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Exploring Generation Z's Perceptions and Motivations in Rural Tourism: The Importance of Authentic and Memorable Experiences

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Master's in Hospitality and Tourism Management

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Resumo

Este estudo investiga as perceções, motivações e comportamentos da Geração Z no contexto do turismo rural, com foco na importância de experiências autênticas e memoráveis. O principal objetivo deste estudo é compreender melhor como a Geração Z avalia os destinos rurais e quais os fatores que mais influenciam a satisfação, a lealdade e as intenções de recomendação.

Foi realizada uma pesquisa com 209 inquiridos entre os 18 e os 30 anos, utilizando perguntas baseadas nas escalas de experiências turísticas memoráveis. A análise investigou as relações entre os fatores antecedentes (autenticidade, interação com os habitantes locais e sustentabilidade), as sete dimensões da MTE (hedonismo, refrescos, cultura local, significado, conhecimento, envolvimento e novidade) e as consequências do comportamento (satisfação, intenção de revisitar e intenção de recomendação).

Os resultados indicam que a autenticidade e a interação com os habitantes locais têm um forte impacto nas perceções da Geração Z sobre experiências memoráveis, embora a sustentabilidade tenha sido considerada menos significativa, destacando uma distinção notável entre a consciência ambiental e a prática real. Os inquiridos forneceram feedback principalmente positivo em todas as dimensões da MTE, mas muitos mostraram apenas um acordo moderado, sugerindo que os destinos rurais estão a corresponder às expectativas, mas não a superá-las constantemente. Significativamente, as experiências memoráveis estavam fortemente relacionadas com o aumento da satisfação, intenção de revisitar e intenção de recomendar, demonstrando como são cruciais para cultivar a lealdade e o feedback favorável entre os viajantes da Geração Z.

Esta investigação contribui para a literatura existente, destacando as expectativas e comportamentos da Geração Z no turismo rural. Também fornece orientações práticas para os prestadores de serviços de turismo rural, enfatizando a importância de criar experiências autênticas, culturalmente imersivas e significativas que ressoem com esta geração e melhorem a competitividade do destino.

Palavras-chave: Comportamento do Consumidor; Turismo Rural; Experiências Autênticas; Experiências Turísticas Memoráveis; Geração Z

Abstract

This study investigates Generation Z's perceptions, motivations, and behaviours in the rural tourism context, focusing on the importance of authentic and memorable experiences. The main goal of this study is to better understand how Generation Z evaluates rural destinations and which factors have the biggest influence on satisfaction, loyalty, and recommendation intentions.

A survey was conducted with 209 respondents between the ages of 18 and 30, using questions based on the scales of memorable tourism experiences. The analysis investigated the relationships among the antecedent factors (authenticity, interaction with locals, and sustainability), the seven dimensions of MTE (hedonism, refreshments, local culture, meaningfulness, knowledge, involvement, and novelty), and the consequences of behaviour (satisfaction, revisit intention, and recommendation intention).

The findings indicate that authenticity and interaction with locals strongly impact Generation Z's perceptions of memorable experiences, although sustainability was considered less significant, highlighting a notable distinction between environmental awareness and actual practice. Respondents provided mainly positive feedback across the MTE dimensions, yet many displayed only moderate agreement, suggesting that rural destinations are meeting expectations but not constantly surpassing them. Significantly, memorable experiences were strongly related to increased satisfaction, intention to revisit, and intention to recommend, demonstrating how crucial they are in cultivating loyalty and favourable feedback among Generation Z travellers.

This research contributes to the existing literature by highlighting Generation Z's expectations and behaviours in rural tourism. It also provides practical guidance for rural tourism providers, emphasising the importance of creating authentic, culturally immersive, and meaningful experiences that resonate with this generation and improve destination competitiveness.

Key Words: Consumer Behaviour; Rural Tourism; Authentic Experiences; Memorable Tourism Experiences; Generation Z

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1. Introduction

In recent years, rural tourism has emerged as an opportunity for visitors to engage with nature, tradition, and local culture in authentic and often unexplored settings (Tănase et al., 2023). This sector of the tourism industry has gained importance as more travellers look for unique and personalised experiences (Rodrigues et al., 2023). Born into a digitally and globally connected world, Generation Z is often characterised by a desire for meaningful engagement, cultural immersion, and sustainable practices when travelling (Gössling et al., 2021). As a result, investigating the relationship between these two is extremely relevant and valuable in contemporary tourism research (Poruțiu et al., 2024). Consequently, this study has as its main objective the relationship between these two agents and attempts to understand what changes the rural tourism enterprise must make in order to meet the expectations and needs of this generation and provide them with memorable tourism experiences.

This study aims to analyse Generation Z's perceptions, motivations and behavioural intentions in the context of rural tourism. More specifically, it examines how factors, such as authenticity, memorable tourism experiences, and interaction with locals influence their decision-making process and overall satisfaction. As rural tourism destinations compete for a more visible and relevant place in the global tourism landscape, understanding the expectations and preferences of the emerging consumer groups is crucial for viable development and effective competition of the destinations.

Rural tourism is developing into an increasingly important segment of the tourism industry, with Generation Z being the most recent and influential generation of consumers. As a result, investigating the relationship between these two is extremely relevant and valuable in contemporary tourism research.

The theoretical research gap in this study lies in the limited understanding of how Gen Z's specific preferences for sustainable and authentic experiences shape rural tourism. So, this study aims to fill this gap by diving into the complex nature of Gen Z's choices, motivations, and the impact of these preferences on rural tourism destinations. This will also provide insight into how Generation Z accesses sustainable and authentic rural experiences while investigating how to fill a gap by looking into their specific preferences and impact, and offering managerial insights for tailored services and societal implications for rural tourism.

Understanding Gen Z's preferences in rural tourism holds significant managerial implications for businesses, local communities, and tourism stakeholders. It provides insights into tailoring offerings and services to meet the demands of this generation, fostering innovation in sustainable practices, and creating authentic experiences that resonate with Gen Z travellers. For instance, businesses can adapt by implementing eco-friendly initiatives, promoting local culture, and leveraging technology to enhance authenticity without compromising sustainability.

At a societal level, this study sheds light on the potential for rural areas to thrive sustainably through tourism while preserving their cultural heritage. It underscores the importance of community engagement, sustainable development, and responsible tourism practices. By catering to Gen Z's preferences, rural destinations may experience economic growth, improved infrastructure, and a revitalisation of traditions, ultimately benefiting local societies by creating employment opportunities and preserving cultural identity. Moreover, it might encourage broader societal shifts towards more environmentally conscious and culturally respectful tourism practices.

This study has a research aims to comprehensively explore how Generation Z's pursuit of sustainable practices and authentic experiences in rural tourism reshapes destination dynamics, influences community development, and fosters innovative strategies for sustainable growth in rural tourism sectors.

In order to achieve the aim of this study, several questions were developed to help study the key components of this research. The questions are the following:

- What are the main motivations of Generation Z to seek this type of tourism?
- What factors influence their decision-making when selecting rural destinations?
- What makes a rural tourism experience memorable for Gen Z?
- What is the impact of memorable tourism experiences on satisfaction, loyalty, and willingness to recommend rural destinations?

With those previous questions in mind, these are the set of research objectives that were developed to help this study: To define the key concepts: Consumer Behaviour in Tourism Experiences (key concepts in consumer behaviour in tourism); Rural Tourism; Authentic Experiences; Memorable Experiences in Rural Tourism; Generation Z (types of generations; generational differences in tourists' environmental attitudes and behaviour; the distinctive factor of generation Z).

To analyse Generation Z's preferences and motivations in choosing rural tourism destinations; To study their preferences towards sustainable practices and authentic cultural experiences; To investigate how traditional and modern components interact to create and deliver authentic experiences for Generation Z in rural tourism, and their perception and engagement with these destinations; To determine if Generation Z's preferences for rural tourism are sustainable in the long term, by assessing the crucial role these preferences play in maintaining a sustainable tourism model that goes beyond trends, and ensures a constantly positive impact on rural communities and environments; To identify creative approaches that rural tourism destinations can use to satisfy Generation Z's motivations and preferences, and to make suggestions on how local communities can take advantage while preserving their unique cultural identities.

The study is divided into five sections. The second section is a literature review that presents previously conducted studies on the subject in question, as well as the theoretical framework. The third section describes the sample's characteristics and methodology. The following section contains an analysis and discussion of the results. Finally, the fifth section presents the main findings, study limitations, and recommendations for future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Consumer Behaviour in Tourism Experiences

Studies, such as Wu & Pearce (2014), define consumer behaviour as the dynamic interaction process between emotional, cognitive, behavioural, and environmental factors that allow humans to perform the exchange function in life. In addition to this definition, consumer behaviour is also seen as a process, including multiple stages of selection, purchase, and disposal, and the process is dynamic.

Understanding consumer behaviour, particularly in the tourism sector, is critical when assessing the extent to which tourism preferences may appear, allowing tourism businesses to develop accurate marketing approaches. Juvan et al. (2017) also state that tourist behaviour differs from other consumer behaviour in that it's a hedonic-driven behaviour outside the usual home environment, carried out with the main objective of obtaining positive experiences.

Additionally, theoretical research on tourist behaviour indicates that tourists possess multiple and dynamic goals, including the desire to align with personal norms. However, it is generally acknowledged that the primary objective of tourism consumption is to achieve enjoyable experiential value (Malone et al., 2014). Moreover, escapism, recognised as a prevalent motivator in tourism for the pursuit of enjoyment, is frequently associated with hedonism (Sánchez-Fernández et al., 2020). Consumers, driven by escapism, pursue intrinsic value by avoiding daily responsibilities and challenges during their tourism activities (Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987).

Poruțiu, et al. (2021) reveal that the motivations and behaviours of tourists can differ based on the type of tourism practised. With that in mind, it is reasonable to say that the type of tourism and its perceived appeal can be defined as criteria for studying tourist preferences. Additionally, the topic of authenticity in tourist experiences is growing more significant in terms of tourist behaviour and motivation, with a particular emphasis on essential authenticity, which can be an alternative source in tourism regardless of whether the visited elements are authentic or not.

Teng, Ma, and Jing (2021) also believed that the behaviour and experiences of family and friends have a significant impact on the tourists' behaviour, motivation, and satisfaction with the experience. Tourism and travel motivations have been identified as the foundation for identifying and researching preferences as variables in tourist behaviour. Furthermore, according to Poruțiu et al. (2021), although family and friends are the most influential factors in these situations, travel behaviour in rural destinations can also be affected by a variety of other variables such as the size of the travel group, the travel season, the type of accommodation and other additional services.

In addition, Li and Cao (2022), show us how tourist motivation is an internal factor that leads potential tourists to take a certain action and is also a key factor for a series of tourist behaviours in the future. It can also be used as the link between tourist demand and specific tourist destinations (Stone, 2016).

2.1.1. Key Concepts in Consumer Behaviour in Tourism

Cohen et al. (2014) identified nine key concepts that they believe best describe consumer behaviour in the tourism sector:

Decision-Making

Consumer behaviour research in tourism has often relied on models based on the assumption of rational decision-making. However, many scholars have critiqued these models for their inability to fully capture the complexities involved in travel decision-making. The unique context of travel adds layers of complexity, as decisions are influenced by various factors and can change over time (Hyde & Lawson, 2003). Travellers face numerous choices regarding different aspects of their vacation itinerary (Decrop & Snelders, 2004); some make it before departure, while others make it on-site at the destination (Choi et al., 2012). This dynamic nature of decision-making highlights the limitations of traditional rational models in understanding tourism behaviour.

Values

In the marketing field, consumer behaviour regarding product categories, brands, and specific product attributes is significantly influenced by values, as highlighted by Vinson et al. (1977). In tourism studies, researchers typically identify two distinct types of values: instrumental (external) and terminal (internal). On one hand, instrumental values relate to the knowledge and understanding of specific objects, such as goals, experiences, or situations, as noted by Prentice (1987). On the other hand, terminal values relate to broader classes of objects rather than to individual items themselves, a concept explored by Gnoth (1997).

Motivations

Motivation plays a crucial role in the field of tourism, attracting significant attention from academics due to its impact on various marketing decisions, including segmentation, product development, advertising, and positioning (Bieger & Laesser, 2002). It can be defined as the psychological and biological needs and wants that encompass the forces driving, directing, and integrating a person's behaviour and activities (Yoon & Uysal, 2005, p. 46). In recent years, research has increasingly focused on how motivation affects factors before a visit, such

as expectations and attitudes, as well as those that follow, like customer loyalty (Hsu et al., 2010).

Self-concept and Personality

In the field of consumer behaviour, self-concept is a multidimensional construct that combines self-identity with social and aspirational aspects. This concept can be measured through four dimensions: real self-image, ideal self-image, social self-image, and ideal social self-image (Sirgy, 1982). Personality also significantly influences consumer decision-making, affecting purchase behaviour, product preferences, and attitudes (Kassarjian, 1971). In tourism, personality is a key factor that shapes tourist motivations and behaviours (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2004).

Expectations

Expectations play a crucial role in determining consumer satisfaction, loyalty, and post-purchase behaviours (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1993). They are essentially the desires or wants of consumers, reflecting what they believe a service provider should deliver, as opposed to what the provider might actually offer. Moreover, expectations can also signify the standard against which consumers evaluate the attributes of a product or service (Teas, 1993). Generally, it is accepted that these expectations are shaped by prior experiences, personal influences (such as word-of-mouth), non-personal communication sources (like advertising), individual characteristics (including nationality and gender), attitudes and motivations (Sheng & Chen, 2012).

Attitudes

Schiffman and Kanuk (1997) noted that attitudes are learnt behaviour, shaped by individual perceptions and assessments of various attributes related to products or experiences. Besides, these are not inherent but developed through exposure and evaluation. This evaluation process is critical, as it serves as the foundation for attitudinal responses. Individuals assess their beliefs and feelings toward an object or behaviour along a spectrum, determining whether they view it positively or negatively (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000).

Perceptions

Consumers often shape their perceptions based on familiarity, past experiences, and personal values, significantly impacting their tourism involvement and satisfaction (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997). The main implication of this field is that perceptions, like attitudes, are crucial in establishing visitor engagement, destination image, satisfaction, and service quality (Lee & Lockshin, 2012). Also, destination image remains a major topic of study in perception-related

tourism in consumer behaviour research. Similar to that, perceived service quality remains a hot topic in tourism research due to the importance of perceptions. Furthermore, it's recognised that a gap can exist between consumers' expected and perceived service quality, highlighting the complex nature of customer satisfaction in tourism (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman 1993).

Satisfaction

Satisfaction plays a critical role in consumer behaviour, significantly affecting future organisational success through consumer satisfaction. As Anderson, Fornell, and Lehmann (1994) outlined, satisfaction involves evaluating a consumption experience and forming a judgment about it (Oliver, 1997). However, defining satisfaction operationally is more complex, as highlighted by Correia et al. (2009), this involves not only identifying which aspects are being assessed but also understanding the mental processes that consumers use to make these satisfaction judgments.

Trust and Loyalty

Building strong customer relationships hinges on trust, which is a vital tool for encouraging loyalty (Berry, 1996). This trust grows over time as businesses consistently exceed consumer expectations and provide satisfaction (Fam et al., 2004), and it will play an important role in determining loyalty and future behaviour (Kim, Chung, & Lee, 2011). Ultimately, loyalty can be defined as "a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronise a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or similar brand purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour" (Oliver, 1997, p. 392)

2.2. Rural Tourism

Rural tourism is defined as a tourism activity that creates experiences related to products based on nature, agriculture, lifestyle, and fishing found in the countryside. (Tănase, et al. 2023). This type of tourism appeared in the 19th century and is practised in rural areas, or a region characterised by rurality with fewer than 10,000 residents. It involves contact with locals' natural and cultural heritage and aims to ensure the sustainability of rural communities. Lane and Kastenholz (2015) also defined this type of tourism as the polar opposite of mass tourism, providing an escape from cities and away from standardised, impersonal service delivery.

According to Rodrigues et al. (2023), rural tourism distinguishes itself from other types of tourism by providing tourists with the opportunity to experience cultural and gastronomic practices and traditions, as well as personalized interaction with the locals. Nonetheless, the tourism industry evolved alongside civilizations, becoming increasingly connected in a digital

transformation process that sees travellers, tour guides, and locations embracing information and communication technologies as active and decisive tools permanently. At the same time, the tourism sector's digital transformation is causing an increase in the value and diversity of the entire tourist experience, and implementing evolution in marketing is revitalizing the sector and its products. It's also allowing these destinations to benefit greatly from globalization opportunities.

The relationship between Gen Z and rural tourism shows that this generation travels for various reasons, including leisure activities, seeking tranquillity, and calmness. It can also be mentioned that the perception that younger people have of this type of tourism is that it's relaxing, a great way to discover new things, visit relatives, get to know new cultures, and adopt new hobbies.

Even though holidays in rural areas are not at the top of Gen Z's list of preferences, the literature explores the relationship between rural tourism and Gen Z, specifically what motivates Gen Z to practice rural tourism and the level of awareness of rural tourism among Gen Z. A study conducted by Gurbuz, Nesirov, and Macabangin (2019) highlights the fact that young people visit rural areas to enjoy nature and biodiversity, while older people are drawn to the history, culture, and traditions of the area. Additionally, assuming that "young visitors (18-25 years old) prefer physically demanding activities and older visitors (31-39 years old) prefer fewer demanding ones, the findings demonstrated that there is no relationship between tourist age, level of income, and preference for specific tourism activities in the rural environment." (Tănase et al., 2023)

According to Jiang, Zan, and Balaji (2022), factors such as education, entertainment, aesthetics, authenticity, and hedonism play a significant role in increasing Gen Z tourists' engagement and pleasure in rural tourism experiences. These authors suggest that businesses in this type of tourism should implement the following measures: promote local arts and crafts as a highlight to display the unique cultural heritage of the area, offer tourists the chance to participate in farming activities, collaborate with local craftsmen and farmers to create a more genuine experience, and organise festivals centred around Indigenous agricultural products to offer an authentic and enjoyable experience.

2.3. Authentic Experiences

Authentic can also be defined as something genuine, true or unique (Grayson and Martinec, 2004). It is one of tourism literature's most debated and multifaceted issues and is thought to play an important role in shaping consumer experiences (Tariq et al., 2023). One of the primary reasons consumers seek authenticity is nostalgia, curiosity about past experiences, and a desire to remain connected with history (Büttner and Göritz, 2008). To help with that search for authenticity, cultural heritage institutions provide opportunities for

"immersion into the past," which is going to be strongly connected with the term of authenticity (Wang, 1999). Additionally, as Kim et al. (2020) stated, authenticity is a new consumer sensibility that involves perceptions of how genuine novel, real, original, exceptional, and unique experiences, services, or products are.

According to Ruan (2008), authenticity, also known as "veracity," was originally used to describe the accuracy of religious history before being applied to the safeguarding of the heritage tourism industry. The main goal of authenticity is to ensure that cultural heritage is preserved and transmitted in its original and unaltered form. Also, as a result of cultural differences between the East and the West, there are significant gaps regarding comprehension of the authenticity of cultural heritage, particularly in the preservation of a lot of architectural patrimonies. With that in mind, the consciousness regarding the need to preserve cultural heritage has grown, and it has been updated and refined as technology has advanced.

Researchers discovered that tourism motivation and authenticity make it more difficult for tourists to feel the history and culture. However, Stovel (2008) outlined an extensive structure for authenticity and emphasized the importance of fostering and preserving industrial heritage. This term is seen by authors, such as Gazzola (1964), as the distinctive characteristic of the world's industrial heritage. Additionally, it is believed that to guarantee the variety and depth of cultural heritage, the implementation of the concept of authenticity should take into consideration the specific cultural setting.

Wei and Zhang (2023) present various perspectives on how the concept of authenticity has been studied and understood by many other authors. Firstly, MacCannell (1973) believes that authenticity should be incorporated into the tourism industry. Then, Ruijgrok (2006) determined that the importance of authenticity when assessing the value of preserving and maintaining a site is crucial. Finally, Xie (2020) argued that cultural heritage sites, such as shipyards, offer genuine opportunities for conservation and learning. This last author also suggested that destination management organisations (DMOs) should keep the shipyard in its original state to avoid losing authenticity as a result of excessive use of the natural environment.

According to Wang (1999), authenticity can be separated into two perspectives: the authenticity of the toured objects and the experience of the tourist. The first one can then be subdivided into objectivist and constructivist approaches. Firstly, the objective authenticity approach is a “museum-linked” perception that will invoke in tourists the perception of the “authentic experience” by showcasing “original” objects. This approach states that the authenticity must be inherent in an object from its point of origin, which can be confirmed by experts. Although this verification is seen as the real property of the object, it largely depends on the view and judgment of an expert rather than the perception of the tourists.

In contrast to the objective approach, authors such as Robinson and Clifford (2012) present two generalist approaches that interpret authenticity more subjectively. The first one is a constructive approach, which gives us an inside look at how humans relate their experiences to their preconceived ideas. This will lead consumers/tourists to construct an idea of the object's authenticity by projecting their own beliefs and perspectives. Therefore, it's safe to say that this approach shows us how the authenticity and inauthenticity of an object depends on the perception and interpretation of the tourists based on their expectations. Additionally, these two authors state that this approach presents the existence of multiple realities which are relativist or dependent on situation and context.

The second approach, existential authenticity, is rooted in a post-modernist perspective. Wang (1999) explains the relevance of this approach in describing the wide variety of self-discovery experiences when tourists are enjoying themselves. This existential authenticity can be divided into two sections: interpersonal and intrapersonal. Interpersonal authenticity involves both the physique and the psyche of the tourists, while intrapersonal authenticity involves collective activities that invoke a sense of self. Both of these perspectives will contribute to the perceived authenticity of brands, services and destinations (Leigh et al., 2006).

2.4. Memorable Tourism Experiences in Rural Tourism

The concept of memorable experiences has gained considerable attention in the field of tourism management, evolving significantly since the influential work of Pine and Gilmore (1998). They introduced a transformative management paradigm that highlights the shift from a service-based economy to an experience economy. According to Pine and Gilmore, businesses must focus on staging experiences and crafting unique and memorable events, which in turn create value for customers. This shift is not only beneficial to individuals but also presents substantial opportunities for organisations, particularly in tourism, where the differentiation of destinations and the creation of competitive advantage are crucial for success (Hanna et al., 2018). By offering tourists experiences that leave a lasting impact, businesses can generate a sense of uniqueness and distinction, making destinations more appealing and fostering customer loyalty.

The memories formed through these experiences are invaluable. Research has shown that memories are a significant source of information that directly influences individuals' behavioural intentions, such as their decision to revisit a destination or recommend it to others (Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2013). Memorable tourism experiences (MTEs) stand out because they tend to be recalled with greater clarity and emotional importance compared to other types of experiences. Such experiences have been found to foster strong emotional connections with the destination (Cifci, 2022), often resulting in what is referred to as "destination love"

(Mohammad Shafiee et al., 2021). This emotional attachment, combined with vivid memories, can enhance perceptions of the destination's image and overall appeal (Zhang et al., 2018).

The significance of MTEs extends beyond emotional attachment; they are also powerful predictors of future behaviours. For instance, research suggests that individuals who have had memorable experiences are more likely to return to the same destination in the future or recommend it to others (Kim & Ritchie, 2014). Furthermore, MTEs play a key role in promoting positive word-of-mouth, as individuals who have experienced memorable moments are more likely to share their experiences with friends and family (Kim et al., 2010). This dissemination of positive recommendations contributes not only to the destination's reputation but also to the broader tourism ecosystem, as individuals become informal ambassadors for the location.

The implications of these findings are profound for tourism management. Understanding and integrating the principles of memorable experiences into tourism strategies can significantly enhance customer satisfaction, loyalty, and the overall success of a destination. By focusing on crafting experiences that resonate emotionally and create lasting memories, destinations can build a strong and loyal customer base. This customer loyalty, coupled with the positive effects of word-of-mouth, can ultimately foster long-term sustainability and growth in the highly competitive tourism industry (Sthapit et al., 2019).

Kim et al. (2012) indicate that individuals remember a tourism experience as memorable by recognising seven key attributes. The first five include hedonism (pleasurable feelings), refreshment (an escape from daily routines), local culture (favourable impressions of residents and their culture), meaningfulness (activities that are significant and valuable), and knowledge (opportunities for learning and education). The remaining two attributes are involvement (a psychological state characterised by motivation or interest) and novelty (a comparison of current experiences with past ones). MTEs are, therefore, specifically shaped by experiences that create positive memories, enhance the retention of pleasant recollections about the destination (Kim et al., 2012), and affect the overall image of the destination (Sharma and Nayak, 2019).

MTE Scales Table

Construct		Scales	References
Antecedents	Authentic Experiences	Closely experienced the actual local culture	Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015)
		Exposed to authentic local villages and markets	
		Visited local restaurants/food outlets	
		It gave me an opportunity to experience the real day-to-day life of locals	
	Interaction with Locals	Delighted by the hospitality of the local people	Coelho and Gosling (2018)
		Very well served in the visited establishments	
		Single treatment during the trip	
		Good impressions about the local people	
		The people in the destination were friendly	
	Sustainability	It helped acquire new friendly-environmental skills	Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015)
Memorable Tourism Experiences	Hedonism	Thrilled about the new experience	Coelho and Gosling (2018)
	Refreshment	It was liberating	
		Sense of freedom	
		It was refreshing	
		Felt revitalised	
	Local Culture	The local culture was very different	
		Contact with different cultures was enriching	
		Delighted with the local culture	
		Realised the cultural diversity while travelling	

Construct		Scales	References
		Closely experienced local culture	
	Meaningfulness	Something meaningful	
		Something important	
		Learn about oneself	
	Knowledge	Exploratory	Kim and Ritchie (2014)
		New Culture	
	Involvement	I visited a place where I really wanted to go	
		I enjoyed activities which I really wanted to do	
		I was interested in the main activities of this	
	Novelty	Did things never experience before	Coelho and Gosling (2018)
		Surprised by the experiences during the trip	
		Once-in-a-lifetime experience	
		Unique experience	
		Different from previous experiences	
		Experienced something new	
Consequences	Consumer Behaviour	Visiting the destination was an enriching experience for me	Melon et al. (2021)
		Visiting the destination allowed me to interact with other people who are interested in the same things as me	
		It helped me to learn more about myself	Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015)
	Satisfaction	General experience at the destination was satisfactory	Melon et al. (2021)
		Enjoyed the experience at the destination	

Construct		Scales	References
		Felt good about the decision to visit the destination	
	Revisit Intention	If I had to decide again, I would choose this same destination	
		Would go back to this destination in the future	
	Recommend Intention	Would recommend it to a friend	
		Would say positive things about the place	
		Would encourage my friends and family to visit this place	

Table 1 - Memorable Tourism Experiences Scales

2.5. Generation Z

2.5.1. Types of Generations

A generation, according to Szromek et al. (2019), is a distinct group of people who share similar birth dates and experiences of significant events at various stages of development. In the scientific literature, four generations of people have been identified as being active and physically fit enough to enjoy tourist trips. Specifically, they are:

- Baby Boomers (born 1945 - 1964) are the generation that experienced the baby boom and economic boom and grew up in a time of prosperity. This generation is described by Wiedmer (2015) as work-centric, independent, goal-oriented, and competitive.
- Generation X (born in 1965 - 1980): the generation that grew up during the 1970s economic crisis. This generation is described as independent thinkers, engaged in interesting work, and efficient because they value their personal time and can balance work and family life (Grimes, 2011).
- Generation Y (born in 1981 - 1994): the generation born during the era of globalisation and universal access to the internet, also known as Millennials. Gen Y is less independent and more inclusive community-oriented as they enjoy discovering solutions to problems within their communities (Wiedmer, 2015).
- Generation Z (born after 1995: the generation that relies on modern information and communication technology for everything, so much so that authors such as Horovitz (2012) name this generation as “digital natives”. Wiedmer (2015) shows how this generation is more socially and environmentally aware than the previous generations.

2.5.2. Generational Differences in Environmental Attitudes and Behaviour

Some studies support the idea that Gen Z shows greater concern for the environment than the older generations, while more recent studies show that in terms of attitude, the older generations show better attitudes. With that in mind, previous research, such as Jones & Dunlap (2010), reveals a relationship between age and environmental attitudes, with younger people having more ecological opinions than older people. However, while young people have a strong orientation toward environmental and sustainability issues (Giachino et al., 2021), older people are more likely to have positive environmental attitudes (Sargisson et al., 2020) and engage in environmentally responsible and sustainable behaviour.

Given this, according to Prayag et al. (2022), the environmental attitudes and engagement of individuals in environmentally sustainable practices increase as they age, peaking in the middle ages and declining in the oldest. Nonetheless, the effects of age on environmentally oriented variables don't completely distinguish how certain age groups behave from others.

Although some studies find no significant difference in environmental attitudes between Millennials and Generation Z, Prayag et al. (2022) present some recent research comparing these two groups. With this in mind, a study by Parzonko et al. (2021) demonstrated how Gen Z is less engaged in environmental practices than older generations. In this study, the author proposes that while younger generations (Generation Z) claim to have strong environmental beliefs, they engage in fewer effective environmental practices than older generations.

Prayag et al. (2022) present us with the idea that this younger generation is more aware of its environmental impacts and sustainable practices. Consequently, this awareness forces them to do more research when planning a trip, so that their choices align with their beliefs.

2.5.3. The Distinctive Factor of Generation Z

A study conducted by Williams et al. (2010) presents the following main characteristics of Gen Z, realistic, open-minded, determined, responsible, curious, and accustomed to the use of technology. Also, this generation prefers self-control and is used to having quick access to a vast amount of information through technology, and they also tend to favour experiences that allow them to escape from the routine of their everyday life (Çora, 2019). However, Aina et al. (2021) show us how important it is to consider that this generation's tourist experience is going to be vastly influenced by new technologies, such as social media and other technological means.

Moreover, Gen Z travellers actively participate in trip preparation when travelling alone or with friends, but their involvement reduces significantly when travelling with family. Their travel decisions are influenced by factors such as familial and peer influence. In a study conducted by Robinson and Schänzel (2019), these travellers prefer peculiar and adventurous experiences, and they frequently stay in low-cost accommodations such as hostels to meet locals and other travellers.

Overall, this generation is highly social and active, and it values more meaningful and genuine experiences rather than possessions (Smone, 2016). Because of their extensive knowledge of technology and digital tools, Generation Z has the ability to strike a balance between the old and the new, using technology to improve their experiences while also emphasising authenticity and meaningful connections.

Furthermore, in the rural tourism context, Gössling et al. (2021) show that Generation Z seeks unique and authentic experiences associated with various cultural and gastronomical features in this type of tourism. Poruțiu et al. (2024) assert that stakeholders must diversify their offerings in the industry by investing in infrastructure enhancements, conservation initiatives, and cultural preservation projects to augment the attractiveness of rural destinations while ensuring their sustainable viability.

Empirical Studies

References	Type of Experiences	Research Context	Research Design
Szromek et al. (2019)	To investigate public awareness of over-tourism in the context of the different generations, and to determine the impact of tourists on the places and the local communities	Poland; N => 386	Qualitative Research - Questionnaire
Poruțiu et al. (2021)	To discover tourists' preferences for rural tourism destinations	Rural areas of Cluj County; N => 174	Quantitative Research - Surveys
Li and Cao (2022)	To investigate and analyze tourism consumer behavior using various methodologies, as well as to support tourism businesses in understanding	Four prefectures in southern Xinjiang; N => 500 (including 250 on Mafengwo, 110 on Qunar,	Qualitative Research - Online Travel Notes

	tourist behavior, and preferences	90 on Baidu Travel, and 40 on Ctrip); Travel Notes on Websites (Ctrip, Mafengwo, Baidu Travel, and Qunar)	
Prayag et al. (2022)	To identify the Gen Z attitudes and environmental behaviors, and compare them to the other generations	Christchurch Airpot in New Zealand; N => 615	Quantitative Research - Surveys
Rodrigues et al. (2023)	To propose a novel conceptual model based on tourism destinations' image relationship with tourists' visit intentions and also on Verma's tourism destination brand equity concept	N => 8	Qualitative Research - Focus group
Tănase et al. (2023)	To identify relationships between Gen Z and rural tourism by surveying Romanian students	Romanian University; N => 323 (280 Gen Z respondents)	Quantitative Research - Surveys
Wei and Zhang (2023)	To understand authentic experience, experience quality, tourist satisfaction, environmentally responsible behavior, and destination loyalty.	Nanjing Quarry Park; N => 459	Qualitative Research - Questionnaire
Tănase et al. (2024)	To analyse the tourists' preferences when choosing a rural destination.	North-West region of Romania; N => 563	Quantitative Research - Surveys

Table 2 - Empirical Studies

3. Conceptual Model

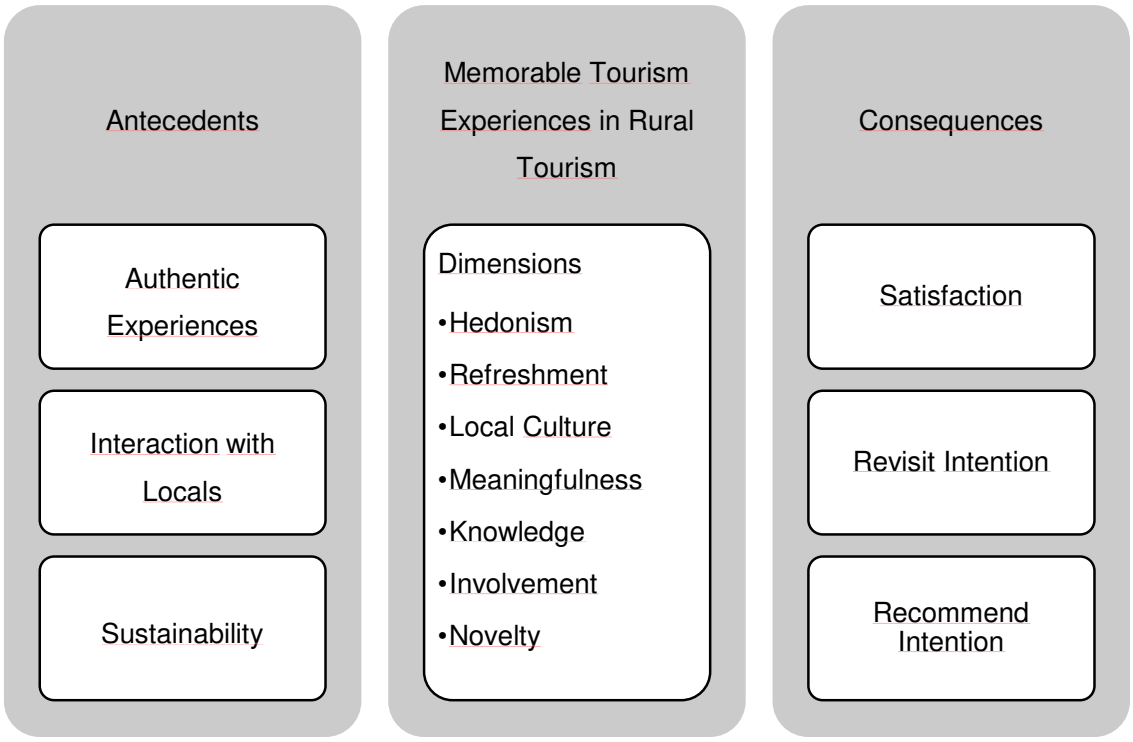


Figure 1 - Conceptual Model

The conceptual model above provides a comprehensive framework to help better understand the antecedents and consequences of memorable tourism experiences in rural tourism. This model highlights which main antecedents influence these experiences and what outcomes they may have on the tourist. The ultimate goal is to identify how these elements shape tourists' perceptions, emotions, and behaviours in order to create lasting positive impressions that can influence future tourism behaviour.

First, the three main antecedents identified in this model contribute to a memorable experience in this setting. More specifically, authentic experiences help moderate a positive relationship between emotional connections and the memorability of the experience by allowing tourists to feel connected with the destination's culture. The interaction with locals provides a more in-depth insight into the culture, traditions and daily life of the destination, allowing tourists to connect on a deeper level with the region by encouraging them to engage directly with the people. Lastly, sustainability will ensure that the destination remains intact so that future tourists can also have memorable experiences in this region.

The concept of memorable tourism experiences, which is important to the model because it is the ultimate goal for tourists, is supported by seven key dimensions that assist in transforming this type of tourism into a memorable experience. These dimensions will also influence how tourists perceive their trip and determine whether or not it leaves a lasting positive impression.

Finally, the consequences demonstrate the outcomes that these experiences will have on the tourists, as well as how a higher level of motivation and involvement is most likely to be positively associated with creating memorable experiences. Following this, the tourists will evaluate how these experiences impact their perception of the event, level of enjoyment, and likelihood to return and/or refer others.

In conclusion, this conceptual model demonstrates how the relation between the antecedents and the key dimension of memorable experiences can create the right conditions for tourists to have meaningful and impactful experiences in this type of tourism. In the end, this model emphasises how rural tourism may produce lasting memories that are favourable to both travellers and destinations.

Hypotheses

With the conceptual model in mind, this study proposes a set of hypotheses that examine the relationships between the three main components of this research (antecedents, memorable tourism experiences, and consequences) within the context of rural tourism among Generation Z. The hypotheses are grounded in the literature review.

Firstly, the antecedents of memorable experiences are examined. Previous research emphasises the importance of authenticity in creating meaningful tourism interactions, as tourists value opportunities to engage with genuine cultural traditions and daily practices of local communities (Wang, 1999; Chandralal and Valenzuela, 2015). Similarly, interaction with locals has encouraged cultural immersion and enhanced the memorability of travel experiences, especially in rural destinations (Coelho and Gosling, 2018; Rodrigues et al., 2023). Additionally, sustainable practices, although sometimes overlooked in actual tourist behaviour, are gaining recognition as important for younger generations, who tend to be more environmentally conscious (Prayag et al., 2022; Chandralal and Valenzuela, 2015). Therefore, it is hypothesised that the three components of the antecedents (authentic experiences, interaction with locals, and sustainability) will all positively influence the likelihood of Generation Z perceiving their rural tourism experience as memorable.

H1: There is a positive relationship between the antecedent factors and Generation Z's perception of rural tourism as memorable.

The second hypothesis is based on the dimensions of memorable tourist experiences. According to research, several key factors that contribute to a memorable experience include hedonism, refreshment, engagement with local culture, meaningfulness, knowledge, involvement, and novelty (Kim and Ritchie, 2014). For example, pleasurable feelings and emotional enjoyment (hedonism) are strong predictors of memorable experiences (Malone et al, 2014), whereas refreshment reflects the escape from routine that is often associated with rural tourism. Additionally, opportunities to interact with local culture (Jiang et al., 2022) and

participate in meaningful activities (Chandralal and Valenzuela, 2015) are critical for creating lasting memories. Tourism-related knowledge helps with self-development and destination image (Sharma and Nayak, 2019), while involvement and novelty promote emotional engagement and uniqueness in the experience (Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Coelho and Gosling, 2018). As a result, this hypothesis proposes positive correlations between each of these seven dimensions and Generation Z's perception of rural tourism as memorable.

H2: There's a positive relationship between the dimensions of MTE and Generation Z's evaluation of rural tourism as a memorable experience.

Finally, research indicates that memorable experiences are strongly linked to positive behavioural outcomes such as satisfaction, loyalty, revisit intention, and word-of-mouth recommendations (Kim et al., 2010; Melon et al., 2021). Customer satisfaction is determined by comparing the tourism experience to expectations (Oliver, 1997), yet revisiting intention and recommendation reflect loyalty and the destination's perceived value (Chandralal and Valenzuela, 2013; Kim and Ritchie, 2014). As a result, the hypothesis suggests that memorable rural tourism experiences have a positive impact on Generation Z's satisfaction, intention to return, and willingness to recommend rural destinations to others.

H3: There's a positive relationship between memorable tourism experiences and Generation Z's consequences.

These hypotheses, applied together, provide a structural framework for empirically testing the factors that contribute to memorable rural tourism experiences for Generation Z, as well as the resulting behavioural outcomes. They also ensure alignment between the conceptual model and the survey design, which allows for a comprehensive understanding of how this generation perceives, experiences, and evaluates rural tourism.

4. Methodology

A survey is a quantitative research methodology that entails the systematic collection of data from a group of individuals, usually through questionnaires or structured interviews, to obtain information regarding attitudes, behaviours, experiences, or demographic characteristics relevant to a specific research objective. The survey was carried out anonymously, and all data gathered were for scientific purposes only, with no intention of commercial gain or profit. All participants in this questionnaire were between the ages of 18 and 30 and consented to participate in this study. Completing the study took approximately 5 minutes. The majority of the survey relies on a 5-point likelihood scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. This scale was used to gather subjective information regarding motivation, authenticity, memorability, and behavioural intention. These scales are commonly employed in research related to tourism and consumer behaviour as they effectively capture the intensity of attitudes and emotional reactions in a consistent and standardised way.

The structure of this survey was based on the MTE scales table shown above (Table 1), were it shows the three main components of the memorable tourism experiences: Antecedents, Memorable Tourism Experiences, and Consequences. Each one of these components has a subsection with other elements that help in designing and organising the questions. Firstly, the Antecedents can be divided into three sections: Authentic Experiences, Interaction with Locals, and Sustainability. These three sections assist in identifying the most important factors for tourists when choosing a rural destination. Afterwards, the component Memorable Tourism Experience is split into seven sections: Hedonism, Refreshment, Local Culture, Meaningfulness, Knowledge, Involvement, and Novelty. These sections will contribute to analysing how these rural tourism destinations can turn their experiences into memorable tourism experiences for the tourists. Lastly, the Consequences have three sections: Satisfaction, Revisit Intention, and Recommend Intention. These sections will help understand what feelings the tourists have after having their rural tourism experiences.

The questionnaire is divided into five sections. The first section briefly describes the questionnaire's purpose to investigate Generation Z's perceptions, motivations, and experiences with rural tourism. It emphasises the importance of authentic and memorable experiences, guarantees respondents' anonymity, and provides an estimate of the time required to complete the survey. The next section will gather background information about the respondents’ most recent tourism trip. It includes questions regarding the motivations for travel, key decision-making factors, the type of tourism and accommodation chosen, and their travel companions. This information will help provide context for the respondents’ overall tourism behaviour and preferences. The third section examines the factors that contribute to a memorable tourism experience. It investigates themes such as authenticity, interaction with locals, and environmental awareness. These variables act as potential triggers for increased

engagement and satisfaction during this trip. In the following section, respondents rate how memorable their most recent rural tourism experience was based on a range of factors, including emotional impact, novelty, cultural immersion, and personal growth. This section is based on well-established theories regarding memorable tourism experiences, aiming to assess the significance and distinctiveness of the trip. The fifth section assesses the outcomes of the tourist experience, emphasising overall satisfaction, the likelihood of returning to the destination, and the chance of recommending it to others. These factors evaluate the long-term impact of the experience and its perceived value. The last section collects essential demographic details, including gender, age, and country of origin. This information allows for data segmentation and enhances understanding of how various demographics influence the rural tourism experience. The data analysis includes descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and neural network analysis.

5. Results

5.1. Demographics

In this study, the sample consisted of 209 participants (see Table 3), with a significant majority of female respondents. Women comprised 66.03% (n = 138) of the sample, while men accounted for 30.62% (n = 64). Additionally, a smaller percentage of the respondents identified as non-binary/third gender (2.87%, n = 6), and one participant chose not to disclose their identity. Regarding age demographics, the predominant age group was between 23 and 26 years old, accounting for 40.67% (n = 85). Participants aged 18 to 22 represented 32.06% (n = 67), while the 27 to 30 age group made up 27.27% (n = 57). Overall, the sample primarily consists of young, female participants, which could offer valuable insights into topics particularly relevant to this group, such as educational transitions, early professional experiences, and lifestyle preferences.

Gender	Frequency (N)	Frequency (%)
Female	138	66.03%
Male	64	30.62%
Non-binary / third gender	6	2.87%
Prefer not to say	1	0.48%
Age	**Frequency (N)**	**Frequency (%)**
18-22	67	32.06%
23-26	85	40.67%
27-30	57	27.27%
Total Geral	209	100.00%

Table 3 – The Samples' Demographics

The respondents in this study came from 41 different countries, which demonstrates a significant international diversity in the sample (see Table 4). The majority of the respondents came from Portugal and the United Kingdom, with 33.49% (n = 70) and 24.88% (n = 52), respectively. 8 respondents came from the United States of America, which represents 3.83% of the total. India, Germany, and France followed with 7 participants (3.35% each). Spain, Italy, and Ireland each had 5 participants (2.39%). Australia and Belgium had 3 participants each (1.44%). Finally, the remaining 30 countries were divided between two and one participants (0.96% and 0.48%, respectively). With that in mind, it's important to state that although the participants come from various countries, the findings may reflect regional preferences from Portugal and the United Kingdom.

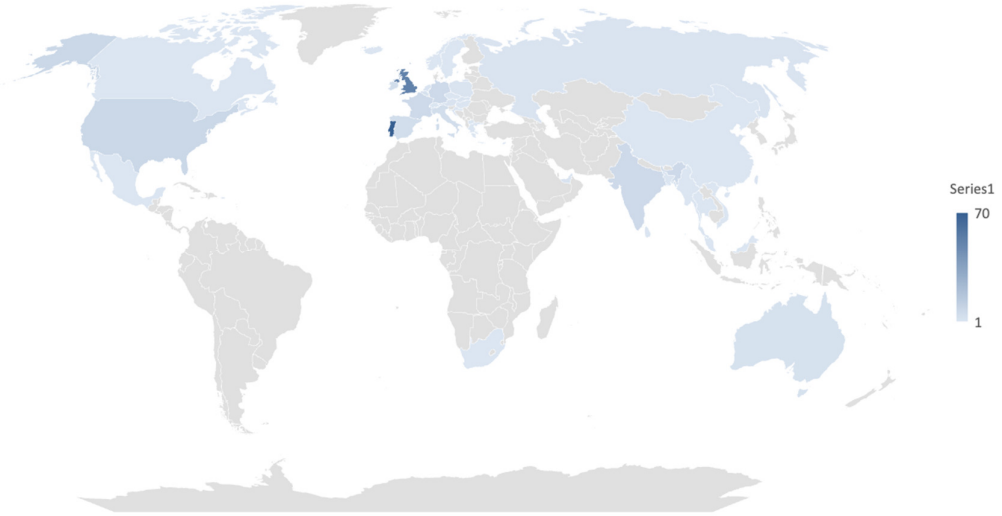
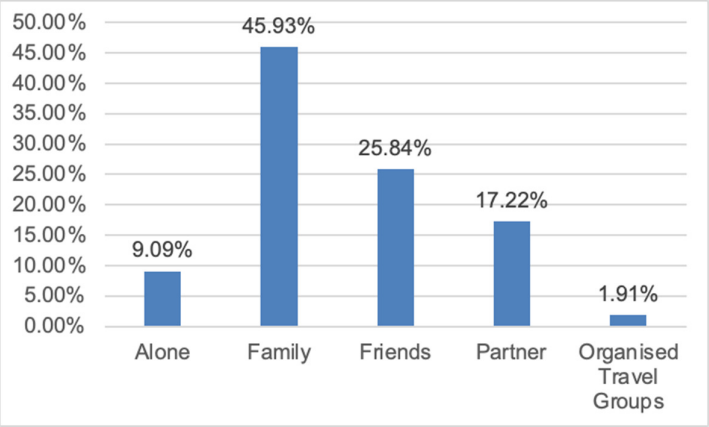


Table 4 - Country of Origin

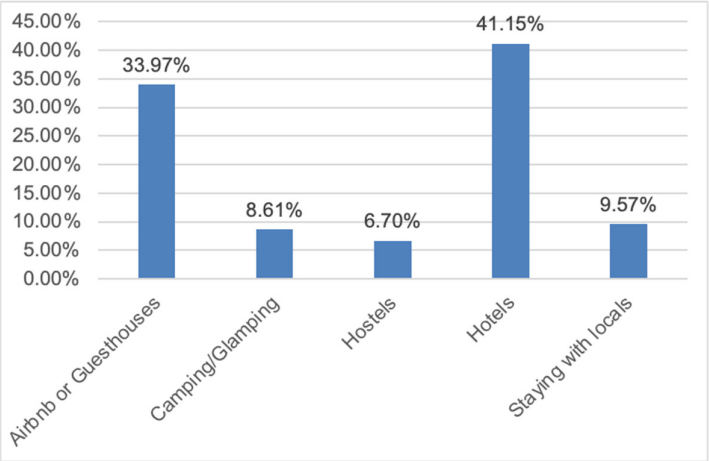
5.2 Previous Tourism Experiences

The following questions were collected in order to understand the choices made by the respondents before their rural tourism experience. Firstly, the respondents stated they mostly prefer to travel with family (45.93%, n = 96), friends (25.84%, n = 54), and a partner (17.22%, n = 36). The other 23 respondents prefer travelling alone (9.09%, n = 19) or with an organised travel group (1.91%, n = 4), as it's possible to see in Graph 1. Overall, these findings show how this generation prefers to travel with family, friends, and/or partner, meaning that shared experiences are what is most valued by this generation, particularly in tourism settings, as opposed to going through these experiences alone.



Graph 1 - Trip's Companion

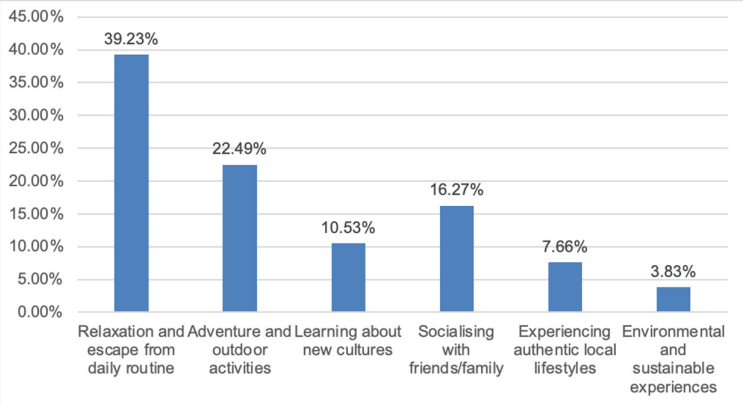
In the respondents' most recent rural tourism experience, the favoured accommodations were hotels and Airbnb or guest houses, with respective percentages of 41.15% and 33.97%. Furthermore, accommodations such as staying with locals, camping/glamping, and hostels were the least favoured by respondents, with comparable percentages of 9.57%, 8.61%, and 6.70%, respectively, as shown in Graph 2. This shows that even though this generation is seen as more sociable than the others, they tend to prefer options such as hotels and guesthouses where the interactions with locals are low and discard the option where this interaction is the highest, staying with locals, camping/glamping, and hostels.



Graph 2 - Accommodation Typology

For the motivations when choosing this type of tourism, the respondents chose "Relaxation and escape from daily routine" as their main motivation to engage in a rural tourism experience (39.23%). The other two most popular motivations were "Adventure and outdoor activities" and "Socialising with friends/family", with 22.49% and 16.27%, respectively. The last three motivations, although relevant, were considered the least important by respondents, with 10.53% regarding "Learning about new cultures," 7.66% relating to

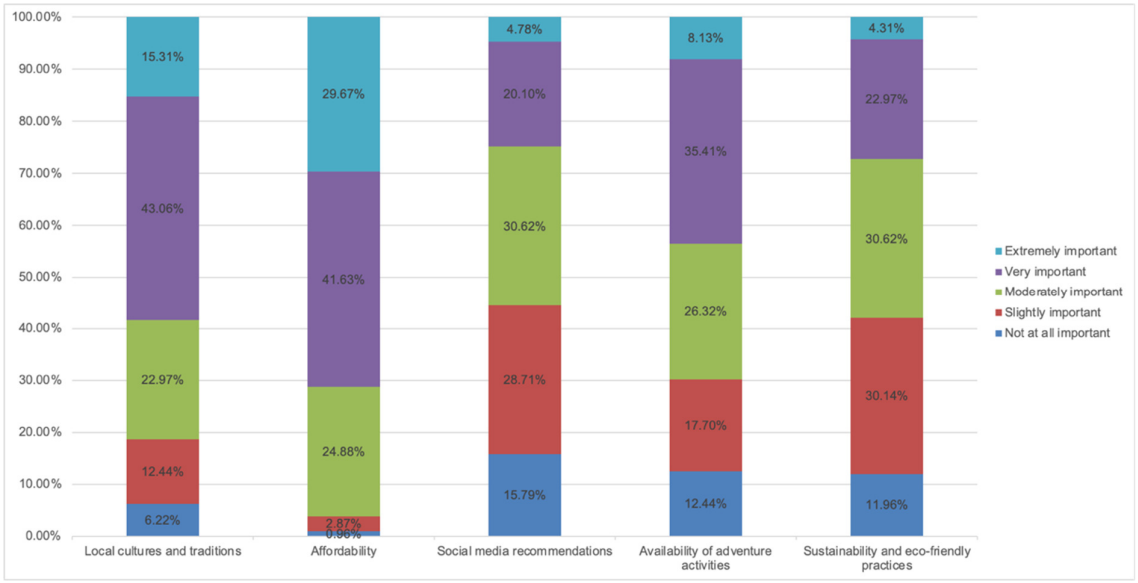
“Experiencing authentic local lifestyles,” and 3.83% for “Environmental and sustainable experiences,” as shown in Graph 3.



Graph 3 – Motivations

Regarding the factors that most impacted when choosing their rural destinations (Graph 4), there’s a clear distance between Local culture and traditions (43.06%), Affordability (41.63%), and Availability of adventure activities (35.41%) and the other factors, which can represent the idea that the great majority of the respondents give these three factors special attention when determining which destination to visit. Additionally, the factor Affordability also has the highest percentage for “extremely important” with 29.67%. The remaining two factors, Sustainability and eco-friendly practices and Social media recommendations, were seen by the respondents as “moderately important”, both with 30.62%, followed very closely by “slightly important”, with 30.14% and 28.71%, respectively. With this, it’s possible to understand that although this generation is viewed as more technology and environmentally driven, when it comes to factors that impact their decision, they give priority to other aspects.

Finally, as seen in Table 5, Anex II, the country most respondents travelled to in their last rural tourism experience is Portugal, with 39.23%. Followed by Italy with 7.18%, the United Kingdom and Spain with similar percentages of 6.70% and 6.22%, and lastly, France and the United States of America, with 4.78% and 4.31%, respectively. The remaining 31.58% of countries indicated by the respondents are spread out between Asia, Africa, and Oceania.



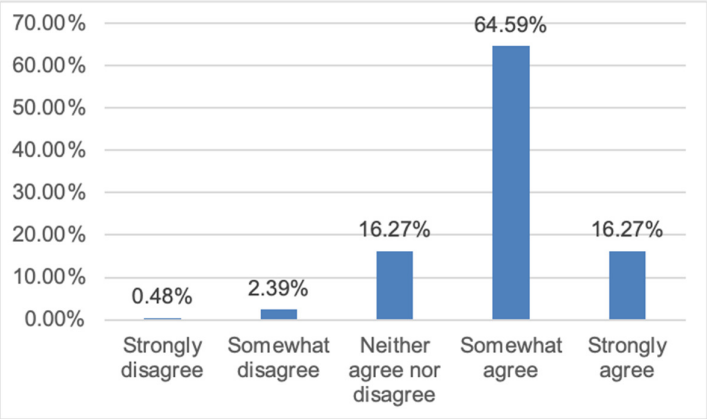
Graph 4 - Decisive Factors

5.3 Antecedents

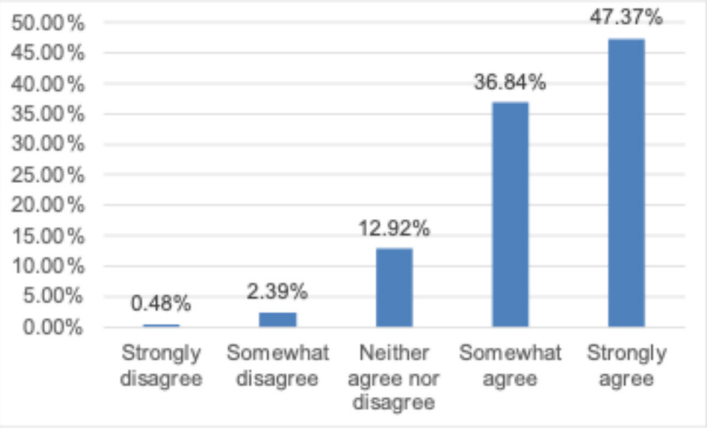
Regarding the following graphs, the ones displayed were selected based on the question that best represents the MTE scales, presented in the Literature Review above and explained in the Methodology.

On one hand, for the Authentic Experience, question 11 on the survey, “The treatments I received were truly authentic” (Graph 5), indicates that 64.59% of the respondents “somewhat agree” that their experience in the chosen rural tourism destination was truly authentic. The same happened regarding the Interaction with Locals seen in Graph 6, question 14, “The local people were friendly to me”, where it shows how 47.37% of the respondents “strongly agree” that the locals they interacted with were welcoming. On the other hand, the Graph 7 shows the Sustainability factor (question 16, “This experience allowed me to learn more about the significance of environmental protection”), where the respondents seemed more indifferent towards this factor, with the highest percentage being “somewhat agree” with 30.62% but followed closely by “neither agree nor disagree” with 29.67%.

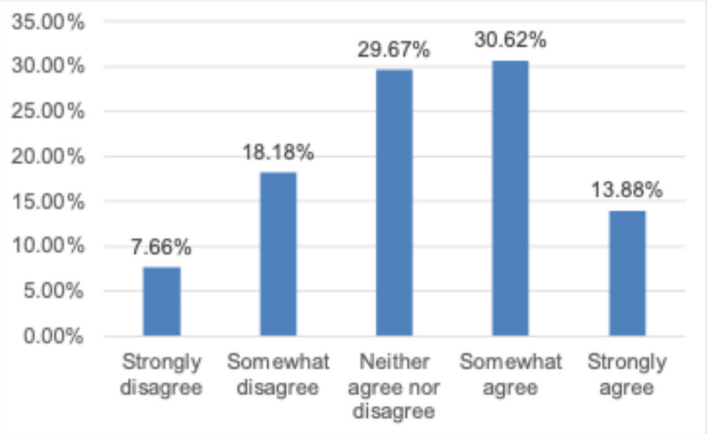
With this in mind, it’s safe to analyse that the respondents give more value to treatments they received and the people they interacted with in their destinations than to the sustainable aspects of their visit.



Graph 5 - "The treatment I received was truly authentic" (Q11)



Graph 6 - "The local people were friendly to me" (Q14)

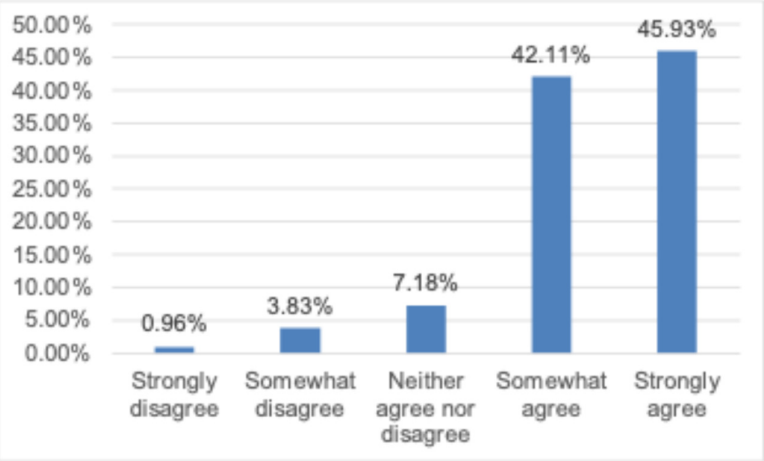


Graph 7 - "This experience allowed me to learn more about the significance of environmental protection" (Q16)

5.4 Memorable Tourism Experience

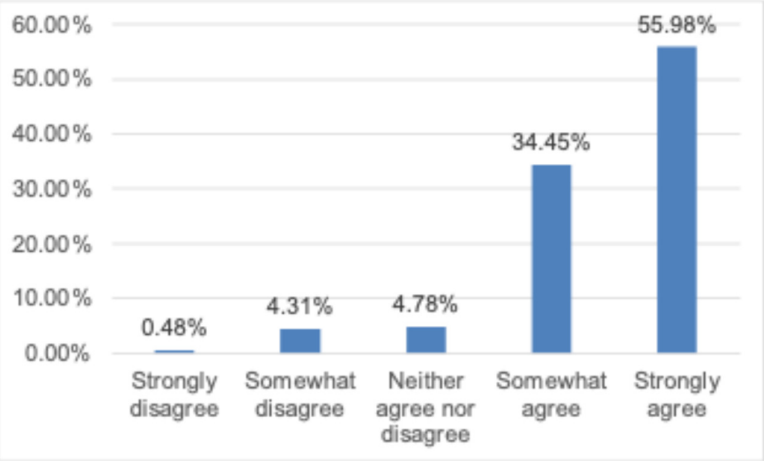
As shown in Graph 8, which represents the factor Hedonism in the MTE scales, 45.93% of the respondents “strongly agree” with question 17 of the survey, where the respondents were

asked if they agree with the statement “I was extremely pleased with this experience”. It’s important to highlight that 42.11% of the respondents “somewhat agree” with the statement, which can mean that although the respondents had a pleasant experience, something was lacking from it.



Graph 8 – “I was extremely pleased with this experience” (Q17)

As for the factor Refreshment, Graph 9 shows how important these rural tourism experiences are for the respondents to relax and disconnect from their daily routine. For that reason, 55.98% of the respondents “strongly agree” with the statement presented in question 24, “I felt free from my daily routine during this trip”.



Graph 9 – “I felt free from my daily routine during this trip" (Q24)

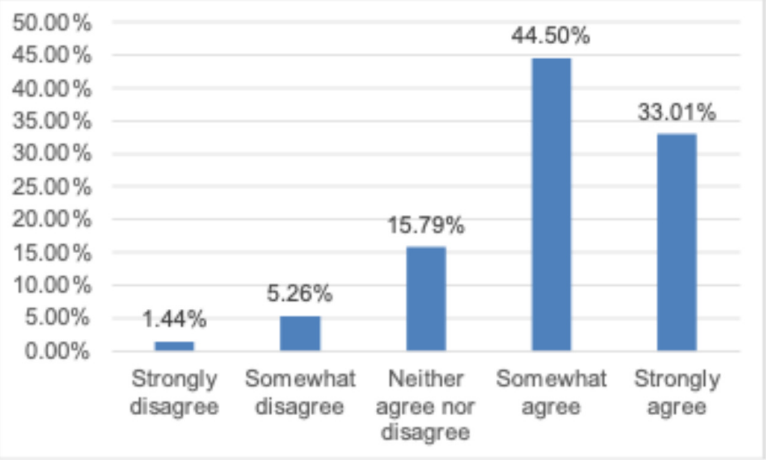
Regarding the remaining factors, Local Culture, Meaningfulness, Knowledge, Involvement, and Novelty, corresponding to Graphs 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14, respectively all of these lead us to the same conclusion, as seen in Graph 8 presented above, where although the respondents had a nice impression about their tourism destination, there was something about their experience that didn’t make them feel fully satisfied.

For instance, for Graphs 10 and 11, we can see 44.50% and 44.98% of the respondents “somewhat agree” with the respective statements “I had a good impression about the local culture” (question 28) and “I did something meaningful during this trip” (question 31).

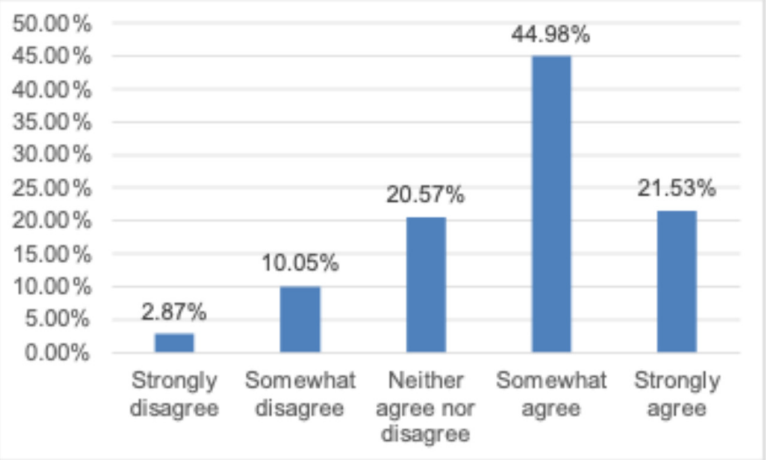
Additionally, Graph 12 displays question 33, “I gained a lot of information about the destination during the trip”, where it shows that 50.24% of the respondents left their visit with the feeling that they could have learned something more about the destination.

The Involvement factor, represented in Graph 13, where it shows question 39, “I was interested in the main activities of this tourism experience”, shows that 50.72% of the respondents left some activities to do in the destination.

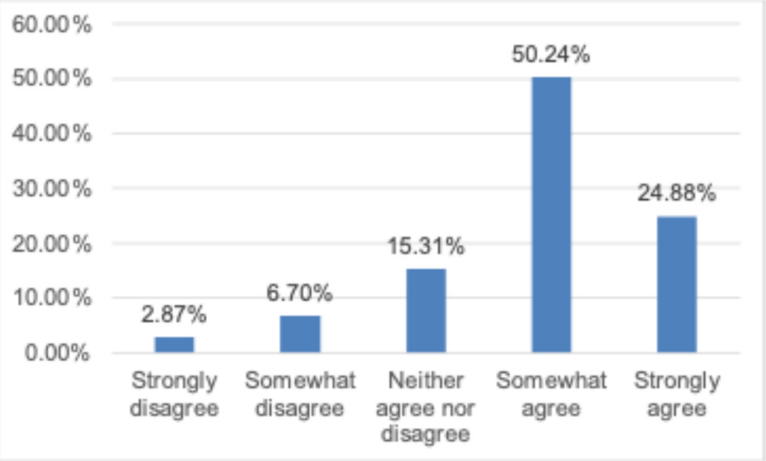
Lastly, in Graph 14, where it can be seen that question 43 “I experienced something new”, although it registers the highest percentage for “strongly agree” (34.45%), the percentage for “somewhat agree” is still very high, which can lead to the idea that although the destination has new experiences. Either the respondents didn’t partake in them, or those experiences weren’t new to them.



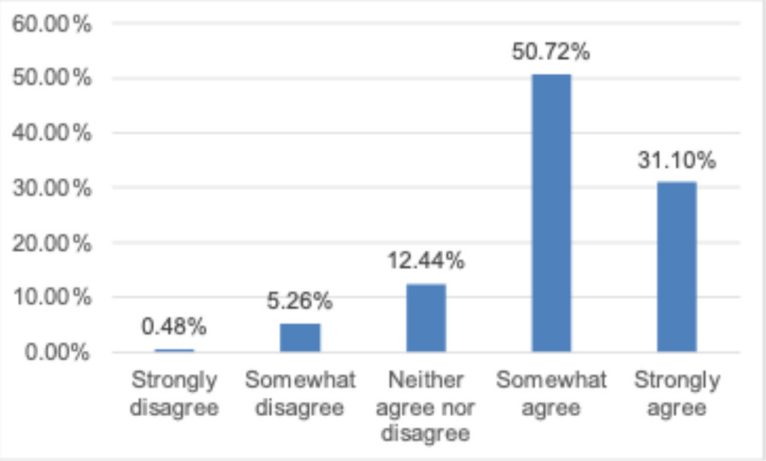
Graph 10 - "I had a good impression about the local culture" (Q28)



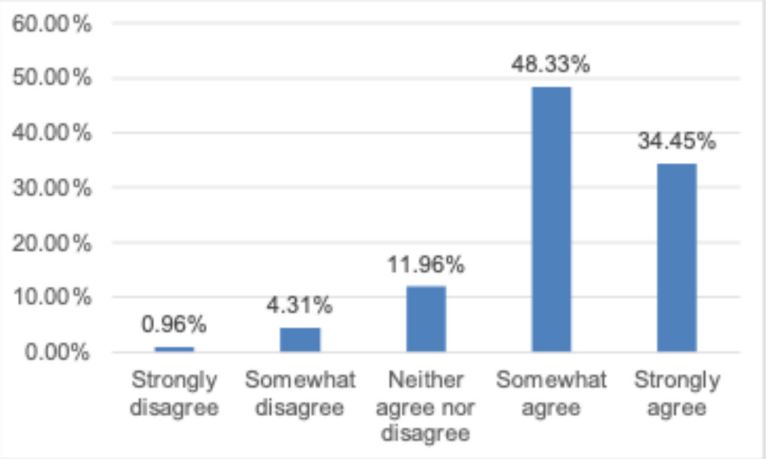
Graph 11 - "I did something meaningful during this trip" (Q31)



Graph 12 - "I gained a lot of information about the destination during the trip" (Q33)



Graph 13 - "I was interested in the main activities of this tourism experience" (Q39)

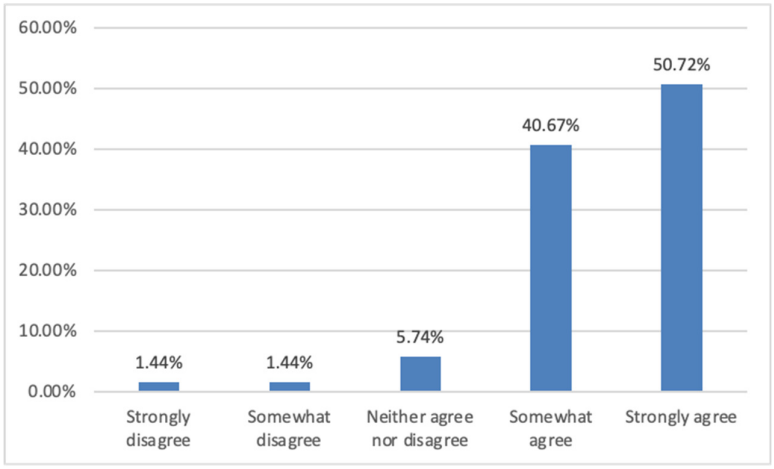


Graph 14 - "I experienced something new" (Q43)

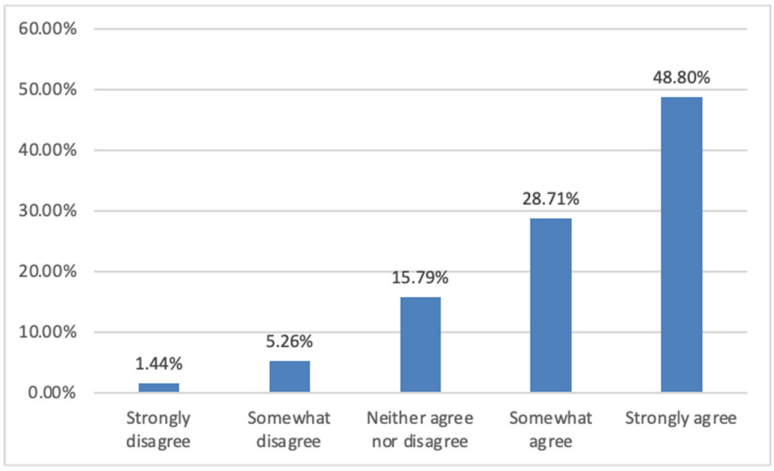
5.5 Consequences

Finally, when asked to evaluate their most recent rural tourism experience, the majority of respondents reported being very satisfied. As shown in the following graphs, when presented with statements related to their satisfaction with the experience, likelihood of revisiting, and likelihood of recommending, the majority of respondents selected “strongly agree.”

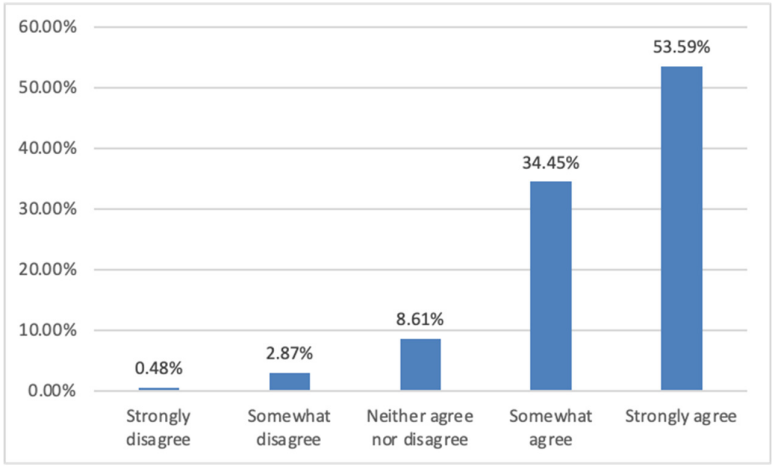
More specifically, in these three graphs, it can be seen that all have very similar percentages, 50.72% (Graph 15), 48.80% (Graph 16), and 53.59% (Graph 17). This discrepancy, between “strongly agree” and the other 4 parameters, leads to the idea that the rural tourism destinations left a good impression on the respondents, which leads them to leave these experiences with a good, memorable tourism experience.



Graph 15 - "My general experience at the destination was satisfactory" (Q46)



Graph 16 - "I would like to like to visit this tourist destination again" (Q49)



Graph 17 - "I would recommend this place to my friends and family" (Q52)

5.6 Hypotheses

In order to test the hypotheses, methods such as a correlation analysis and a neural network analysis were used. For Hypothesis 1, the analysis reveals a positive relationship between the antecedent factors; however, the relation that has the highest value is between the authentic experiences and the interaction with locals (r = 0.318), as seen in Graph 18. This result supports the idea that for Generation Z, the more authentic the experience is, the greater the perception of friendliness among local people. As a result, Hypothesis 1 is validated, emphasising how crucial antecedent factors are in influencing Generation Z's memorable rural tourism experiences.

		AE1 Q11 – The treatments I received were truly authentic	IWL1 Q14 – The local people were friendly to me	S2 Q16 – This experience allowed me to learn more about the significance of environmental protection
AE1 Q11 – The treatments I received were truly authentic	Pearson Correlation	1	.318**	.120
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	.085
	N	209	209	209
IWL1 Q14 – The local people were friendly to me	Pearson Correlation	.318**	1	.095
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		.171
	N	209	209	209
S2 Q16 – This experience allowed me to learn more about the significance of environmental protection	Pearson Correlation	.120	.095	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.085	.171	
	N	209	209	209

Graph 18 - Correlation analysis of Antecedent Factors

Concerning Hypothesis 2, the correlation analysis (Graph 19) revealed multiple positive associations among the MTE dimensions, with particular emphasis on the Local Culture dimension, as it presents the strongest connection to the other dimensions. In this analysis, it's shown that Knowledge and Meaningfulness have the strongest relation (r =

0.484), followed closely by Local Culture and Hedonism (r = 0.472). The relationship between Hedonism and Refreshment, although it is not as strong as the others, is also significant (r = 0.404).

The other MTE dimensions have a moderate relation with each other, which can translate into the idea that they can influence the weight that each dimension carries, but it will not be as strong as the dimension mentioned above.

Given that all correlations are positive, it can be concluded that a successful, memorable tourism experience for Generation Z involves a combination of all these MTE dimensions; hence, it can be concluded that Hypothesis 2 is valid.

		H1 Q17 - I was extremely pleased with this experience	R3 Q24 - I felt free from my daily routine during this trip	LC2 Q28 - I had a good impression about the local culture	M2 Q31 - I did something meaningful during the trip	K1 Q33 - I gained a lot of information about the destination during the trip	I4 Q39 - I was interested in the main activities of this tourism experience
H1 Q17 - I was extremely pleased with this experience	Pearson Correlation	1	.404**	.472**	.318**	.219**	.258**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001	.001	<.001
	N	209	209	209	209	209	209
R3 Q24 - I felt free from my daily routine during this trip	Pearson Correlation	.404**	1	.331**	.200**	.221**	.324**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	.004	.001	<.001
	N	209	209	209	209	209	209
LC2 Q28 - I had a good impression about the local culture	Pearson Correlation	.472**	.331**	1	.254**	.323**	.367**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	209	209	209	209	209	209
M2 Q31 - I did something meaningful during the trip	Pearson Correlation	.318**	.200**	.254**	1	.484**	.288**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.004	<.001		<.001	<.001
	N	209	209	209	209	209	209
K1 Q33 - I gained a lot of information about the destination during the trip	Pearson Correlation	.219**	.221**	.323**	.484**	1	.289**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001	<.001	<.001		<.001
	N	209	209	209	209	209	209
I4 Q39 - I was interested in the main activities of this tourism experience	Pearson Correlation	.258**	.324**	.367**	.288**	.289**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	209	209	209	209	209	209

Graph 19 - Correlation analysis of MTE Dimensions

Finally, a Multilayer Perceptron (MLP) neural network was used to analyse Hypothesis 3. The dependent variable was the consequences of memorable experiences, and the MTE dimensions (Hedonism, Refreshment, Local Culture, Meaningfulness, Knowledge, Involvement, and Novelty) were entered as covariates.

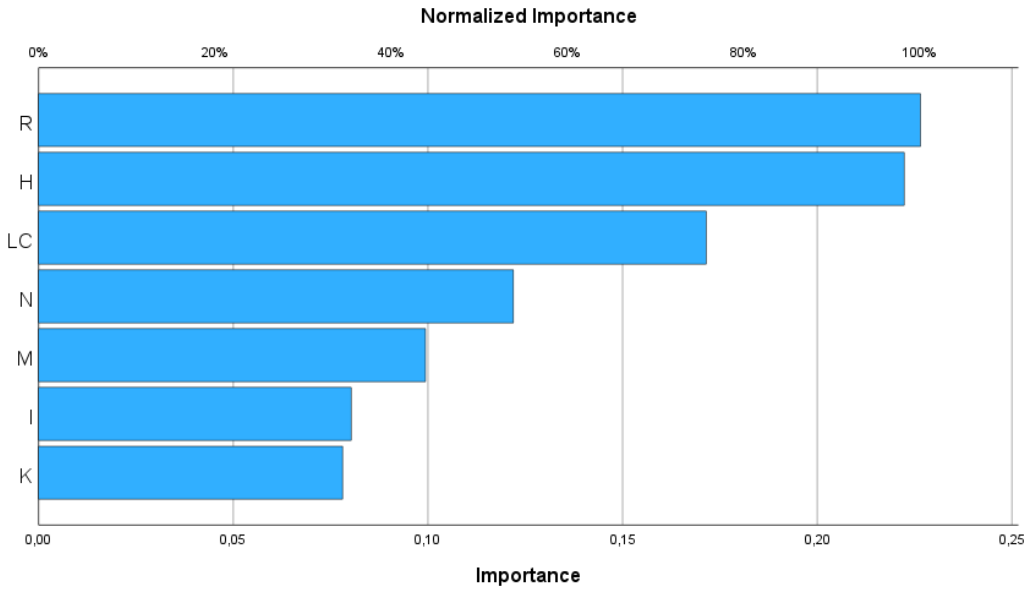
To ensure that the performance was verified on separate data, the data was divided into 71.8% training cases and 28.2% testing cases for MLP, and the structure consisted of an output layer with the dependent variables, a hidden layer, and an input layer with three predictors.

Furthermore, the analysis of the variable importance showed that Hedonism (importance = 0.22; normalised importance = 98.2%) and Refreshment (importance = 0.226; normalised importance = 100%) were the two most significant predictors of consequences. As noted in Table 5, Local Culture played a moderate role in the prediction (importance = 0.171; normalised importance = 75.7%), while the other dimensions of MTE show lower levels of importance.

Independent Variable Importance		
	Importance	**Normalized Importance**
Hedonism	0.222	98.2%
Refreshment	0.226	100.0%
Local Culture	0.171	75.7%
Meaningfulness	0.099	43.9%
Knowledge	0.078	34.5%
Involvement	0.080	35.4%
Novelty	0.122	53.9%

Table 5 - Independent Variable Importance

The analysis indicates that among the various dimensions influencing Generation Z's experiences in rural tourism, Relaxation and Hedonism are the most significant predictors of memorable outcomes. Specifically, Relaxation has an importance score of 0.226 (100% normalised), and Hedonism scores 0.222 (98.2% normalised), making them the primary drivers. Additionally, Local Culture emerges as an important factor, with an importance score of 0.171 (75.7% normalised), highlighting that engaging with local culture is relevant for this generation, alongside relaxing and fun activities. The importance of the other dimensions is as follows: Novelty (importance = 0.122; normalised importance = 53.9%), Meaningfulness (importance = 0.099; normalised importance = 43.9%), Involvement (importance = 0.080; normalised importance = 35.4%), and Knowledge (importance = 0.078; normalised importance = 34.5%), play a minor role in shaping these experiences.



Graph 20 - Importance Graph

Lastly, these findings highlight how all of these dimensions, although the three mentioned above play a more crucial role, are essential in determining the effects of Generation Z on rural tourism. The importance of creating rural tourism experiences that incorporate all three dimensions is emphasised by the fact that these three dimensions together emerge as the most significant predictors, confirming Hypothesis 3.

6. Conclusion

The role of Generation Z in rural tourism has been growing day by day, so tourism enterprises must consider their motivations and preferences in order to attract this age group. Additionally, because rural tourism is undoubtedly growing around the world, this study presents a perspective on how these two can interact with each other in order to create a memorable tourism experience for these tourists. This relationship is based on the quest of this generation to find tourism experiences that give them tranquillity and calmness, but at the same time allow them to explore new places and their cultures. Furthermore, rural tourism is also becoming increasingly more desirable for Generation Z tourists due to the characteristics it possesses, the experiences it offers, and the growing boost it provides to the destinations' sustainability.

In light of the research questions raised in the introduction, the findings contribute with clearer answers and with a better understanding of Generation Z's perception of rural tourism. Regarding the first question, the results show that the main motivations for Generation Z are the need to relax and escape from their daily routine, to partake in outdoor activities, and to socially interact with family and friends. Interaction with the locals and the desire for an authentic experience also play a crucial role, while sustainability appears as a less relevant determining factor in the rural tourism context. Considering the factors that influence their decision-making, on one hand, the analysis shows that the three main factors when choosing a destination are local culture and traditions, affordability, and the availability of adventure activities. On the other hand, factors such as social media recommendations and eco-friendly practices were identified as secondary influences. This leads to the difference between Generation Z's proclaimed environmental awareness and their actual behaviour in destination selection.

In order to better understand the key factors that help turn a rural tourism experience into a memorable one for Generation Z, the findings revealed that a memorable tourism experience is strongly shaped by hedonism (pleasure and enjoyment), refreshment (escape from the daily routine), and local culture (engaging in local and traditional activities), which highlights how Generation Z values rural tourism experiences that merge enjoyment, relaxation, and cultural immersion. Finally, the results helped understand the impact that these experiences will have on satisfaction, loyalty, and willingness to recommend by confirming that refreshment and hedonism, and with the help of local culture, will strongly impact these consequences positively among Generation Z.

To help better understand this relation, this study was supported by a questionnaire, where the respondents had to answer the questions based on their last rural tourism experience. This aimed to better understand what value these memorable experiences brought to the respondents, as was studied by Pine and Gilmore (1998), and what changes

these tourism enterprises can adopt in order to become more appealing to this generation and to differentiate themselves from their competitors, as defended by Hanna et al. (2018). The findings of this study support the idea that the main motivations of this generation are trying to find an escape from their daily routine and immerse themselves physically and mentally in their tourism experiences. Additionally, a lot of studies support the idea that this generation is very sociable, so them give preference to accommodations where they have a closer interaction with locals and other travellers; however, in the results of the survey, it's possible to see that the preferred types of accommodations were the options where the interaction with the locals was the lowest.

As identified in the literature review, Generation Z is less involved in trip planning when travelling with their parents than when travelling with friends. However, the findings of this study reveal a gap between the literature and actual behaviours; even though this generation is frequently described as highly technology-driven, as shown in the study by Aina et al. (2021), social media recommendations had a very low importance in their decision-making process when selecting a rural tourism destination. Instead, this generation's most important factors were affordability and access to local culture and traditions, which can imply that in the context of rural tourism, Generation Z prioritises cultural immersion over digital influence.

With the results from the survey conducted, it's possible to understand that factors like interaction with locals and the desire for authentic experiences are the most important factors the tourists take into consideration when choosing their rural tourism destination, with sustainability being an important, but not determining choosing factor. This part of the survey supported the idea presented in the literature review, where a study by Parzonko et al. (2021), presented above, shows that despite this generation claiming they have a strong environmental belief, they engage in fewer environmental practices in their tourism experiences.

The hypotheses were tested using both correlation analysis and a neural network model. Hypothesis 1 ("*There is a positive relationship between the antecedent factors and Generation Z's perception of rural tourism as memorable"*) was confirmed, as results showed a strong positive relationship between the antecedent factors and the MTE dimensions. For Hypothesis 2 ("*There's a positive relationship between the dimensions of MTE and Generation Z's evaluation of rural tourism as a memorable experience"*), analysis revealed significant positive associations, most prominently between Knowledge and Meaningfulness, and Hedonism and Local Culture, demonstrating how these pairs mutually reinforce one another, thus validating the hypothesis. Hypothesis 3 ("*There's a positive relationship between memorable tourism experiences and Generation Z's consequences"*) was also validated by the neural network model, which identified hedonism and refreshment as the strongest

predictors of positive post-visit behaviour among Generation Z, confirming the influential role of these MTE dimensions.

In this study, it was possible to understand that even though rural tourism enterprises offer various elements that help in creating memorable tourism experiences for these tourists, there are still some aspects that can be improved in order to fully meet this generation's expectations. For instance, in the survey, it can be seen that the authenticity of the experience raised some questions in the respondents of the study, alongside the lack of information given to them about the destination and the meaningfulness of those same experiences.

With the results of this survey, it's also possible to highlight the importance of aspects such as emotional engagement, meaningful activities, and knowledge acquisition as critical dimensions in order to create positive emotions towards the destination, which can turn into favourable behaviours, such as customer loyalty and/or recommendations.

With this in mind, we can see how different Generation Z behaviours are compared to the previous studies made about this generation. This difference may indicate that previous studies are outdated, which could mean that this generation has evolved and, as a result, its needs have changed, along with what it is looking for when it decides to participate in this type of tourism.

It is in crucial aspects of their behaviour, such as their constant connection to social media and other technologies. In this study, it's possible to see how it's believed that this generation gives special attention to what they see on social media; however, comparing it to their actual behaviour, they tend to deviate from what studies show.

Ultimately, the goal of this study was to better understand the new demands that originate from this new generation and what can be done by the destinations in order to create an authentic and memorable tourism experience. This study will, hopefully, assist rural tourism destinations in comprehending the challenges and opportunities brought by this generation, allowing them to create more targeted experiences that align with their expectations and values. This will also allow rural tourism destinations to develop strategies in order to differentiate themselves, making them more competitive.

7. Limitations and Recommendations

Although this study provides some insights into Generation Z's perceptions, motivations, and experiences in rural tourism, it is important to recognise several limitations that may affect how the findings are interpreted and their wider relevance. Firstly, future studies could explore these behaviours among other generations, such as Millennials or Generation X, in order to gain a better understanding and compare the actions of different age groups in rural tourism behaviour.

Furthermore, future research might avoid focusing on a single point in time and instead adopt a more longitudinal perspective to understand how the attitudes or behaviours of this generation towards rural tourism change over time. As Generation Z progresses in their values, life stages, and consumption habits, future research could take a longitudinal approach to examine how their attitudes and behaviours regarding rural tourism may change over time. Additionally, while this study opted for a quantitative survey, future studies could consider adopting a more qualitative approach, such as focus groups or interviews, to gain a deeper and more detailed understanding of respondents' feelings and motivations regarding these authentic and memorable experiences.

Lastly, after analysing the results of the survey, it can be seen that these rural tourism destinations are meeting baseline expectations. Based on this idea, it's important that as rural tourism starts to grow in popularity, these destinations must innovate and develop distinctive and engaging experiences that resonate with Generation Z's need for authenticity and memorable experiences. Embracing these changes will allow this tourism sector to become more competitive in this very dynamic field.

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Annexes

Anex A - Survey

Questionnaire: Exploring Generation Z's Perceptions and Motivations in Rural Tourism

This study is part of a Master's thesis for the Tourism and Hospitality Management course at ISCTE Business School.

It seeks to investigate Generation Z's perceptions, motivations, and experiences when travelling to rural areas, with a particular emphasis on the value of authenticity and memorability. Rural tourism refers to travel experiences in countryside or village areas, where visitors can enjoy nature, local traditions, culture, and a slower pace of life, often involving authentic community-based experiences.

Please reflect on your most recent rural tourism experience and rate various aspects of your trip. Your responses will provide us with valuable insights into what makes rural tourism appealing, memorable, and meaningful to young travellers like you. Your participation will remain completely anonymous and will only be used for research purposes.

The survey should take about 5 minutes to complete. There are no right or wrong answers; simply express your honest opinions based on your experiences.

Thank you for completing this survey about rural tourism. We appreciate your participation. Let's get started!

BY CHOOSING "I understand and agree to participate in this study voluntarily and knowingly", YOU WILL BE GIVING YOUR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

- ○ I understand and agree to participate in this study voluntarily and knowingly

Previous Tourism Experiences

For the following questions, please think about your most recent tourism experience. Select the option that best reflects your experience and feelings during that trip. Your honest responses will help us better understand perceptions and motivations in rural tourism.

Have you participated in a rural tourism experience in the last 2 years?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Where did your last tourism experience take place?

Who did you travel with?

Alone

Family

Friends

Partner

Organised Travel Groups

What type of accommodation did you stay in during your trip?

- ○ Hotels
- ○ Hostels
- ○ Airbnb or Guesthouses
- ○ Camping/Glamping
- ○ Staying with locals

What were the main motivations for your previous trip?

Relaxation and escape from daily routine

Adventure and outdoor activities

Learning about new cultures

Socializing with friends/family

Experiencing authentic local lifestyles

Environmental and sustainable experiences

Thinking about your most recent trip, how important are the following factors while choosing a travel destination

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Local cultures and traditions	○	○	○	○	○
Affordability	○	○	○	○	○
Social media recommendations	○	○	○	○	○
Availability of adventure activities	○	○	○	○	○
Sustainability and eco-friendly practices	○	○	○	○	○

Antecedents

For the following questions, please choose the option that best applies in each case

The treatments I received were truly authentic

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

I had an authentic cuisine experience

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

My experience here is unpretentious

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

The local people were friendly to me

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

This experience increased my recognition of environmental protection

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

This experience allowed me to learn more about the significance of environmental protection

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

Memorable Tourism Experiences

I was extremely pleased with this experience

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

I was thrilled about having a new experience

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

I was indulged in activities during the trip

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

I really enjoyed this tourism experience

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

I had an exciting experience

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

I felt relaxed after this experience

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

I relieved stress during my trip

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

I felt free from my daily routine during this trip

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

I had a refreshing experience

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

I felt better after my trip

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

I had an experience filled with local characteristics

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

I had a good impression about the local culture

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

I closely experienced the local culture

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

I had an amazing sense of self-development

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

I did something meaningful during the trip

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

I learned about myself during the trip

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

I gained a lot of information about the destination during the trip

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

I gained new skills from this trip

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

I experience new cultures during my trip

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

I participated in activities that I have been interested in

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

I enjoyed being involved in physical activities that I have been interested in

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

I visited a place where I really wanted to go

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

I was interested in the main activities of this tourism experience

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

This place was different from my previous experiences

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

This experience was different from my previous experiences

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

It was a unique experience

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

I experienced something new

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

I had a once-in-a-lifetime experience

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

Consequences

I felt really happy

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

My general experience at the destination was satisfactory

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

I really enjoyed the experience at the destination

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

I felt good about my decision to visit the destination

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

I would like to visit this tourist destination again

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

If I had to decide again, I would choose the same destination

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

I would go back to this destination in the future

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

I would recommend this place to my friends and family

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

I would say positive things about this place

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

I would encourage my friends and family to visit this place

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

Demographic Variables

Gender

- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Non-binary / third gender
- ○ Prefer not to say

Age

- ○ 18 - 22
- ○ 23 - 26
- ○ 27 - 30

Country

Anex B – Table of Places of the last rural tourism

Where was the last exprience?	Frequency (N)	Frequency (%)
Albania	1	0.48%
Australia	1	0.48%
Austria	2	0.96%
Belgium	4	1.91%
Canada	2	0.96%
Cape town	1	0.48%
Croatia	2	0.96%
Czechia	2	0.96%
Ecuador	1	0.48%
Egypt	2	0.96%
Finland	1	0.48%
France	10	4.78%
Germany	4	1.91%
Greece	1	0.48%
Iceland	1	0.48%
India	6	2.87%
Ireland	1	0.48%
Italy	15	7.18%
Japan	4	1.91%
Kenya	1	0.48%
Malta	1	0.48%
Mexico	1	0.48%
Moldova	1	0.48%
Morocco	1	0.48%
Netherlands	1	0.48%
Norway	1	0.48%
Poland	3	1.44%
Portugal	82	39.23%
Saudi Arabia	1	0.48%
Scotland	1	0.48%
Slovenia	1	0.48%
South Africa	1	0.48%
Spain	13	6.22%
Sri lanka	1	0.48%
Sweden	2	0.96%
Switzerland	2	0.96%
Thailand	3	1.44%
Tunisia	2	0.96%
Turkey	2	0.96%
United Kingdom	14	6.70%
United States of America	9	4.31%
Vietnam	1	0.48%
Wales	2	0.96%
Zambia	1	0.48%
Total Geral	**209**	**100.00%**

Table 6 - Places where the last rural tourism experience took place