creative tourism can improve rural areas of developed countries and their communities [10] and about destination competitiveness [11]. The topic has generated discussion and has been developed from different points of view, encompassing not only the community's perspective, but also a destination's position in the market. The following sections discuss the different layers of impact these entrepreneurs can have. With this said, there is an important part of this process that is underexplored, which is the tourist's perception of these entrepreneurs. The main objective of this study was to understand if tourists realize, during their experiences, that behind the business there is not a common entrepreneur but a tourism lifestyle entrepreneur, and whether this fact makes the experience different.

Research on the perspective of tourists is scarce. The role of the tourist has changed from that of a passive observer to an active consumer of experiences [12,13]. In this study, a scale is developed to measure the perceptions of tourists.

There are six sections in the present manuscript. In the first section, there is a brief introduction to the topic. In the second section, a literature review of the main concepts is provided. The third section describes the research methodology. Following a careful analysis, the data obtained, and respective results are presented. Finally, a discussion about the results obtained, followed by the main conclusions of the present research, alongside suggestions for future research, are provided. This manuscript presents an innovative perspective that overcomes the gap in the literature around scales of entrepreneurship. Specifically, this study developed a four-item scale to measure the impact of a tourism lifestyle entrepreneur on the touristic experience and to what extent the tourist perceives, through what is provided, that the tourism business owner is not a "common entrepreneur".

2. Literature Review

2.1. Lifestyle Entrepreneurs' Definitions and Motivations

The term entrepreneur is of French origin meaning a subject who takes risks and initiates something in which he or she is a pioneer. Some authors believe that defining entrepreneurship can be a difficult task, due to the complexity of the term. Entrepreneurship can be found in multiple fields and cannot be considered a singular concept. Although some scholars are concerned about not having a strong definition of entrepreneurship and what that can cause, others consider it an opportunity to develop new research theories, and practices [14]. After gathering diverse definitions from different researchers, the following topics consistently appear: creativity and innovation; resource identification, acquisition and marshaling; economic organization; and the opportunity for gain or increase under risk and uncertainty. It is not enough to purchase an existing company to affirm there is entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship must entail the creation of something new. Resources are important, accompanied by the ability to find them and turn them into something attractive. Regarding risk and uncertainty, both are mandatory to consider the presence of entrepreneurship. While risk is about the volatility of outcomes, uncertainty refers to the estimates of the entrepreneur [15].

Entrepreneurial firms are essential to the economy. On one hand, they regenerate the process and define market economies. On the other hand, they bring innovation to the structure, which triggers "technological changes and productivity growth," thereby making market economies dynamic [16]. The world has undergone countless transformations, each revolutionizing people's lifestyles. Thus, given these aspects, administrative concepts have predominated in sociopolitical, cultural, and technological development contexts. Entrepreneurship created labor relations, new jobs, and broke old paradigms. Moreover, nowadays, the creation of companies plays a key role in an economy's growth.

Tourism is affected by the same factors, such as social, cultural, and economic factors, as entrepreneurship [17]. Definitions of tourism have changed through the years. Tourism used to be seen as the movement of a person from his or her normal environment for at least 24 h for leisure or work. Nowadays, it has a more developed definition, characterized as a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon by the World Tourism Organization.

Tourism entrepreneurship has been a very neglected area of study for years. However, there was an increase in studies on this topic between 2000 and 2006 when 40 articles were published, while 96 articles were published during the period from 2007 to 2012 [18]. The awareness of the issue was a result of economic and non-economic inputs [19], and to destinations looking to differ from others so as to attract more tourists to improve their economies.

Most tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs have lifestyle motivations to developing a business, seeking a balance between work and life, instead of looking for profit and growth. Therefore, these entrepreneurs are mostly found in small and medium tourist firms. Lifestyle-oriented entrepreneurs are flexible in decision-making and independent, attributing quality of life as the top priority [19]. Small businesses, and specifically the entrepreneurs of such businesses have associated sustainable practices with innovation to develop tourist destinations [20].

Differentiation is an essential imperative for the competitiveness of tourist destinations [21] and is attached to the concept of tourism entrepreneurship through innovation, creating unique experiences able to sell a service or product [22]. There are several studies about how tourism entrepreneurship diversifies rural locations and the tourist offers [23]. As well as studies about the public policies to support entrepreneurship in the tourism sector there are case studies wherein it is possible to observe the intention of governments to help small and medium enterprises. Such an example is that of rural tourism in Israel, where farmers receive financial resources to renovate their farms into Bed and Breakfast units [24]. Governments may include the local communities in the process of planning and developing measures to prevent disorder and negative consequences [25]. However, sometimes governments constitute a barrier to tourism entrepreneurship because of their divergent motivations to business [26].

Tourism entrepreneurship is guided by informality and flexibility, differing from the characteristics of the usual business tourism environment [26], which aims for growth and profit. Small and medium enterprises emerge with the purpose to live a life with quality, away from crowded markets, while creating a service or product that meets values and interests [5] and, at the same time, attracts people who want an authentic experience. It is in this context that entrepreneurship is recognized as a crucial tool that can act decisively in the process of stimulating tourism activities. Besides entrepreneurship, other factors can influence the potential of the offer regarding activities. The place itself is important, due to its resources, which also impacts its competitiveness [27]. In fact, in [26] it is argued that tourists search for remote and distant places. However, this is not the only aspect that can lead to a successful business.

Tourists nowadays are more interested in a deep experience where they can engage with the community, add value, be involved in the culture they are visiting, and experience authenticity. There is a symbiosis between the local community and tourism entrepreneurship, because of the local knowledge that the entrepreneurs absorb due to their contact with the locals and the surroundings, which consequently influences the tourist experience [27]. Plus, the local community benefits from the presence of tourists, which ends up contributing to the development and improvement of certain infrastructures and services [28], so as to ensure that the destinations are ready to receive tourists and to give them the best experience possible. Along with entrepreneurship, creative tourism can impact poor communities by helping them develop sources of income. For instance, economic sustainability can result from different factors, such as market access, increase in business skills and reputation of the destination [29]. Likewise, politics and economic systems create conditions to encourage citizens to become entrepreneurs and improve their living conditions [30]. This is viewed by some authors as a methodology and not as a situation influenced by the environment, so destinations seek creativity and innovation [31].

Local communities' engagement plays a key role in achieving the three pillars of sustainability, namely, social, economic, and environmental issues. When a destination becomes more attractive and, consequently, receives more tourists, there is a concern about sustainability goals that governments seem to ignore in favor of economic growth [32]. However, research also shows the willingness of the communities to adopt eco-friendly measures to preserve both their cultural and natural assets [33]. Tourism lifestyle entrepreneurship offers a balance against mass market tourism, which is addicted to growth and does not consider sustainability goals [34].

Tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs can be defined as owners of companies that are motivated primarily by style and quality of life and, as such, their businesses operate through the integration of non-financial factors [13]. These types of entrepreneurs can be residents or migrants who move to a certain location to start a tourism business and focus on preserving the local lifestyle and the environment, along with traditions of the local community [35]. Different identities of these entrepreneurs were identified, such as the following: the modern lifestyle entrepreneur wants to discover new opportunities and follow trends without leaving tradition behind and makes use of networking; the loyal lifestyle entrepreneur is more business-oriented regarding keeping his/her firm for a long time, but remains connected to traditions and looks for a way to do business with a purpose; the freedom-seeking lifestyle entrepreneur wants to manage his/her own life and does not want help from friends or family [36].

Lifestyle entrepreneurs offer tourists more creative and genuine experiences and promote innovation in destinations. The most recent studies related to this theme reported that recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic identified that entrepreneurial creativity and innovation are becoming increasingly relevant for the development of destinations. The entrepreneur is considered an innovator, who could change the economy and create new value, and who is specifically concerned with the process of change and the attraction of more visitors [37]. However, the contribution of entrepreneurship in tourism can go beyond creating an atmosphere desired by the client. The tourist entrepreneur has a strong ability

to act directly for the economic and social well-being of the community [38]. Tourism is recognized as a relevant industry by locals, because it not only impacts the economy but interferes with the quality of life of a place.

The enterprises managed by lifestyle entrepreneurs are evaluated by means of a set of variables of diverse nature. Not only quality of life, community, and environmental improvement are important, but also social, cultural, and ideological goals are relevant objectives to these entrepreneurs. Lack of experience and education in business is not an obstacle to seeking a dream of change [39].

2.2. Main Approaches to the Theme

Tourism represents a source of income and lifestyle entrepreneurship, where one seeks to earn a living through activities that provide pleasure and fun. Tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs are classified as scarce creative resources, innovators, and people with modern views of the world [40]. According to the authors, lifestyle entrepreneurs focus their business on their personal goals and value the experiences they offer in terms of personal goals. Plus, the way they communicate with their customers is strongly related to contact with the community [41]. In this sense, small tourism companies seek social networks and long-term cooperation, and the behavior of the social network is often motivated by the needs of the community and by the sustainability plan to develop the destination [42]. In this respect, Romero and Molina [43] defined the cooperation process as a formal relationship between two or more entities that involves time, commitments, high levels of trust, and access to each other's resources to achieve a common goal.

A social network that connects individuals is considered a factor that facilitates the development of tourist destinations through the transfer of knowledge, business activity, communication, and support to the community, as well as the planning, development, and implementation of projects [42]. In this context, balance between quality of life and the attraction of tourists and visitors in a manner that supports the place is essential to creating an environment favorable to tourist activities [44].

The context also plays an essential role in the development of tourism entrepreneurship, and elements like competitive intensity, degree of cohesion, legal framework, and seasonality influence entrepreneurial activity. According to Kofler et al. [45], the selection of the place and destination to live equivalently engages personal and business reasons, and represents a success factor for tourism entrepreneurship. In the process of creating value, environmental resources play a facilitating or inciting role to help increase the number of entrepreneurs in a specific region, as they can provide the conditions for such a process [46]. Tourist activity provides a prominent context for lifestyle entrepreneurs, and tourist destinations associated with nature and a strong cultural or identity load are more likely to attract lifestyle entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurs and their contexts form a unit that supports new businesses. In describing the elements of lifestyle entrepreneurs [41,47] presented a three-layer model of elements, structural conditions, systemic conditions, and outputs. Structural conditions represent the core of lifestyle entrepreneurship, determining the success of ecosystems. Outputs describe the entrepreneurial activity that results from the functioning of the system and that leads to regional effects, such as jobs and economic prosperity.

Several studies highlighted that networks are an essential part of systemic conditions, i.e., networking is crucial, as entrepreneurs identify new situations and organize networks according to their needs [48]. These networks are used to identify businesses and opportunities and provide resources, to create social capital among tourism companies and to contribute to trust, to lower transaction costs, and to provide greater dispersion to sharing knowledge [49]. Other equally crucial elements are a talented workforce, financial means for entrepreneurial activity, and support organizations or intermediaries as business consultants. In tourism, the customer contributes significantly to the tourist product [50]. Entrepreneurial activity is perceived as an integral part of institutional contexts, which encourage network development

and learning [51]. In this sense, characteristics of the context, such as the business-friendly administration of a region or tax benefits [52], attract entrepreneurs.

Most of the theoretical models used in the study of entrepreneurship performance emphasize motivation as one of the main elements in the success of small businesses. According to [53], motivation is an internal state that instigates, directs, and maintains behavior. A set of studies discussed the importance of freedom and flexibility as the main lifestyle-oriented objectives among many small independent businesses in tourism and hospitality in which the owner operates in these contexts [39]. These studies have shown that a lifestyle business can bring significant personal benefits in terms of flexibility for the owner.

According to Ratten [54], tourism entrepreneurship is an attractive and stimulating study theme that includes the analysis of entrepreneurial characteristics in a captivating environment and multidisciplinary concepts, such as the impact of technology, economic geography, cultural contact, and international relations. Thus, due to the identification of the characteristics of tourism entrepreneurs with lifestyle factors, most of the literature analyzed the concept of the lifestyle entrepreneur based on case studies and small and medium tourist enterprises, and associated elements, such as the promotion of new products, destinations and forms of tourism [55]. The area of sustainable entrepreneurship in tourism is changing rapidly, both in research and in practical action. For more than two decades, there has been an increase in the number and diversity of studies in this field. However, only recently have the scientific community and professionals developed more solid methodological models on sustainable entrepreneurship in association with lifestyle entrepreneurs [56].

At the same time, another part of the literature perceives entrepreneurship as a dynamic phenomenon defined in broader terms [57]. Some specificities, such as needs, attitudes, impulses, beliefs, and values, are considered when changing the focus for social and cultural characteristics. In this broader view, entrepreneurship stands for the importance of context, encompassing cultural, economic, geographical, political, and social aspects. In general, the tourism lifestyle entrepreneur wishes to gain a respectable life, achieve greater personal freedom, and spend quality time with family and friends [58].

The authenticity of the experience is a key issue in the hospitality environment, although empirical studies are still scarce. In the context of rural tourism, for example, authenticity is inserted in the space-cultural identity of rural areas [59]. By using the narrative understanding of the construction of entrepreneurial identity, it is possible to problematize the sense of self-being of proletarians as entrepreneurs and the conduct of their values and beliefs. In this sense, many theories about entrepreneurship are important to identify a socially constructed, common construction of the entrepreneur who seeks profit and the accumulation of capital along with a healthy lifestyle.

3. Materials and Methods

To develop a measure for the tourist's perception of the tourism lifestyle entrepreneur (TLE), we used a procedure based on the approach of Churchill, 1979. Regarding this study, the following steps were followed: identification of the domain for the construct; item generation through existing literature and experts' interviews; initial data collection; exploratory factor analysis to identify the relevant items using SPSS; new data collection with the addition of comparable variables; confirmatory factor analysis to test nomological and discriminant validity.

The domain for the construct development was the intention to develop a measure that would help in understanding the impact of tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs on the tourist experience and, consequently, their perception of these entrepreneurs.

Most of the items generated in this study were based on the existing literature regarding tourism lifestyle entrepreneurship, which was presented in the previous section. Two interviews with experts were conducted to take item generation one step further. The interviews began with a brief presentation of the objective of the research and the need to initiate that discussion. Notes were taken to highlight the keywords and key points to

include some more items in the scale. At the same time, these interviews served to purify the scale achieved so far, since both interviewees were experienced in this field. In Table 1, it is possible to see the summary of the items generated and used for the first survey.

Table 1. Results of item generation.

Items
A TLE is someone who has a tourism business and is looking for a different lifestyle to achieve a better quality of life.
A TLE is someone who cares about the environment and uses local resources.
A TLE offers more genuine and different experiences due to local knowledge and contact with local communities.
For the TLE, lifestyle, and quality of life are more important than profit and economic growth.
The TLE's choice of where to live is emotional because of the connection they have with it, namely by having a second home.
The TLE's choice of where to live is emotional because of the connection they have with it, namely with their family.
The TLE is in places with quality social, environmental, and physical resources.
The TLE is in places with an attractive climate.
The TLE is in places surrounded by nature.
Some of the TLEs have their personal and professional lives concentrated in the same space.
The TLE has a strong connection with the community, helping them by buying local products.
The TLE seeks a balance between work and leisure.
The TLE works and lives in the same place, avoiding commuting
The TLE has a low level of education and little management experience.
The TLE seeks to have enough income to support themselves.
The TLE moves from place to place in search of the desired lifestyle.
The TLE offers a unique experience to tourists through contact with the local community and activities.
The TLE contributes to the development of poor communities through the development of tourism activities that generate employment and investment opportunities, among others.
The TLE tends to continue their activity even after retirement.
Some of the TLEs develop their work with ancient arts and materials they find in the space they have occupied, for example, tiles, ceramics, and ancestral art.
The price to be paid for these activities or products is a symbolic and fair value.

Subsequently, a draft questionnaire was presented including the items generated in the previous step and demographic factors were included to further analyze the universe of study. Despite some amendments being made, none of the items was removed. The questionnaire was distributed to people who could be identified as potential tourists. Respondents were asked to assess the different statements with a five-point Likert Scale, where 1 corresponded to strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neither agree nor disagree; 4 agree and 5 strongly agree. In terms of respondents, 203 answers were found to be complete and of use for further analysis. Table 2 presents a summary of the respondents' profiles.

Table 2. Sample description (for EFA).

	Frequency	Percentage
Respondent type		
	Age	
18–25	75	36.9
26–35	30	14.8
36–45	47	23.3
46–55	39	19.2
56–65	9	4.4
>65	3	1.5
	Level of Education	
9th Year	15	7.4
Secondary School	66	32.5
Bachelor's Degree	98	48.3
Master's Degree	24	11.8

Table 2. Cont.

	Frequency	Percentage
Residence Area		
North Region	3	1.5
Centre Region	30	14.8
Lisbon	158	77.8
Alentejo	5	2.5
Algarve	2	1.0
Açores	2	1.0
Madeira	1	0.5
Job Area		
Tourism	37	18.3
Psychology	8	3.9
Restaurants	5	2.5
Management	11	10
Education	9	4.4
Other	133	60.9

After the first data collection, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was made with SPSS, using the principal component analysis. Regarding rotation, varimax was selected to minimize the number of variables and simplify the interpretation of the factors. For that reason, it was necessary to define criteria in terms of factors and loadings. Four factors were established. For the loadings, 0.50 was determined to be the minimum. Every item below the established loading would be eliminated from the scale since it meant that the surface attribute was weakly influenced by the factor. This analysis allowed an understanding of how the items behaved between themselves and within each dimension. Thus, from 21 initial items, 10 items (five-point Likert-type scale) remained. A new survey was then conducted, and this time it included variables from another scale in the confirmatory analysis, as can be observed in Table 3, to further compare and test nomological validity. It was important to have a scale within common objectives, which measured something related to what was being developed. In this case, the scale chosen measured how service providers could turn a tourist experience into one that would be memorable and authentic in on-site conditions, in the context of sightseeing tours [60]. Even though this scale had multiple dimensions, social involvement was selected, since it was more related and appropriate to the purpose of this study.

Table 3. Items remained from the first EFA.

Code	Items
Q1_1	A TLE is someone who cares about the environment and uses local resources.
Q1_2	A TLE offers more genuine and different experiences due to local knowledge and contact with local communities.
Q1_3	The TLE's choice of where to live is emotional, because of the connection they have with it, namely by having a second home.
Q1_4	The TLE's choice of where to live is emotional, because of the connection they have with it, namely with their family.
Q2_1	The TLE is in places with an attractive climate.
Q2_2	TLE is at places surrounded by nature.
Q2_3	The TLE has a strong connection with the community, helping them by buying local products.
Q2_4	The TLE works and lives in the same place, avoiding commuting.
Q2_5	The TLE has a low level of education and little management experience.
Q3_2	The TLE offers a unique experience to tourists, through contact with the local community and activities.
Code	Items added from Zatori et al., 2018
Q4_1	In a tourist experience, I value being able to enjoy the presence of people
Q4_2	In a tourist experience, I value a pleasant environment
Q4_3	During the tourist experience, I value being able to interact
Q4_4	Interactions during a tourist experience are enriching

Next, another survey was shared to collect new data with the items from the previous table, and another exploratory factorial analysis was conducted. Then, to verify the goodness of fit for the model and to test nomological validity, a confirmatory exploratory analysis (CFA) was performed. The results from the survey were reorganized to proceed and 13 items remained.

4. Results

4.1. Measurement Analysis

After an EFA, the items were exposed to CFA. In the model used, four factors allowed the items to correlate freely, even though each item was restricted to load on its pre-specified factor. CFA allowed a scale purification, and, from 21 initial items, the results showed 3 dimensions and a total of 9 items, but both the second and third dimensions were rejected because of few and low loadings, as can be seen in Table 4. Only the first dimension was accepted and, in that way, 5 items persisted. The alpha corresponded to 0.74, which could be considered a consistent value, which brought consistency and reliability to the scale. As Figure 1 shows, one more item was eliminated since the loading was below 0.6, while the others provided a good convergent validity [61]. The other items had enough significant standardized loadings to survive. This way, the final scale had 4 items, which appeared to be an interesting result, since it was a brief scale and could be used when time and resources were limited. The chi-square for this model was significant ($\chi^2 = 82.834$ df, p -value < 0.05). Additional fit indices were assessed because the chi-square statistic is sensitive to sample size and the number of factors can go up [62]. For that reason, the normed fit Index (NFI), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) were calculated. The NFI of this model was 0.711 and the SRMR was 0.098 which could be considered acceptable [63].

Table 4. CFA matrix component.

	1	2	3
Q1_1	0.684		
Q1_2	0.757		
Q1_3		0.572	
Q1_4	0.629		
Q2_1			0.721
Q2_2			0.555
Q2_3	0.636		
Q3_3			
Q2_5		0.714	
Q3_2	0.678		

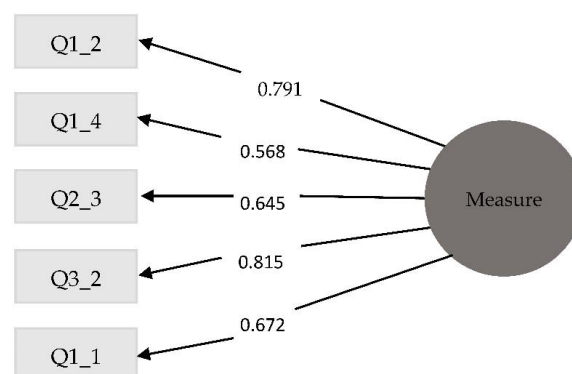


Figure 1. Standardized coefficients of CFA.

4.2. Nomological Validity

Concerning nomological validity, measures were tested concerning other constructs and the expectation was that there would be theoretical relatedness but it would not be exactly equal otherwise it would measure the same and that was not the purpose. This way, as stated before, 4 items were created from another scale, belonging to the factor “social involvement” to test nomological validity. The correlations between them worked well. At the two ends, the correlation was significant at a level of 0.01. All the coefficients were positive which allowed the conclusion that tourism perception of TLEs and social involvement were associated. As a result, the nomological validity of this measure was supported. Finally, the Cronbach’s Alpha was 0.736.

5. Discussion

This manuscript developed items for a scale that measures tourist perception of tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs, and helps further research. Existing literature contributed to developing the items and, based on two data samples, the results were satisfactory. The final scale is presented below:

- A TLE is someone who cares about the environment and uses local resources.
- A TLE offers more genuine and different experiences due to local knowledge and contact with local communities.
- The TLE has a strong connection with the community, helping them by buying local products.
- The TLE offers a unique experience to tourists, through contact with the local community and activities.

The first item of the scale is related to sustainability concerns and the attachment to local resources. There are several authors who show how these topics are related to TLEs. It is clear that these entrepreneurs positively impact the local economy and the sustainable development of regions [64], and TLEs have potential to promote rare local resources, such as local products. In fact, this aspect is related to sustainability and the aspiration to contribute to a better environment, which is the reason why TLEs care about teaching tourists about agriculture, the countryside, and its preservation [65]. TLEs want to create something without changing or affecting their environment. Additionally, the value proposition of products and services is based on this sustainable way of thinking, by using networking to create something innovative [66]. The scale also allows an understanding of the impact of entrepreneurship on communities, providing improvement in local economies, not only through the development of new jobs, but also by increasing local incomes and wealth through the purchase of local products [67].

The items from the scale can confirm the importance of the communities to the tourists and, consequently, to the tourism lifestyle entrepreneur, who is able to create social capital and strengthen local identity, making places more attractive because they provide what tourists want, involvement with locals, and with the local culture, environment, way of life and traditions [34].

Innovation is one of the most important factors to allow this phenomenon because people are looking for different and authentic experiences that can be found within these communities. The scale presented previously shows a strong association between the community and the TLE. Even the poorest communities, who have difficulties competing with other destinations, can offer an authentic experience, even if it only consists of participating in the locals’ daily life activities, because there is a strong culture and the TLEs have knowledge of that culture to differentiate themselves from others. The local resources and environment have characteristics that allow the development of new experiences and contribute to a “unique involvement” between the tourists and the place they are visiting.

This connection to the community can encourage the tourist to feel as though he or she belongs to it, which might be an advantage once both the entrepreneur and the community co-create experiences. The knowledge present in the place contributes to developing this uniqueness that tourists are looking for, having a strong impact on the value proposition of a destination, which ends up in “selling” it [68]. TLEs’ perception is influenced by

their knowledge regarding the ability to imagine resources as products, their creative thinking, and their social networking. Local resources and communities can, thus, relate to tourist perceptions. The local contribution of tourism and, more specifically, tourism entrepreneurship, impacts on an environment in a more appealing way, especially due to TLEs whose creativity and willingness to change their lifestyles develops something with impact, which is memorable [69].

6. Conclusions

This study conceptualized the development of a scale and contributed to the existing literature in several ways. Firstly, research has focused on tourism perceptions regarding costs and product features which impact the overall satisfaction and willingness to return to a place and spread the message to friends and family [70]. There are several studies to measure tourists' satisfaction related to a destination, i.e., service perception, tourists' perceived safety [71]. The present research expanded the research in this sense, focusing on a topic that has gained more relevance in recent years, namely, tourism lifestyle entrepreneurship in small and medium firms within tourism. This scale is important to help researchers in the future to measure this perception, develop other conclusions and expand studies.

The importance of these entrepreneurs was shown in the literature review, as well as their positive impact on communities and destinations. For that reason, based on this research, it is possible to ascertain if tourists perceive who is managing a business and if that is related to their choice regarding their experiences. This knowledge might allow governments to develop measures to help these entrepreneurs make tourism sustainable. Additionally, business owners can understand what tourists value the most, which can change how they satisfy their customers. This scale advises managers to be concerned with the environment, use local resources, and offer genuine experiences associated with engagement with the local community and consumption of local products, so as to differentiate themselves from other firms by means of local knowledge. In fact, these measures give guidance to business owners to improve their offers and thereby improve their firm's success. Policymakers can take advantage of this scale, for self-assessment and benchmark purposes.

Regarding the limitations of the study, the sample size could be larger to achieve more certainty about the results. It would be interesting if the two surveys were applied to the exact same people. In addition, the sample profile could be more defined to have a more cohesive return.

For future research, it would be interesting to apply this scale and measure perceptions across different countries, i.e., developed and developing countries, to see if the impact is different and in what way, so as to conclude what can be done to improve destinations and how. Future research may try to develop a scale with different dimensions to streamline the analysis and make it even more complete.

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Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

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