



**Promoting Entrepreneurship for Tourism Industry
Competitiveness in The OIC Countries**

This report has been commissioned by the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC) Coordination Office to a team led by Ziad Alrawadieh, Professor of Tourism Management in the School of Archaeology and Tourism at University of Jordan.

The research team is grateful to all the interviewees for their contribution to this study in relation to the case studies by allocating their valuable time in imparting their expert opinions.

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List of Abbreviations

OIC	Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
COMCEC	Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation
WTTC	World Travel & Tourism Council
GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
KOSGEB	Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization
SESRIC	The Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
KOSGEB	Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization
IDB	Islamic Development Bank
GIEPA	Gambia Investment & Export Promotion Agency
MOTIE	Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment (Gambia)
GCCI	Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry
AmCham	The American Chamber of Commerce
Tourism-CaB	Tourism Capacity Building
ToT	Training of Trainers
ITC	Islamic Tourism Centre
UNCTAD	The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
TUIK	Turkish Statistical Institute
TEA	Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity
UNWTO	World Tourism Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic product
MICE	Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Exhibitions
ISSF	Innovative Startups and SMEs Fund
AWETE	Arab Women Empowerment in Technology and Entrepreneurship Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VR	Virtual Reality
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
EIS	Enterprise Investment Scheme
SEIS	Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme
SITR	Social Investment Tax Relief
VCT	Venture Capital Trust
EEA	Entrepreneurial Employee Activity
ATIC	Australian Tourism Industry Council

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Entrepreneurship in general and tourism entrepreneurship in particular in OIC member countries is a significant driver of economic growth and a crucial promoter of social change. Therefore, understanding the characteristics of successful entrepreneurship in these countries is of paramount importance for policymakers, investors, and entrepreneurs themselves to formulate, organize, and manage business ventures. SMEs constitute the majority of businesses worldwide in OIC member countries and play a crucial role in national economic development by creating job opportunities. Moreover, OIC Member States enjoy a considerably young population of 350.8 million youths, accounting for 18.5% of their total population and 29% of the world's total youth population as of 2022. This is also reflected in initiative oriented towards encouraging young people to engage in entrepreneurial activities such as the Jointoic Youth Strategy and the VIII Kazan OIC Youth Entrepreneurship Forum.

To promote entrepreneurship in OIC member countries, there is a wanting need to understand the nature, size, and volume of barriers and challenges hindering market entry and entrepreneurial journey as a whole. These challenges may vary among OIC member countries based on various factors including existing infrastructure, existing legislations, regulations, and policies, and the overall entrepreneurial climate. One key challenge is access to capital. Nations with more access to finance typically have a higher rate of entrepreneurship, thus leading to greater economic development. However, entrepreneurs in OIC member countries often suffer from a lack of financial capital in the market, which makes it difficult for them to enter new business ventures in the tourism and hospitality industry. The availability of funding for a new business is a major driver of tourism entrepreneurs in terms of supporting their service performance.

The tourism industry in OIC member countries has witnessed significant growth in recent years. Although the pandemic has impacted the industry, many OIC member countries have responded with immediate policies for tourism recovery in their planning and strategies. Moreover, a great proportion of tourism entrepreneurs' SMEs have been deeply impacted

since they have no crisis plans (Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries, 2022c).

Destinations require entrepreneurs and new business start-ups to serve their growing tourism market and create economic and social value. Furthermore, the tourism industry demands entrepreneurial endeavours that embrace innovations. In OIC countries, tourism has not received the desired market share in the global travel industry. While the role of tourism in regional integration is acknowledged, more focus on entrepreneurial activities can further stimulate growth in these countries. These activities are believed to improve the quality and competitiveness of tourism products and services (Organization of Islamic Cooperation, 2020). To propose appropriate strategies for tourism entrepreneurship, it is necessary to assess the drivers behind entrepreneurial action and challenges can hinder it.

While some OIC countries have achieved desired development in their tourism industry, others fall behind for due to several factors (Abdullah, 2019). For instance, while some OIC countries have successfully provided the necessary infrastructure and superstructure for tourism, others still struggle with issues such as a lack of adequate tourism infrastructure, planning, and institutions. These issues hinder tourism development and prevent the emergence of tourism entrepreneurs in these countries. Therefore, entrepreneurs are considered the backbone of the industry, and addressing the challenges they face is crucial to their success (Burbar & Shkukani, 2021).

To foster and develop the tourism industry in OIC member countries, planners should consider several challenges that tourism entrepreneurship faces. These include lacking or inadequate infrastructure, lack of finance, exiting policies, and international sanctions (Bagherifard et al., 2013). Creating opportunities for tourism entrepreneurs depends on solving these challenges in OIC destinations. In OIC countries, not only do locals participate in entrepreneurial activities in the tourism and hospitality industry, but also migrants contributing to the enhancement of local markets, and supply chains, diversifying the workforce, and regenerating the economy (Abebe, 2023). However, despite their desire to engage in these activities for various reasons, these may also face challenges when attempting to enter entrepreneurship facilities. These challenges might be legislative and administrative challenges, such as bureaucracy, complex procedures; market-related issues

including a lack of qualified human resources, an influential black market, market ambiguity and instability, high turnover rates, unfamiliarity with the market environment, and limited market growth; financial challenges such as limited access to financial resources and high tax rates; and socio-cultural challenges, such as the language barrier, and social insecurity (Alrawadieh et al., 2019).

The present report is based on a mixed-method approach drawing on three case study OIC member countries namely, Jordan, Türkiye and the Gambia. Using a sequential qualitative-quantitative research design, the current report presents findings drawn from a qualitative study based on 29 interviews, a quantitative data collected from 157 tourism entrepreneurs and tourism experts. Semi-structured interviews with tourism entrepreneurs and tourism experts were conducted. Informants were asked a number of questions with the aim of understanding entrepreneurship motives, challenges, success factors, as well as the role of government support. Based on an extensive review of tourism entrepreneurship literature as well as initial qualitative findings, a survey is designed to measure motives for, barriers to, and success factors of tourism entrepreneurship as well as perceptions of strategies and tools used by governments to encourage and support tourism entrepreneurship. The qualitative data were analysed using a thematic content analysis approach.

Findings suggest that tourism entrepreneurs in OIC member countries are typically driven by various motives for venturing in tourism and hospitality. These motives can either be *personal motives* or *contextual motives*. Personal motives are often shaped by both economic and social values such as the *desire to make a profit, desire to be own boss, seeking independence and self-reliance, desire to continue family legacy, exiting work experience in the field, family involvement in tourism, desire to live a fulfilling life, desire to contribute to the local economy, interest in the cultural benefits of tourism, and challenging social barriers*. Unsurprisingly, the economic benefits of venturing in tourism through generating income, achieving independence, and being own boss have been widely highlighted.

Along the personal motives, tourism entrepreneurs in OIC seem to be driven by various contextual motives including *high tourism demand and growth of the industry, support from the government, political and economic stability, encouraging business environment, lack of adequate service in the tourism industry, less entry barriers (know-how and initial capital),*

and existing supportive laws. In many OIC countries, tourism is flourishing and is likely to further grow in the coming decades. Tourism entrepreneurs involved in the study highlight the opportunity in the market as evidenced in the high tourism demand and growth in the industry as a crucial factor underlying their decision to venture in tourism. It is worth mentioning personal and contextual motives are intertwined in such that tourism entrepreneurs can be driven by several different factors, both personal and contextual, at the same time.

The study also identifies a range of barriers or challenges that tourism entrepreneurs are likely to navigate over different stages of their business. Findings show that *financial challenges, legislative barriers, infrastructure, market issues, and situational factors* are the key barriers hindering tourism entrepreneurship. In terms of financial challenges, tourism entrepreneurs mention several barriers including lack of initial capital, accessibility to loans, access to financing, high prices of energy/water bills, high rental prices, high operational costs, and economic instability. Not less significant than the financial challenges are the legislative barriers. High taxes, restrictive laws, outdated existing laws, unstable existing laws, vague legislative structure, lack of reliable data for investors, and bureaucracy appear to be prominent challenges. Infrastructure-related barriers were also highlighted by tourism entrepreneurs. Specifically, unreliable water and electricity supply, poor accessibility to beaches, and poor internet services were viewed as key barriers. High competition, shortage of trained and qualified human resources, fluctuation in tourist arrivals, seasonality, weak efforts to diversification of tourism offerings, finding a suitable location, and the industry being dominated by foreign/international businesses (e.g., foreign tour operators) were also mentioned as key barriers that are inherently associated with tourism and hospitality business. Some tourism entrepreneurs also highlight some situational factors such as crisis (e.g., Ebola and Covid-19), instability in the region (e.g., Middle East), and bias towards women (i.e., gender gap) as potential challenges with significant negative impacts on their tourism entrepreneurial activities.

The study also identifies trajectories that help tourism entrepreneurs navigate the above-mentioned challenges and the key factors that help entrepreneurs the most to survive. It has become evident that a favourable entrepreneurial ecosystem and entrepreneurial mindset were the core broad factors crucial to the survival of tourism businesses. Indicators

of a favourable entrepreneurial ecosystem include streamlined accessibility to finance, friendly tax policies, removing barriers to start-ups, friendly business policies, more incentives, governmental support, product development, aiming towards competitive advantage, and overall resilience of the tourism sector. The findings show that various factors with relevance to the entrepreneurial mindset are crucial to survival of tourism businesses. These include creativity, hiring the right people, focusing on customer satisfaction and loyalty, cost control and cutting costs, networking and political engagement, competing for quality services, persistence and patience, cutting personal spending and changing lifestyle, securing informal sources of initial income, past experience, and building and maintaining customer base.

One key objective of this report was to understand the role of the government in supporting tourism entrepreneurship. The findings show that tourism entrepreneurs are aware of the government's role in encouraging and supporting tourism entrepreneurship. They benefit from a wide range of resources made available by the government including tax reduction (specially to ventures in less developed regions), land allocation, and advisory support. However, despite existing support, tourism entrepreneurs and tourism experts raise concerns and advocate for more improvement. Specifically, there seems to be agreement on the need to streamline licensing and business registration procedures, up-dating existing regulations, improving infrastructure (e.g., roads, water and electricity supply), applying more encouraging tax exemptions on nascent business, and increasing destination marketing efforts. Other issues also emerge as essential such as training tourism and hospitality staff, encouraging niche tourism, improving the attractiveness of tourism jobs by involving them in social security systems, awarding well performing tourism businesses, encouraging low-cost flights to destinations, de-centralizing support to tourism businesses through empowering local authorities (e.g., municipalities), and improving accessibility to tourism sites.

The study also identifies the key indicators of success of tourism and hospitality businesses. The findings reveal a wide range of indicators both at organizational and personal levels. Unsurprisingly, these indicators are perceived to be largely intercorrelated and intertwined. In terms of the organizational indicators, sustained profit-generating, achieving customer satisfaction and loyalty, excelling in service provision, organizational

resilience, ability to survive crises, expansion, good reputation, adding value to tourism offerings through innovation, and creating jobs to the local community emerge as key organizational indicators of success of tourism and hospitality businesses. In terms of the personal indicators, past experience in the same line of business, creativity, personal financial assets (vs loans), patience, ability to cope with emerging challenges, being passionate about business, persistence and perseverance, working hard and diligence, adaptability, decisiveness, learning from own mistakes, ability to build networks, strong interpersonal skills, and good leadership are salient personal indicators of success of tourism and hospitality businesses.

Finally, based on field case studies and qualitative and quantitative data collected from three OIC member countries, the report concludes with policy recommendations oriented towards promoting entrepreneurship in the OIC member countries. Overall, there seems to be a wanting need to create a friendly entrepreneurial ecosystem through streamlining existing regulatory frameworks and licensing procedures and reducing bureaucratic barriers. This is important to encourage and promote venturing in tourism. In the aftermath of the pandemic, many OIC member countries suffer from increasing inflation rates and high interest rates. This has created burden on existing tourism and hospitality businesses and seems to be a prominent challenge in the face of nascent entrepreneurial activities in the industry. To mitigate the impact of these economic factors on entrepreneurship rate, governments in OIC member countries may introduce further incentives to both help existing business survive in times of crisis while also encouraging new enterprises enter the market. Unfortunately, adequate infrastructure remains a challenge in some OIC member countries preventing the provision of quality tourism services while creating barriers to tourism entrepreneurship. Efforts to develop accessibility through modern roads and reliable water/electricity supplies are important to the success and sustainability of destinations and inherently entrepreneurship in tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in societies by bringing about various social and economic benefits contributing to the overall well-being of local communities. Entrepreneurship contributes to the economy through creating jobs, increasing GDP, fostering competition, and introducing innovative technologies, products, and services. Therefore, countries often view venturing and business growth as a path to boost the economy. Entrepreneurship also plays a vital role in bringing about several social benefits including improving the quality of life of the local communities, providing innovative solutions to societal challenges, supporting charitable causes, and promoting inclusivity in the society. Therefore, through the contribution of their businesses, entrepreneurs are likely to play a significant role in economic development and social progress of their societies which raises the need for sustained efforts to ensure the success of entrepreneurial activities.

Despite the generic benefits of entrepreneurship across various sub-sectors of the economy, the tourism and hospitality industry seems to be among the most lucrative areas for entrepreneurial activities due to the limited required know-how and the relatively low initial capital to start. Alongside its economic and social benefits, entrepreneurship in tourism is argued to generate more foreign exchange and create more employment given the human intensive nature of the industry. Tourism and hospitality businesses are also significant to the success of tourist destinations through quality tourism service supply necessary to meet needs of diverse tourist markets (i.e., leisure, business, family, halal).

Entrepreneurship in tourism is particularly important for OIC countries where tourism in many of the member countries is a vital driver of the local economy and is usually viewed as a path to sustainable development. However, to foster the role of entrepreneurship, it is of paramount importance to understand the role of the destination-related factors such as government policies, incentives, cultural ecosystem technological infrastructure in encouraging entrepreneurial activities (Fu et al., 2019).

Despite the notable growth and potential of the tourism and travel industry in OIC, there are several major challenges hindering fulfilling the potential of this industry. Insufficiency

and limited capacity of human resources is one key challenge that has clear implications on tourism services in OIC.

The per capita income generated from tourism is also influenced by the level of service quality, and OIC countries, on average, receive 20-25% lower income per tourist compared to across the globe. Further, the issue of financial leaks is considered another significant obstacle. Due to limited human resource capacity and expertise, OIC countries often rely on importing know-how in the form of tourism organizations and brands, such as management firms and franchises. These result in significant economic leakages (i.e. profits and commissions that are transferred to the franchisor, wages for foreign staff, and management fees).

Addressing above-mentioned issues within the OIC tourism industry can thus be achieved by fostering entrepreneurship. Encouraging entrepreneurial activities will foster competition, compelling suppliers to enhance service quality, professionalism, and standards. Improved service quality will enable suppliers to command higher prices. Further to this, entrepreneurship will enrich the range of products, services, and activities available. The increased variety of offerings may even prolong tourists' stay duration, leading to higher average spending per tourist. Successful entrepreneurs of the OIC member countries might also consider expanding their brand internationally through franchising, thereby reducing leakages from the OIC economies.

Tourism entrepreneurship also contributes to the economic welfare of local communities and serves to enhance the quality of life for residents (Séraphin et al., 2013). Ensuring an adequate level of demand for a tourist destination is vital to generating a satisfactory level of tourism income. Creating a tourism demand can only be achieved when it is accompanied by an adequate supply. Achieving the availability of touristic resources for tourists can only be achieved through enterprises that offer the desired services (Yılmazdoğan and Kaşlı, 2011). It is so critical to enhance tourism development in the region by increasing the number of these enterprises and providing them with support.

Tourism provides a distinctive context for describing entrepreneurial opportunities and transforming them into tourism products and services. Unlike other industries, tourism entrepreneurship involves collaboration among multiple stakeholders, with a focus on

economic benefits while also respecting environmental, social, and cultural values - (Ateljevic and Li, 2009) which are the core offerings of the tourism sector. Furthermore, tourism is characterized by its seasonality, intangibility, service-oriented nature, intercultural aspects, and its prevalence of SMEs.

Tourism entrepreneurship yields significant benefits for both individuals and businesses as well as playing a significant role in fostering regional development. Tourism entrepreneurship has indirect and induced effects on other industries due to the higher multiplier effect, in addition to its direct impact on employment, income, and innovation. Hence, regional and local entrepreneurship practices have a positive and direct connection on the development of tourism at a regional level (Pirnar, 2015).

There exist some obstacles in the tourism industry that hinder entrepreneurship. Eliminating these can potentially improve entrepreneurial activities in the industry. A notable obstacle is the scarcity of a competent labor force. Another barrier is age, as individuals who have worked in the sector for a prolonged period and are of a certain age may be resistant to growth (Reijonen and Komppula, 2007).

OIC member countries' tourism industry has experienced rapid development, although the income generated from tourism is not keeping up with the growth rate in volume. So, OIC tourism fails to reflect the increase in per capita spending. The average tourist spending is approximately 750 USD, significantly lower than the global average of 1000 USD. The reason for this situation is the inadequacy of tourism activities and low quality of services. However, it is imperative to study the entrepreneurial obstacles in the OIC in order to identify strategies for their removal and to cultivate a more competitive and sustainable tourism industry.

The development of tourism entrepreneurship in OIC has the potential to facilitate a more cooperative and competitive atmosphere, ultimately leading to improved levels of quality in tourism services. This could result in increased prices and diversified recreational activities, potentially lengthening the average duration of tourists' stays. Providing tourists with a variety of services could potentially encourage them to prolong their stays, leading to an increase in their overall spending.

A significant concern is that the majority of quality services in the OIC are provided by international brands, such as hotels, which originate from countries outside the OIC. A leakage can occur as a result of this concern in the form of profits, management fees, and franchising fees, which are transferred back to the country of origin, thereby depleting the local economies. By promoting local entrepreneurship and providing support to local chains in their expansion to become international brands, it could be possible to reverse this trend. This, in turn, has the potential to retain a greater portion of tourism revenues within the OIC. Therefore, it is important to ascertain successful entrepreneurs within the tourism industry who have accomplished the creation of international brands. By understanding their entrepreneurial ways, valuable insights can be gained that will inform policy recommendations aimed at promoting growth and internationalization.

Tourism plays a key role in OIC countries as it generates essential foreign exchange income and employment opportunities. Furthermore, the multiplier effects of tourism stimulate economic activities across various sectors.

This study aims to provide OIC member countries with best practices, tools and policy recommendations that will assist them in harnessing the contribution of entrepreneurship in fostering tourism industry competitiveness. Specifically, the study explores strategies and courses of action to facilitate and encourage local tourism entrepreneurship in OIC countries. The study also identifies personal, institutional, and environmental factors effecting self-employment decision, and examine tools used to subsidize entrepreneurship in tourism and their effectiveness and efficiency. Finally, the report suggests policy recommendations to stakeholders and government policy-makers in OIC countries. To achieve the study objectives, this study draws on sequential qualitative-quantitative research design to understand the current circumstances of tourism entrepreneurship drawing on experience of OIC Member Countries as well as destinations from the rest of the world. This study undertakes a comprehensive analysis of tourism entrepreneurship characteristics and facilitation strategies, tools, institutions in five case studies. Involving three OIC Member Countries, namely, Türkiye, Jordan and, the Gambia and two non-OIC countries, namely, the UK and Australia. These case studies have distinct characteristics and they pertain to destinations in different stages of maturity. This will not only enhance the

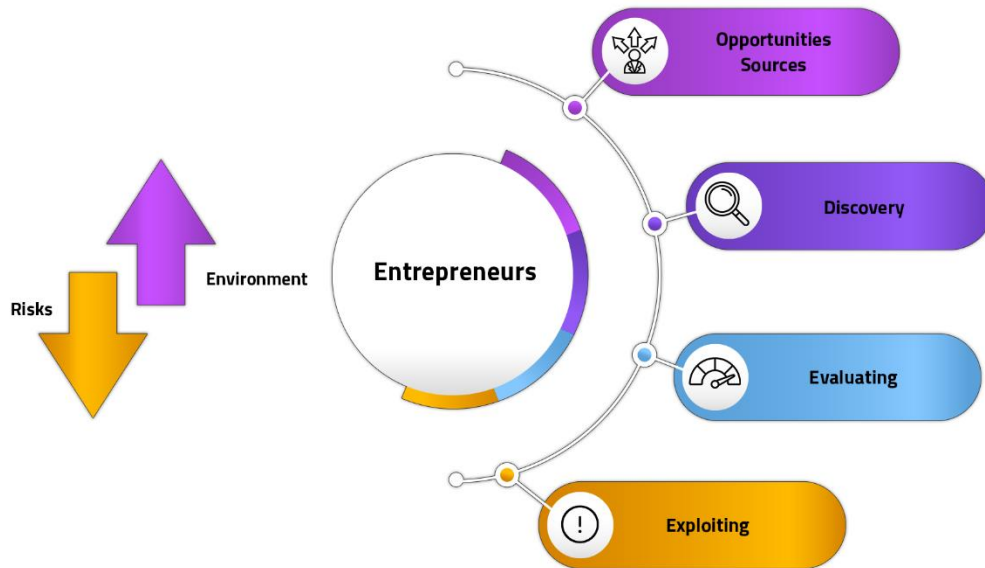
generalizability of the findings but will provide an opportunity for comparison and benchmarking-based policy recommendations.

1. Conceptualization of Tourism Entrepreneurship

1. 1. Definition of entrepreneurship, its characteristics and types

Broadly defined as the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying risks, and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction (Hisrich & Peters, 2002), entrepreneurship has been widely associated with creativity, innovation, competitiveness, revenue generation, and creation of job opportunities (Fu et al., 2019). The concept refers to the initiatives of change through creation and innovation processes that are usually affected by the environment in which they are launched (Zhao et al., 2011). Entrepreneurship is also about opportunities sources, phases of discovering, evaluating, and exploiting of these potential opportunities, as well as the people (entrepreneurs) involved in all these processes (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). (See figure 1)

Figure 1. Entrepreneurship Journey

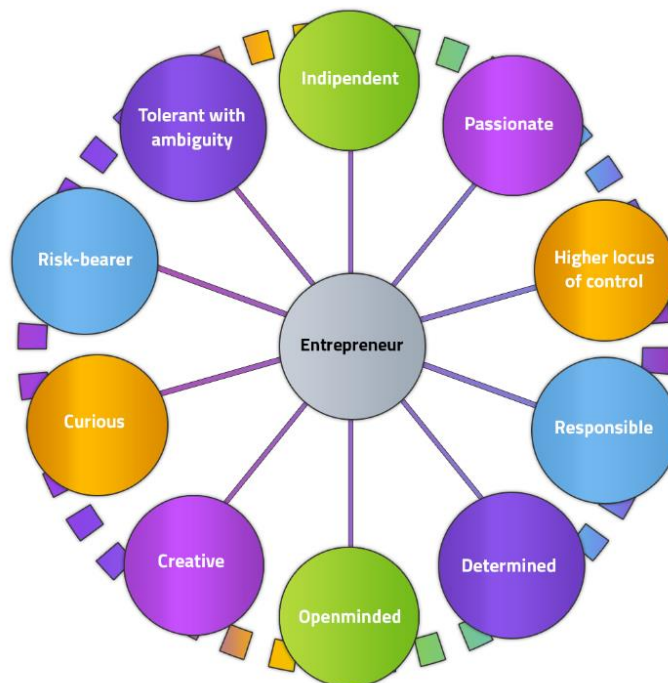


Enterprises can be either traditional commercial enterprises or social enterprises. The economic value creation against social value creation represents the core difference between the two types affecting their missions, goals, and practices (Austin et al., 2006). The traditional commercial enterprises aim to undertake lucrative activities to increase owners' wealth (while also being a driver for community development), and rely more on the quantifiable tools including financial indicators and market share in evaluating and monitoring the business performance. Social enterprises, however, are somehow akin to the cooperatives and non-profit organizations with a social mission rather than economic in the sense that they seek to share benefits with local communities through adopting sustainable development techniques (Aquino et al., 2018). While maintaining the social purposes, the social entrepreneurship might also employ the business expertise and market-needed skills to develop creative and innovative activities for profit, non-profit, or hybrid approaches that combine both (Austin et al., 2006). In the realm of tourism, social entrepreneurship has been commonly associated with initiatives that reflect the lifestyle entrepreneurial stream.

Central to the understanding of entrepreneurship as a socio-economic action is the entrepreneur. Defined as the person with specific psychological traits, characteristics, and

values who innovates and starts up a business (Gurel et al., 2010), the entrepreneur represents the heart of entrepreneurship processes as his/her behavioural and psychological characteristics are deemed to be influential in shaping the business performance. Entrepreneurs are independent, determined, open-minded, passionate, curious, creative, responsible, with higher locus of control, tolerant with ambiguity, and risk-bearer individuals who seek to innovate (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005; Jaafar et al., 2011; Haddoud et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2021; Güzel et al., 2021) (See Figure 2).

Figure 2. Key characteristics of the entrepreneur



Based on the Theory of Economic Development, Schumpeter (1951) classified innovations made by the entrepreneurs into five main categories, that are namely:

- Developing a new product or quality of already existing product,
- Application of novel production methods,
- Penetrating a new market,
- Reaching new supply sources,

- Developing novel types of industrial organization.

The typology of entrepreneurs has been extensively discussed in past research. Entrepreneurs are classified from different perspectives into different types including, for instance, growth-entrepreneurs vs. autonomy-seeking entrepreneurs, and craftsman entrepreneurs vs. opportunistic entrepreneurs (Getz & Petersen, 2005). The entrepreneurs can be also classified based on their entrepreneurial orientation into social entrepreneurs and profit-oriented entrepreneurs (Day & Mody, 2017). Another classification categorizes entrepreneurs based on the perceived success into four subgroups, namely: the empire builder entrepreneur (chasing growth and profitability), the vision developer entrepreneur (making a personal achievement), the challenge achiever entrepreneur (achievement and recognition), and the happiness seeker entrepreneur (looking for enjoyment) (Simpson et al., 2004). Lifestyle-oriented entrepreneurs who seek to enhance their quality of life rather than chasing economic drives (Fu et al., 2019) are notably common in tourism.

From an organizational perspective, entrepreneurs can be classified into: self-employed (workforce depends on family members, small capital, and lack of skills), small employer (could rely on non-family members in running business operations), owner-controller (higher reliance on non-family members, higher capital, and more systemized management style) owner-director (segregation between ownership and management, and higher capital investment) (Zapalska & Brozik, 2004).

In tourism industry, entrepreneurship has received a significant attention and it has been considered the catalyst of change in a very dynamic sector featured with rapid world tourism market growth, emergence of new types of tourists, and consistent with novel, and innovative tourism products (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005). In this respect, boosting entrepreneurial activities helps tourist destinations thrive through diversification of products and services thus enriching the tourist experience and contributing to the overall success of destinations (Jaafar et al., 2015).

1. 2. Benefits of entrepreneurship and its socio-economic impacts

Entrepreneurship is widely acknowledged to bring about various economic and social outcomes. In terms of the economic impacts, entrepreneurship, through innovation and the introduction of new products and markets, promotes local economic development and growth, increases the contribution of added-value products to the country's GDP, alleviates poverty, and creates job opportunities (Van Praag & Versloot, 2007). Entrepreneurship helps businesses, enhances the competitive advantage, increases the market share, and fosters the economic performance and profitability (Luke et al., 2007).

Entrepreneurship also brings about several social benefits to the entrepreneurs themselves, their immediate family members, and the wider community. These benefits include autonomy, independence, self-esteem, self-actualization, and the enhanced standards of living (Luke et al., 2007; Carland, 1995). Entrepreneurship is also beneficial to local communities as it facilitates the positive community change through empowering local people which is particularly significant when the government interventions are lacking in the early stages of tourism development (Aquino, 2022). Moreover, entrepreneurship contributes to the local economic diversification, enriches the local cultural life, and could even enhance the efforts to conserve environment (Wang et al., 2019). Entrepreneurship can be a tool to make a connection between traditional local life and economy and will contribute to a greater sense of attachment and belonging to the local community specially in the rural areas (Güzel et al., 2021).

In tourism context, entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in supporting local economies, reducing unemployment rates, developing the provided services to the market, and enhancing the destination image and reputation (Fu et al., 2019). Entrepreneurial activities in tourism can be among the mechanisms used to address challenges that local communities face (e.g. the degradation of local communities because of urbanization) through paving the way for the social transformation (Jørgensen et al., 2021). In particular, rural areas might be subject to the marginalization even in the most developed economies, thus, entrepreneurship in tourism can be a means for development that aims to alleviate poverty and promote economic growth in these rural areas (Wang et al., 2022). Indeed, this is might

more important aspect in case of developing countries suffering of deficiency in responding to economic and social challenges in terms of high unemployment and poverty rates (Jaafar et al., 2015).

Through introducing an inclusive and social dynamic approach in the tourism development, entrepreneurial activities are deemed to be an efficient tool to bridge the gap between the different social groups and classes. For instance, tourism helps reduce the social barriers between locals and migrant entrepreneurs who move from urban to rural areas aiming to have a lifestyle change, and inculcates the cultural and social understanding and respect between them (Matarrita-Cascante & Sues, 2020).

Entrepreneurship inculcates the value of gender equality through the inclusion and the empowerment of women in tourism industry. In fact, entrepreneurship in tourism supports women psychologically, socially, economically, and politically, enhances their independence, and increases the contribution to their families' livelihoods (Abou-Shouk et al., 2021).

1. 3. Entrepreneurship in tourism and its differences from mainstream entrepreneurship

Tourism is among the industries that rely heavily on entrepreneurship and business start-ups, value creation and innovation in almost all its operations (Moyle et al., 2020). Tourism has long been considered to be an attractive environment for the entrepreneurial activities and among the most rewarding industries for entrepreneurs (Nikraftar & Hosseini, 2016).

Entrepreneurship in tourism is featured with the prevalence of SMEs representing 80% of global businesses in the field (WTTC, 2022), this is ascribed to the minimum investments needed and few prerequisite qualifications required to run a business in tourism (Jaafar et al., 2015). These businesses contribute significantly to the regional development by alleviating poverty and combatting the high unemployment rates specially in low-income countries. The nature of entrepreneurship in tourism promotes small family-oriented businesses that involve all family members who are looking for secure and independent source of income (Pechlaner et al., 2012) and paves the way for the informal relationships

between the different stakeholders that are based on trust and close friendship (Kallmuenzer et al., 2019). In addition, the small businesses in tourism are also characterized of tendency of most entrepreneurs to run their firms independently as sole proprietors (Skokic & Morrison, 2011). Actually, tourism offers an appropriate environment for the autonomy seekers who make the entrepreneurial activity as a lifestyle choice (Hollick & Braun, 2005).

Being a sector with low entry barriers compared to other industries (e.g. manufacturing industry), tourism attracts entrepreneurs to venture and launch their own enterprises (Pechlaner et al., 2012). To start a small business in tourism neither large investments nor very highly skilled and specialized people are needed specially at the early stages (Honggang & Shaoyin, 2014). The exit barriers and regulatory restrictions in tourism are also relatively less than other sectors (Pechlaner et al., 2012). Securing a safe and less expensive exit from the market is essential in any entrepreneurial activity. Entrepreneurship in tourism implies fewer risks due the little investment nature of most tourism businesses, simple structure, and the relatively low operational costs. However, most risks in tourism entrepreneurship are related to the vulnerability of tourism to the external environments, the difficulty of evaluating intangible-labeled tourism products before introducing them to the market, and the reliance on the cultural and natural assets controlled by local governments which poses some limits and restrictions that could sometimes hinder entrepreneurs from operating their businesses appropriately (Koh & Hatten, 2002; Wang et al., 2019). Other factors including language, previous experience, informal cash, and interdependence with other suppliers are also more salient in tourism entrepreneurship. For instance, informal economy practices are likely to be common in less developed tourism destinations (Lv, 2020). Services in the travel and tourism industry in general require high synergy with various stakeholders, therefore, the level of interdependence with other suppliers (e.g., travel agencies, hotels, airline companies) tends to be high.

1. 4. Motivations, characteristics and typology of tourism entrepreneurs

Motives to venture in tourism have received considerable attention. Overall, tourism entrepreneurs can be driven by a set of push and pull factors (See Figure 3). Push factors are typically personal or external factors forcing individuals to venture. The work-related factors including unemployment and redundancy and job uncertainty are among the most influential push factors (Kirkwood, 2009). Poverty associated with the lack of full-paid jobs forces people to seek other alternative livelihoods (Kimbu & Ngoasong, 2016). Job dissatisfaction because of low wages, lack of progress in the work environment, and the feeling of not being appreciated at work might also be the trigger to quit working and run a new business, this was particularly a strong motivation for male entrepreneurs compared to females.

Some of the family-related aspects such as the family policies and obligations, children's upbringing, and family living expenses are also reckoned to be pushing individuals to enterprise (Kirkwood, 2009). Breeding children pushes women entrepreneurs to choose the entrepreneurial path due to the need for flexibility that permits them look after their children wellbeing and emotional needs, while men, pushed by the increasing family expenses, are more concerned about their breadwinner role (Kirkwood, 2009). Family characteristics and attitudes can contribute to shaping its offspring's' intention and motivations to venture in tourism. For instance, different parental backgrounds and characteristics including education, age, family composition, and income might affect children's decisions to start a business and will determine to what extent children's entrepreneurial choices are supported as well as influence the individuals' ability to take decisions (subjective norms) and perceive and fulfil specific tasks (perceived behaviour control) and attitudes (Liu & Zhao, 2021). The entrepreneurial families have a significant impact on the individual business orientation, behaviours, and performance, this is due to the rich entrepreneurial environment from which individuals can gain creative ideas and professional skills (Gurel et al., 2010).

Unlike push factors, pull factors are those that draw people to start businesses (i.e. recognition of a market opportunity) (Kirkwood, 2009). Pull factors are likely to be more

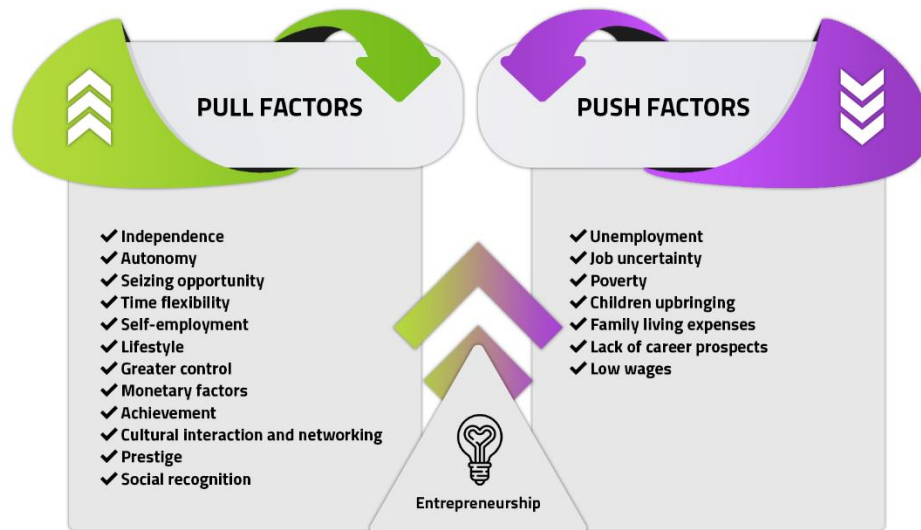
influential since entrepreneurs who start their businesses driven by pull factors seem to be more successful than those driven by push factors (Amit & Muller, 1995). The pull factors include the desire for independence, autonomy, greater control, monetary factors, self-employment, time flexibility, and seizing an opportunity (Kirkwood, 2009). The psychological drivers have a considerable influence on the entrepreneurial journey. The inner willingness to achieve encourages the small entrepreneurs to invest through deploying the slack financial and human resources they own to diversify the sources of income (Fu et al., 2019).

In addition, entrepreneurs in tourism might be motivated by the willingness to change their lifestyle either through abandoning the urban life, living the life the way they like, chasing the dream of being a boss, or securing an independent source of income for covering current and after retirement needs (Zhang et al., 2021). Yet, motivation might be shifted from lifestyle orientation to the business orientation or vice-versa with the passage of time, this shift might be caused by some demographic factors, environmental factors including the changes in the tourism market, and the entrepreneur's cognitive beliefs related to the perception of entrepreneurship and the benefits of resources and experience gained in course of time as well as their standpoint towards commercialization and commodification of product throughout the entrepreneurial process (Wang et al., 2019).

The desire to have cultural interaction with tourists, gratification of hosting, and networking are also among the socio-cultural pull factors that attract entrepreneurs to operate tourism businesses. These motivations are common for people engaged in the informal disruptive businesses (e.g., sharing accommodation sector) (Alrawadieh & Alrawadieh, 2018; Atsız & Cifci, 2022)

Entrepreneurship can be also triggered by the desire to have prestige and social recognition. For instance, women entrepreneurs are usually motivated by the willingness to make social transformation by increasing their contribution to their communities, and the desire to reach their personal professional independence and advancement, generate income, and develop their personal business skills (Kimbu & Ngoasong, 2016).

Figure 3. Drivers of entrepreneurship



Closely relevant to the drivers of entrepreneurship action, there exists considerable theoretical and empirical assessment on the key characteristics of entrepreneurs. Overall, these characteristics may be approached from demographic/personality traits perspective. Overall, it seems that entrepreneurship rate is notably higher among men (Aidis et al., 2012), this might be because women are likely to be risk-averse than men and they often whereby fear of failure pushes them to avoid starting a business (Figuroa-Domecq et al., 2022). Family-related responsibilities can also discourage women from venturing (Salem & Mobarak, 2019). Nevertheless, some evidence shows that entrepreneurs in some small businesses such as restaurants and lodging businesses can be dominated by females (Ramos-Rodríguez et al., 2012). Moreover, the cultural context may have an influence on the prevalence of men (particularly in developing countries) comparing to women presence in the tourism entrepreneurship (Fu et al., 2019). In terms of their age, tourism entrepreneurs are often aged between 21-50 years (Jaafar et al., 2015). Marital status can also influence entrepreneurship action, for instance, while marriage can come with more family responsibilities, thus discouraging women from starting a business, it seems to drive men to venture to meet family daily expenses (Salem & Mobarak, 2019).

There also seems to be a connection between the income levels and the propensity to start a business in tourism. For instance, despite the limited business opportunities and the lack of access to resources, people in low-income countries are more likely to venture in tourism due to the lack of alternative livelihoods, while people in the high-income countries are less likely to enterprise due to the availability of job opportunities (GEM-Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2023). Individuals with low-income are usually more pushed to enterprise in an attempt to secure other sources of income that can be harnessed to meet the living expenses.

Existing body of literature on the intersection between level of education and entrepreneurship is still vague and provides inconsistent findings. Overall, while graduates may enjoy more confidence and may be better positioned to recognize opportunities in the market (Sahasranamam & Nandakumar, 2020), they typically earn more than non-graduates, and thus they may also have less incentive to start a new business (GEM-Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2023). This might be because education stimulates a more cautious approach toward venturing (Altinay et al., 2021).

Like demographics variables, some personality traits are also significant in influencing entrepreneurship. Life experience coupled with the belief and passion, good communication skills, curiosity and imagination, and perseverance significantly help entrepreneurs when chasing the entrepreneurial opportunities (Zhang et al., 2021; Güzel et al., 2021). The passion is particularly important in driving individual to devote their money, time, and efforts to the entrepreneurial activity with perseverance and determination (Fu et al., 2022). Furthermore, entrepreneurs' openness to accept and implement new ideas helps them be more innovative when running their businesses (Singh & DeNoble, 2003). Moreover, possessing vision, proactiveness, and risk-taking characteristics are essential to trigger and run entrepreneurial activities (Kallmuenzer et al., 2019), this might be associated with the people with higher achievement orientation, autonomy, and stronger internal locus of control who believe in their ability to fulfil certain achievements (Lerner & Haber, 2001). In addition, being agreeable and extroverted can better facilitate the entrepreneur's endeavours to create a productive work environment and get support from relevant networks (Haddoud et al., 2022). The entrepreneurs should also possess the sense

of responsibility when handling relationships with main stakeholders in the field as this affects both business performance and resilience (Haddoud et al., 2022). Moreover, being subject to stress caused by the entrepreneurial activity and excessive work addiction, entrepreneur's mental health and wellbeing might be affected which, in return, could affect the business performance and push him/her to quit (Sánchez-Medina et al., 2020).

1. 5. Entrepreneurial process in tourism

As in other sectors of the economy, entrepreneurship in tourism evolves in five main stages: idea generation, opportunity evaluation, planning, company formation/launch and growth (Duke Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, 2023). However, given the ever-changing and dynamic nature of the tourism industry, tourism entrepreneurship can be a "chaotic" process whereby entrepreneurs are triggered to keep changing, innovating, and sometimes creatively destroying throughout the product life-cycle to meet the complexities of the tourism market (Russell & Faulkner, 2004).

The initiatives for creative and innovative change are the core of entrepreneurship. People, who are searching for opportunities, being ready to seize the emerging opportunities, and having prior knowledge about the changes in the market; are more successful in discovering opportunities and, eventually, getting involved in the tourism entrepreneurship process (Nikraftar & Hosseini, 2016). The innovation process starts by generating ideas to address specific markets' needs, challenges, or problems.

In the second phase, opportunity evaluation needs to be carried out to scrutinize the attractiveness of the opportunity, the expected competitive advantage, feasibility, and the adequacy of proposed solutions (products) to the market needs, availability of human and financial resources to realize the opportunity, and the potential risks, costs and benefits. Evaluation of the generated ideas and opportunities needs to be an ongoing step that is carried out throughout all entrepreneurial process stages to handle any drawbacks and reduce potential failure risks (Ardichvili et al., 2003).

In the following stage, entrepreneurs have to prepare the needed strategies and operational plans, allocate the needed resources, build the team, and identify the targeted customers

before moving to choose the appropriate form to launch the business. At the early stages of starting a business, securing financial and human resources are among the main challenges that should be carefully tackled to face business development needs. In this vein, entrepreneur plays the most critical role in the initial stages of entrepreneurial journey through allocating resources and exerting the necessary efforts to succeed (Sánchez-Medina et al., 2020). The team organization is also required to develop the idea and introduce it to the market. This implies the way used to organize people in order to make them work in harmony and be more productive (Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2019).

In the final stage, entrepreneurs start executing the ideas by designing products and services (Duke Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, 2023), and, in parallel, they have to benefit from the received feedback in improving their product characteristics. At this stage, networking and coalition building is imperative to facilitate access to the necessary resources. The networks should target all related social groups and stakeholders including investors, suppliers, government bodies, and local communities (Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2019).

It should be noted that entrepreneurial process might be influenced by the tourist destination evolution throughout the different stages of destination lifecycle where pioneer entrepreneurs explore opportunities in the initial stage of discovery and involvement, yet the development pace depends significantly on the availability of services and adequacy of infrastructure (Weiermair et al., 2006). Those pioneer entrepreneurs are the catalyst of transformation and the source that fuels tourism development in its early phases as they convert the unbeaten and abandoned natural and cultural areas into vibrant tourist destinations and by starting their businesses they open the door for other local and international entrepreneurs to invest (Koh & Hatten, 2002). Later, some entrepreneurs might seek to inculcate social transformation of “others” through supporting the development initiatives that target the under-privileged categories (Kimbu & Ngoasong, 2016). With the government and other relevant stakeholders’ support, these initiatives can guide businesses towards success during the various stages of entrepreneurial process, and facilitate and accelerate local destination growth.

1. 6. Challenges faced by tourism entrepreneurs

Tourism entrepreneurs face a vast range of challenges when starting and running their businesses. The lack of access to low-cost and long-term funding represents a barrier for small tourism businesses, this is particularly critical considering the fragile financial structure of these small businesses and the over-reliance on owners' savings especially at the start-up stage (Zapalska & Brozik, 2004).

The lack of incentives and the weak public support for the entrepreneurs, the nascent ones in particular, along with unfavorable taxation policies could make venturing into tourism unfeasible for both local and foreign investors (Lundberg & Fredman, 2012). Regulatory issues are another challenge that renders these enterprises operating in an unfriendly business environment. This includes unfavourable legislation, time and effort-consuming bureaucratic procedures, and the lack of guidelines that help entrepreneurs in the registration process (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005).

Tourism businesses might also face some managerial and operational challenges that are originally derived from shortages in financial resources, poor knowledge and expertise, and the lack of access to information (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005). The limited financial resources render these enterprises affront obstacles in hunting skilled and well-trained people and addressing marketing-related needs in a severe and, sometimes, unfair market competition (Lundberg & Fredman, 2012).

Entrepreneurs in tourism are prone to several external shocks that require adequate coping strategies (Aquino, 2022). For instance, foreign entrepreneurs might be constrained due to the lack of support and unwillingness to collaborate from the local communities, thus, entrepreneurs should seek to strengthen social solidarity, emotional closeness, and mutual understanding with local individuals and organizations (Matarrita-Cascante & Sues, 2020).

Entrepreneurs venturing into rural marginalized areas often affront challenges related to depopulation, inadequate infrastructure, shortages in local human and financial resources, and limited access to the market as well as the lack of services that are needed to enhance business's various operations (Wang et al., 2022). In addition, small business entrepreneurs

in these rural areas suffer from the lack of educational and training opportunities required to strengthen their managerial and marketing knowledge and skills as well as ameliorate their strategies in response to tourism-related problems such as seasonality (Jaafar et al., 2015).

Certain entrepreneurs might face distinct challenges. For instance, women entrepreneurs' participation in entrepreneurial activities might be sometimes hindered by certain barriers related to socio-cultural norms such as the societal views of women entrepreneurs and women's role and social complexity, (Amine & Staub, 2009). Moreover, although being burdened by both household and entrepreneurial tasks, women entrepreneurs in some societies suffer from gender discrimination resulting in being less supported than their peers (Kimbu & Ngoasong, 2016). For instance, women entrepreneurs may face several gendered constraints that prevent them from building internal and external networks to enhance their businesses' performance (Ribeiro et al., 2021).

1. 7. Factors effecting success of entrepreneurship in tourism

The success of entrepreneurial tourism activities is usually determined by a wide range of personal, organizational, and environmental factors. These success factors fall into two main groups: internal factors and external factors. Internal factors include the entrepreneur's personality traits, characteristics, values, education and past experience, and business characteristics in terms of structure, strategies, managerial practices, technology, and financial and human resources. External factors, however, include the business environment in terms of competitors, providers, public sector and other supportive bodies, lending institutions, external networks, customers, and other influential players in the broad socio-cultural environment (Lundberg & Fredman, 2012).

On the internal level, businesses that have the necessary capacities and knowledge help entrepreneurs possess the needed power to operate their enterprises (Aquino, 2022). The knowledge and capacities can be enriched through the gained experience from past employment and education that strengthen an entrepreneur's ability to run a business (Kimbu & Ngoasong, 2016) and guide their market understanding and exploration (Wang et al., 2022). Entrepreneurs coming from entrepreneurial family that has a long history in

operating businesses whether in or outside tourism resulted are exposed to a rich learning and experience environment that can equip them with the necessary managerial and financial skill on which they can capitalize during their entrepreneurial journey (Wang et al., 2022). In a very dynamic industry like tourism, a continuous learning process is imperative as it entitles entrepreneurs to keep chasing innovation and creativity in their activities (Zhang et al., 2021).

Moreover, individuals with a strong entrepreneurial orientation are more inclined to seize opportunities, adopt the most appropriate strategies and managerial practices, tackle challenges and potential risks, and employ all required resources to positively enhance a business's performance (Ribeiro et al., 2021). With entrepreneurial orientation, organizational efforts and processes will be harnessed to create initiatives that reinforce the competitive advantage of business (Güzel et al., 2021).

Internal business environment underpinned by access to required resources, innovation, proactive behaviors, financial resources, and risk-taking approach; improves the enterprise performance and strengthens its response to various uncertainty settings (Kallmuenzer et al., 2019; Ribeiro et al., 2021).

On the external level, establishing strong ties with all relevant stakeholders (e.g. government, suppliers) has a significant influence on the business's performance (Ribeiro et al., 2021). Networking is also a key factor in having a successful journey as it paves the way for knowledge and information exchange, enhances enterprise operations and performance, and ensures community support (Kallmuenzer et al., 2019). For instance, through having strong political ties, entrepreneurs can access scarce resources (Ribeiro et al., 2021).

The political, economic, social, and cultural environments, in which the business is operated, are influential as entrepreneurship flourishes when supported by government and local communities (Zhang et al., 2021). Such environments might determine the availability of significant market opportunities, the availability and accessibility to venture capital, the involvement degree of business ventures, the availability and the possibility of land

acquisition for entrepreneurial purposes, the accessibility degree to suppliers and tourism markets, and the availability of cheap manpower (Lerner & Haber, 2001; Zhang et al., 2021).

In addition, the entrepreneurship journey could be shaped, whether by accelerating or constraining, according to the relationship between regulators (local authorities) and entrepreneurs (Russell & Faulkner, 2004). The constraints in the face of entrepreneurs might be derived from the lack of vision and anti-development attitudes at the tourist destination (Russell & Faulkner, 2004). Thus, it might be of great importance that businesses seek to strengthen their image and reputation on the local level by maintaining a good relationship with traditional (TV and Radio channels) and social media channels as it might bring further support and facilitate access for any required resources (Wang et al., 2022).

From another perspective, the environment in terms of infrastructure, availability of resources, tourist-related infrastructure and facilities, and attractive places at the destinations; is a vital factor for entrepreneurial activities in tourism (Lerner & Haber, 2001). Regions, with attractive cultural and natural resources and mild climates along with affordable living costs, can attract more tourists which, in return, makes entrepreneurs be able to generate profit benefitting from both the tourist destination development and the cheaper prices (Honggang & Shaoyin, 2014).

The social environment has also a critical influence on the operated business. To gain social acceptance, established tourism businesses need to build strong social relationships/networks that, eventually, could facilitate access to local resources (Jóhannesson et al., 2003) and may reduce the cost and risks associated with starting a new business (Wang et al., 2022). In addition, considering the importance of social capital in the entrepreneurship processes, entrepreneurs have to exert efforts to increase local communities' involvement in the tourism industry so they can benefit from the traditional resources they have through venturing into tourism (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). The inclusion of local employees in the whole business decision-making process makes them more attached and loyal and creates a productive business environment (Matarrita-

Cascante & Sues, 2020). The small entrepreneurs are particularly in need of these social ties to overcome the barriers they might face in their entrepreneurship journey such as the lack of a strong asset base that entitles them to get loans from the lending institutions (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000).

Religious beliefs and cultural values could influence the entrepreneurial process (Wang et al., 2019). Entrepreneurs might be inspired by religious beliefs that call for cooperating, sharing benefits, and spreading love when shaping their social and business connection, this, in return, leads to enhance employees' productivity and business overall performance and create a positive environment (Wang et al., 2022).

2. Facilitating entrepreneurship in tourism

2.1. Legislation and legal framework to support tourism entrepreneurship

Providing a business-friendly regulatory environment is a prerequisite to support and accelerate the launch and growth of entrepreneurial activities in tourism (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005). The regulatory environment can either promote or constrain investments. Countries with more encouraging investment and funding laws are often better positioned to enhance entrepreneurship environment, while others with less institutional or over-regulated environment are likely to hamper business venturing (Aidis et al., 2012). Because regulatory burden could deter individuals from getting engaged in any entrepreneurial activities in tourism. For instance, the stringent entry regulations and the cost and time needed to officially register a business might push people to give up. Similarly, the nature of exit regulations the strict labour regulations, and the associated costly hiring procedures could render the entrepreneurial activities unfeasible (Levie & Autio, 2011). On the contrary, economic freedom and the adoption of market economy-oriented policies could provide more appropriate legal frameworks (e.g., the regulations related to credit, labour, and property rights) that boost entrepreneurial activities and facilitate both recognition and exploitation of opportunities (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017).

To create a good investment climate, the strategies to improve legislation that favours tourism entrepreneurship require addressing all issues that affect the entrepreneurial journey including taxation laws, labour laws (e.g., the ease of recruiting and laying off employees, minimum wages, labour protection policies, and immigration issues), and bureaucratic procedures, and entry barriers (Dredge, 2017).

In addition, legislative reforms need to promote and support entrepreneurial activities carried out by certain social categories. For instance, addressing gender equality by improving the legislative environment can facilitate women's access to the tourism entrepreneurial market and increase their representation in the different tourism companies and professional associations (Abou-Shouk et al., 2021). Thus, regulations and public policies should focus on ameliorating women entrepreneur rights in legislation and practices (Kimbu et al., 2019).

It is worth mentioning that sharing economy platforms (e.g. Airbnb) have encouraged micro-entrepreneurship. Unlike traditional businesses within the formal economy, these are often operated without being subject to taxes and other regulatory restrictions (Atsız & Cifci, 2022). In some countries, these informal activities are tolerated as they contribute to the economy (Koh & Hatten, 2002). Yet, while they contribute to increasing tourist demand and improving tourist offerings, these activities are also often criticized for creating an unfair competitive environment (Alrawadieh et al., 2020).

2. 2. Tools and strategies to encourage entrepreneurship in tourism

2.2.1 Capacity Building and training

Considering the limited knowledge and experience and the lack of managerial and financial skills of most nascent entrepreneurs venturing into tourism, it is imperative to adopt the appropriate capacity-building strategies to enhance entrepreneurs' competencies and skills. The adopted strategies have to be based on launching well-structured training programs for the targeted people and promoting networking and the transfer and exchange of both knowledge and experience.

Equipping local people and entrepreneurs with the necessary knowledge and skills through carrying out training programs is one of the key tools to trigger their entrepreneurial thinking. The training programs have to address the entrepreneurs' weak points and improve their managerial, financial, and marketing skills. This is of great importance as it facilitates their penetration into and success in tourism entrepreneurship (Dredge, 2017). Training programs that prioritize the less-advantaged individuals and groups (e.g., women, ethnic minorities, refugees, and people living in less-developed areas) represent a cornerstone for achieving inclusivity and sustainability (Abou-Shouk et al., 2021).

Networking is also among the effective tools to build individuals' entrepreneurial capacity. Fostering collaboration and knowledge transfer and exchange can trigger local people. The pioneer entrepreneurs who possess long past experience have a fundamental role in capacity-building programs through transferring the knowledge to nascent and potential entrepreneurs and spreading the entrepreneurship culture among local communities by showing the value of tourism as well as the steps needed to successfully start and run a business (Aquino, 2022).

2.2.2 Financial Support, funding and subsidizing

Small firms face several kinds of financial challenges including the strict credit terms, negative attitudes of lending institutions towards small firms, weakness of economic incentives, and limited financing choices (Zapalska & Brozik, 2004). The lack of access to the financial market might prevent entrepreneurs from developing creative and innovative initiatives and could even make them prone to failure risk (Fu et al., 2019). In addition, the regulatory constraints that entrepreneurs encounter in their pursuit to access finance from the traditional financing institutions might push them to resort to other lending bodies including the informal microfinance institutions (Ngoasong & Kimbu, 2016). Thus, the financial instruments have a critical role in enhancing the so-called "enabling conditions" for creating a tourism entrepreneurship-friendly environment. Such instruments include fiscal support through grants, subsidies, and other incentives that aim to attract and support entrepreneurial activities (Dredge, 2017). The public sector itself has to be leading in allocating public funds providing microcredit programs for innovation projects, and providing entrepreneurs with information about potential external funding opportunities

(Selby et al., 2011; Ahmad et al., 2022). Public funds can be given to empower certain social categories. For instance, governments seek to empower women and increase their representation in economic activities by supporting women entrepreneur collaborative associations, funding women's entrepreneurial activities, and facilitating women's access to external financing sources (Kimbu et al., 2019). However, it is worth mentioning that government finance to entrepreneurial activities is deemed to be less efficient in low-income and less-developed countries compared to those in developed economies (Aidis et al., 2012). In particular, small businesses in remote rural areas lack government support, funding, and incentives to foster entrepreneurial activities in tourism (Jaafar et al., 2015).

On the other hand, governments can urge lending institutions, i.e. banks to offer entrepreneurs loans at competitive interest rates in an attempt to boost business start-ups (Abou-Shouk et al., 2021). Moreover, in line with endeavours to diversify the financial support schemes, governments may need to pay more attention to and facilitate the microfinance channels that offer small loans for entrepreneurs to surmount barriers related to accessing mainstream and conventional financing resources (Zapalska & Brozik, 2004).

In addition, taxation policies are a very important factor in determining the attractiveness of an entrepreneurial environment (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005). This is due to the fact that taxes represent a burden for entrepreneurs especially in the business's early phases (Aidis et al., 2012). Hence, governments can support the growth of entrepreneurial activities through adopting the right taxation policies including tax reduction and tax breaks for small businesses (Zapalska & Brozik, 2004). In particular, waiving or reducing taxes for the beginner and small entrepreneurs will foster their ability to withstand financial challenges (Wang et al., 2022). The tax exemption can be also offered for entrepreneurs when hiring laid-off individuals, women, and people with disabilities to affront poverty and high unemployment rates (Honggang & Shaoyin, 2014).

The entrepreneurship facilitation policies have to favour venturing into tourism by allocating lands for entrepreneurial activities to reinforce their chance to succeed (Zhang et al., 2021), and reducing registration costs, eliminating unnecessary procedures associated

with the new business registration process (Zapalska & Brozik, 2004), and encouraging research and development (Ahmad et al., 2022).

2.2.3 Risk reduction

Considering the vulnerability of the tourism industry and the uncertainty about the future performance and profitability of businesses, entrepreneurs usually refrain from venturing into tourism due to the fear of failure (GEM-Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2023). In particular, nascent entrepreneurs are more prone to affront ambiguous environmental challenges affecting their endeavours to pursue their entrepreneurial journey successfully. In less developed countries, the faced risks might derive from the unfriendly business environment due to the discouraging governmental policies and the complexity of regulations and bureaucratic procedures (Fu et al., 2019). Thus, to reduce risks and mitigate the cost of failure entrepreneurs might be directed to and supported in exploring the market opportunities and potential challenges and risks before initiating the entrepreneurial journey, this can be through conducting market research and risk assessment studies (Weiermair et al., 2006). In addition, providing risk-taking entrepreneurs with convenient conditions to venture into tourism is of great importance in order to make entrepreneurial activities flourish as well as foster tourism destination development (Fu et al., 2019). This could include adopting strategies to enhance tourism businesses' resilience in the face of potential risks. In some countries, the developed ones, in particular, there exist some public schemes to protect entrepreneurs. The mechanisms used to support businesses are integrated with the social security measures that are mostly activated during crisis times. The subsidiary programs adopted by these countries seek to assist businesses and employees to survive these crises (Mahato et al., 2023).

2.2.4 Logistics and legal assistance

Businesses in their initial stages suffer from limited financial and skilled human resources rendering them unable to efficiently perform all necessary functions that are reckoned to be significant in determining the business's performance and success opportunities. Thus, offering entrepreneurs with the needed services will contribute to filling the gap. This could

include providing entrepreneurs with logistic and technical support that leads to enhancing their access and competencies to benefit from technology and its applications and develop their internal and external networks. In addition, the services could include facilitating entrepreneurs' access to skilled consultants and experts in the field, and fostering their ability to approach lending institutions and venture funding (Zapalska & Brozik, 2004). Incubators are among the most popular forms where experts and consultants from both the private and public sectors are invited to sit with entrepreneurs to enhance their general attitudes, raise their awareness of the rules they have to adhere to and the prospective challenges and the appropriate techniques to deal with, and (Zapalska & Brozik, 2004). In addition, facilitating entrepreneurs' access to information and consultancy centres' services that offer deep and up-to-date market research helps entrepreneurs understand and meet the ever-changing tourist market trend. This also will enhance their ability and flexibility in reacting to the emerging entrepreneurial opportunities in the tourism markets through developing products and services (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005).

3. Institutions and structures in tourism entrepreneurship

Across all countries, entrepreneurship can be largely influenced by the nature of existing institutions and structures depicted in all bodies that shape the collective human actions and contribute to the activities/industries formation. The activity formation process is usually affected by government strategies, laws and regulations, businesses' rules and norms, and social and cultural norms and beliefs. In tourism, institutions namely, educational institutions, private sector, professional associations, and governmental bodies, and their structural forms have a fundamental role in formulating the entrepreneurship landscape and the directions of entrepreneurial activities in terms of processes, practices, and performance; and their contribution to the economic growth and sustainable development (Moyle et al., 2020).

3.1. Educational institutions

Tourism education is one of the main pillars of the tourism industry (See Figure 4) due to its determinant role in forming businesses and products and improving performance (Ayikoru et al., 2009). Tourism and hospitality education dates back to 1893 when "Ecole

Hoteliere de Lausanne” in Switzerland was launched (Hsu et al., 2017). Currently, many institutions around the globe, through offering educational and vocational programs, provide a tourism labour market with millions of graduates (Weiermair et al., 2006). While traditional education programs focus on the didactic and theoretical approach, vocational training offers more technically oriented courses that aim to provide the tourism labour market with skilled people (Ayikoru et al., 2009). However, despite the huge number of educational institutions that offer tourism programs, a gap still exists between what is provided by these institutions and the real needs in the tourism labour market (Daniel et al., 2017).

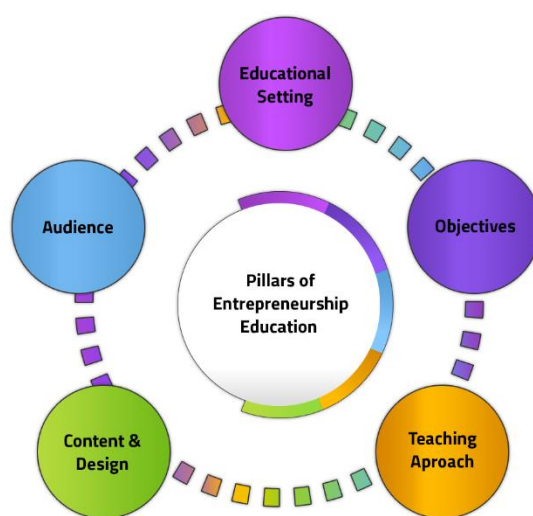
From an entrepreneurship education perspective, these institutions can cultivate entrepreneurial intentions among university and college students, enhance the entrepreneurial culture, raise awareness to the importance of entrepreneurship in tourism, and improve local people’s attitudes towards entrepreneurship which, in return, contribute significantly to local economic development and support governments’ endeavours to alleviate poverty and create opportunities (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005). However, institutions’ ability to achieve their mission to qualify students to enterprise in tourism depends on having a nuanced understanding of targeted audience characteristics and needs along with the availability and adequacy of educational settings, resources and structures in terms of allocated funds to support student entrepreneurial initiatives, incubators and venture creation centres that pave the way for enhancing student entrepreneurial thinking and attitudes (Fayolle et al., 2006).

The way educational and training programs are designed as well as the delivered contents are key in fostering students’ intention to enterprise. (Fayolle et al., 2006). Motivating students and shaping their attitudes toward entrepreneurial activities can be achieved through providing students with all the substantial technical skills needed to start up a business including the techniques to develop viable business plans/models. It is also beneficial to expose students to international experiences, extracurricular activities, and on-the-job work experience through internships to gain new skills and enhance their emotional, social, and cognitive competencies (Bonesso et al., 2018). The internship is particularly important as it helps effectively bridge the gap between academic knowledge

and practical skills in the real work environment (Hsu et al., 2017). In addition, tourism entrepreneurship education seeks to develop students' generic and soft skills and competencies including communications skills, decision-making, problem-solving, critical thinking, innovative spirit, and leadership skills (Daniel et al., 2017), taking into consideration the emerging skills associated with and imposed by the technological advancements in the realm of tourism and hospitality (Hsu et al., 2017), and equip students with qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques, strategic management, and broad entrepreneurial context-related knowledge that can qualify students to develop creative ideas (Weiermair et al., 2006).

The teaching approach is also significant in cultivating entrepreneurial culture among tourism students. Simulating the real work environment, introducing students to the best practices in the realm of tourism and hospitality through presenting case studies and inviting experts from the field as guest speakers, and promoting the learning-by-doing approach; are among the mechanisms that can be adopted to trigger student awareness to entrepreneurship and foster their creative thinking (Fayolle et al., 2006).

Figure 4. Pillars of Entrepreneurship Education



3.2. Private Sector

The private sector is a fundamental component in tourism entrepreneurship and it is the catalyst in supporting and financing the initiatives launched by the entrepreneurs. Although entrepreneurs depend mostly on their own or family's financial resources to initiate a business, they might later resort to other individual investors, senior partners, or companies within their social network to get more funding (Wang et al., 2022).

One of these financial resources is venture funding where the funder/investor could be approached by an entrepreneur to address resource inferiority and liability newness (failure risk), however, the venture capitalist is usually cautious and reluctant when making the decision to invest in a new business, thus, a deep evaluation is carried out based on the presented information in the entrepreneur's business proposal (Fu et al., 2022). Venture capital businesses have different derives behind funding any business, from a commercial-wise perspective some of them fund entrepreneurial activities expecting to maximize their returns on investment, while some capitalists fund new initiatives and products to explore market potentials, and there are some firms that fund exclusively the well-established businesses to increase their market share (Dimov et al., 2007). Here it is necessary to indicate that the government can positively interfere by giving incentives to venture capitalists to motivate them to invest in those nascent innovative businesses (Rodriguez-Sanchez et al., 2019).

Joint ventures are among the approaches that can be used to encourage partners from the private sector to take part in entrepreneurial activities. Inviting external talent, advisors, and investors to run joint projects could be also vital for local entrepreneurs to gain the necessary expertise in the field (Wu et al., 2022). However, in some cases, the overreliance on external funders might become a challenge for local communities as the leading positions and roles might be dominated by external people instead of local ones (Aquino et al., 2018). In the same vein, some lifestyle entrepreneurs avoid taking loans from individuals for not being exposed to any kind of threats to their autonomy (Skokic & Morrison, 2011).

In social entrepreneurship, the main sources of funding are through seeking to build partnerships with profit-oriented businesses, angel funds, venture capital, capital market,

money collected from social activist movements, foundations, and donors, and offering products at high prices relying on the claims that some revenues are to support local communities (Day & Mody, 2017). Unlike commercial entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurs seek more to receive funds from divergent sources whether with or without return-on-investment expectations, however, the reliance on philanthropic donations is still prevalent (Mahato et al., 2023).

3.3. Professional Associations

Professional associations, which are often established and managed by the private sector, are among the key players in boosting entrepreneurial activities through contributing to creating a business-friendly environment and providing entrepreneurs with needed support services (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005). These professional services are depicted in the collaborative professional associations which can be either formal networks and associations for entrepreneurs or informal networking initiatives (Kimbu et al., 2019).

These professional associations and organizational entities could be also created and supported by local governments to fulfil certain tasks related to destination management and marketing and promote partnership and collaboration projects between tourism businesses (Dredge, 2017).

In addition, professional associations have a vital role in improving the quality of labour forces involved in the tourism industry through launching education-industry cooperative partnerships to develop tourism and hospitality employees' knowledge and skills. Such partnerships are also employed to incorporate tourism and hospitality industry standards into the realm of education (Breen, 2002).

The professional associations, that take the collaborative network shape, aim to boost networking, launch skills development initiatives, and reduce the entry barriers in face of entrepreneurs (Kimbu et al., 2019). They also provide a better communication environment and positive interaction atmosphere that contribute to knowledge exchange and promote the organizational learning culture among the involved businesses, which, in return, serves to reduce businesses' failure rate for nascent entrepreneurs (Horng et al., 2021).

Maintaining the quality of services is also one of the significant issues addressed by these professional associations through providing certification services. For instance, some environment-friendly associations provide labelling systems and certification services for the entrepreneurial activities to ensure their complete adherence to sustainability and environment protection requirements (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005).

3.4. Governmental bodies

State support is crucial in paving the way for entrepreneurship in tourism as it facilitates the transition to the entrepreneurial culture by adopting adequate strategies that contribute to tourism development on the local level (Booth et al., 2020). When setting visions, strategies, and actions to enhance the business environment, governments usually engage and consult with the private sector following the industry-oriented policy approach. However, this could sometimes result in directing these policies toward the interests of large tourism firms at the expense of small businesses due to the closer proximity to and greater impact of large corporations on policy-makers (Dredge, 2017). Besides these macro strategies and policies, the public sector's contribution to the development of entrepreneurship in tourism can be also reflected in developing the needed infrastructure, research and development projects, entrepreneurship-oriented policies, and safety (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005).

Moreover, the governmental endeavours to enhance the entrepreneurial environment could include promoting entrepreneurial education along with launching and supporting tourism-related vocational training, reducing unnecessary regulations, restrictions, and bureaucratic procedures, and prioritizing nascent entrepreneurs and the less advantaged social categories such as people in rural areas, women (Moyle et al., 2020). Government interventions might be also through addressing the taxation issues and adopting the necessary welfare and non-welfare strategies for promoting entrepreneurial activities (Wang et al., 2022).

However, this is highly determined by the institutional environment in which businesses work. For instance, countries with great size of state sectors, high taxation levels, and extensive welfare systems are unlikely to provide appropriate incentives for

entrepreneurial activities (Aidis et al., 2012). Moreover, entrepreneurs might be less interested in starting a new business in an environment with weak institutions, inefficient regulatory systems, high level of corruption, and weakness in the market economy, as those present in many developing countries, resulting in negatively influencing the expected return on investment and hampering entrepreneurs from running a business (Aidis et al., 2012). In contrast, governments in developed countries might take the lead in promoting entrepreneurship in tourism by carrying out some top-down exogenous development interventions through conducting mega pioneer projects or events in the less advantaged regions (Qu & Zollet, 2023). For instance, many European countries use entrepreneurship in tourism to address the need for development in rural areas and to improve the quality of life for people living in these marginalized regions (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005).

4. Infra-structure and super-structure needed for tourism entrepreneurship

Tourism entrepreneurship is in need for the so-called “enabling conditions” that can make tourism industry flourish through paving the way for businesses to work, generate revenues, and gain the expected profits. The enabling conditions include safety and security in terms of the low crime rates as a prerequisite for operating a business as well as attracting tourists, offering the adequate quality of services in the tourist destination, and visa and immigration and other entry-related procedures (Dredge, 2017). Communication and information technology-related services are also required to improve the entrepreneurial environment (Zapalska & Brozik, 2004).

From a tourist destination life cycle perspective, the speed of development is determined by the availability of services, infrastructure including transportation, security, and communication, easy access to finance, and skilled workforces, which represent the pillars on which entrepreneurship is based (Weiermair et al., 2006). The lack of adequate infrastructure might hinder the flourishing of entrepreneurial activities and the development plans in the destination as a whole. In particular, entrepreneurs in rural and marginalized areas are most likely to be exposed to service and infrastructure inferiority and shortage at the first stages of the destination lifecycle which negatively prevents them

from developing and operating their businesses appropriately (Weiermair et al., 2006). In this regard, the government plays a crucial role beside adopting policies in favour of tourism and carrying out and supporting development efforts, as it is mostly responsible for constructing roads, railways, airports, and providing power, water, efficient sewage systems, and other facilities and services that enable entrepreneurs to reach the supply sources and access the labour market (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005). However, the ability to build adequate facilities varies between countries based on their size and economic structure. Most developed countries usually have the financial capacity to heavily spend on infrastructure projects needed for entrepreneurship while poor countries are mostly deficient in this regard (Aidis et al., 2012).

The availability and quality of super-structure facilities are also important to create a vibrant tourism environment and enhance local tourism growth. Although tourist destinations can capitalize on their natural and cultural assets to attract both tourists and investments, it is required to improve the tourism business environment by securing on the variety and quality of tourist-related facilities including resorts, hotels, restaurants, transportation services, shopping centres entertainment centres, and museums that are imperative to enhance destination's competitive advantage, increase the tourist demand, and make entrepreneurial activities in tourism flourish (Lerner & Haber, 2001; Dredge, 2017).

4. 1. Capacity Building, empowerment and investment facilitation

4.1.1 Training and education

Human capital is the heart of entrepreneurship thus, enhancing its quality through entrepreneurship education and training is crucial. Entrepreneurship education refers to developing individuals' broad knowledge and theoretical concepts, skills, and values that enable them to interpret, evaluate, analyse, and solve the faced challenges (Gurel et al., 2010), while training refers to developing knowledge and skills that help individuals perform specific tasks and reach the required performance (Fayolle et al., 2006).

Local governments usually have the lead in putting the appropriate strategies to establish and promote educational and vocational programs that provide qualified workers to the tourism labour market (Daniel et al., 2017). From a socio-economic perspective, education and training programs are particularly important for supporting local governments' efforts in addressing challenges faced by the marginalized categories including women and the poor people in the less advantaged geographical regions, especially in the rural areas, and improving their economic and social conditions (Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2020).

In the tourism entrepreneurship context, people with higher educational attainment and strong attachment to the real work environment through either on-site training or past work experiences in tourism and hospitality are more likely to venture and succeed in enterprising, thus, spreading the entrepreneurial culture can be through reforming the formal education and fostering the vocational programs (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). The successful tourism programs focus on developing students' entrepreneurial mindset, exposing students to the real work environment, preparing students to get engaged directly in the tourism labour market, and building a strong and effective education-industry partnership (Daniel et al., 2017).

On the other hand, launching training programs for those who are already working in the field (referred to as continuing and lifelong learning or professional development programs) is of great importance. This can be done through developing a strong partnership between educational institutions, tourism and hospitality businesses, and professional associations in the field (Breen, 2002). Yet, taking into consideration that most tourism businesses are SMEs, training programs need to overcome the constraints that might hinder the involvement of entrepreneurs in these businesses especially the distance for the external trainings, time that has to be flexible, and cost that should be affordable (Becton & Graetz, 2001). In addition, when targeting small entrepreneurs, the training programs seek to enhance their ability to analyse the business environment in which their enterprises are operate as well as build their capacity on how to act accordingly (Kallmuenzer et al., 2019). Moreover, considering that most small entrepreneurs are suffering from stress and excessive work addiction (workaholism), these training programs might consider entrepreneurs' well-being and mental health and aid them.

4.1.2 Business Support, coaching and mentorship

Support programs need to focus on the main challenges in the face of entrepreneurship (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). For instance, entrepreneurs face challenges in handling internal and external finances at the early stage of running the businesses, which is, in many cases, imputed to the lack of required financial knowledge and skills, thus, training nascent entrepreneurs on how to plan financially for their entrepreneurial journey is imperative to surmount this obstacle (Zapalska & Brozik, 2004). Public sector support is important in enhancing entrepreneurs' access to education and training opportunities (Jaafar et al., 2015), and in conducting workshops and trainings in which experts in different entrepreneurial aspects are invited to coach local people on the best practices in operating businesses (Güzel et al., 2021). This requires launching public-private initiatives to build the nascent entrepreneurs' capacities and improve their skills through providing them with personal support, mentoring, expertise sharing and exchanging (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005).

On the other hand, social capital, that facilitates the interaction between entrepreneurs and locals, is also an important approach to introduce local people to opportunities that tourism offers in their region by looking at stories of success and might trigger their interest in enterprise in tourism (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Entrepreneurs can train locals on how to start businesses in tourism, market and sell their products using traditional and digital channels including social media platforms, and even create a brand (Wang et al., 2022).

Mentorship is another tool that can be employed to enhance entrepreneurs' social networks, operational knowledge, and skills. Mentors, old practitioners, and experienced entrepreneurs can enrich the prospective entrepreneurs' understanding of the reality of entrepreneurship, and prepare them to handle the adverse situations (Kumar et al., 2022).

4.1.3 Business incubation

Promoting entrepreneurship in tourism requires consistent support to the individuals with the intention to enterprise. This can be through facilitating the entrepreneurial journey by eliminating the constraints in the face of entrepreneurs which hinder them from investing

in tourism projects. Furthermore, the generosity in offering economic incentives for investors, the nascent entrepreneurs in particular, will render venturing into tourism be more feasible and lucrative in terms of expected revenues and profits (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005).

Being mostly labelled by the limited financial resources and insufficient past entrepreneurial experience, entrepreneurs need to be incubated to start a business and accelerate its growth. When starting a business, small entrepreneurs mostly face liquidity problems that force them sometimes to follow the so-called “bootstrapping” mechanisms that include eliminating some infrastructure costs (e.g. working from home instead of renting a space), searching for a job to cover the cost of the operated business, or relying on unpaid students who join the business in their internship period (Rodriguez-Sanchez et. al., 2019). The lack of managerial skills is also among the factors that can hinder entrepreneurs from succeeding in the entrepreneurial journey, thus, incubation should address these drawbacks by arming entrepreneurs, through well-structured training programs, with the necessary skills and techniques to overcome challenges and survive their businesses (Lerner & Haber, 2001). Through working as a hub that helps entrepreneurs in receiving low-cost facilities and connects with field experts, consultants, government, and lending institutions representatives; incubators can be determinant in improving local people’s mindset in dealing with entrepreneurial processes and practices (Zapalska & Brozik, 2004).

The incubation initiatives could be supported and financed by private firms, NGOs, local municipalities, and public bodies including educational institutions. For instance, universities might host business incubators that sponsor students’ creative projects, guide them in pursuing their entrepreneurial journey, and offer them access to the necessary resources to venture into tourism (Fayolle et al., 2006). Implementing incubation programs and offering entrepreneurs an affordable workplace was found to be effective in increasing entrepreneurial intention and, eventually, driving tourism growth and creating jobs (Moyle et al., 2020). Offering entrepreneurs physical workspace and incubator sessions is reckoned to be important especially when considering their limited financial resources (Selby et al., 2011).

Moreover, establishing support centres that provide nascent entrepreneurs with market research services to identify potential opportunities based on the targeted audience's needs can significantly raise the prospective entrepreneur's awareness of the innovative initiatives that can be launched and, subsequently, will lead to the development of more creative and sustainable entrepreneurial activities (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005).

It should be noted that although entrepreneurs are usually more stimulated to explore potential entrepreneurial opportunities considering the high unemployment rate (Fu et al., 2019), governments in developing countries are criticized for not being supportive of nascent entrepreneurs, especially in rural areas. For instance, the active role of local governments in seeding and incubating new ventures in tourism along with training programs and incentives for local entrepreneurs' projects are all lacking in these rural areas (Jaafar et al., 2015).

4. 2. Sustainability of tourism entrepreneurship

4.2.1 Promoting local entrepreneurship

Promoting the entrepreneurship culture among locals is aligned with the required inclusive development that Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) calls for (United Nations, 2015). To promote local entrepreneurship, the local decision-makers have to explore first tourism entrepreneurship potentials in their region, barriers that hinder entrepreneurial activities in terms of shortage in financial and human resources and lack of marketing skills, and the actions required to address nascent entrepreneurs' challenges (Selby et al., 2011). To reach this, governments are called to adopt the right strategies to foster entrepreneurship in tourism, yet, the strategies need to be scrutinized whether they fit the local contexts by consulting and engaging local people in the initial phases of the development plan (Booth et al., 2020). Later, governments can launch awareness and education campaigns and advocacy initiatives in order to introduce local communities to the entrepreneurial opportunities and reach the desired cultural change (Dredge, 2017). The policy makers need to facilitate knowledge exchange about entrepreneurial activities between individuals to motivate the reluctant local people to an enterprise by eliminating their fear of uncertainty (Ramos-Rodríguez et al., 2012).

In addition, entrepreneurs have also a considerable role in promoting and introducing the entrepreneurial opportunities for their local employees to encourage them to enterprise and arm them with professional experience that entitles them to become tourism producers (Matarrita-Cascante & Suess, 2020). Through the social entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs can also lead the transformation in their societies through spreading the entrepreneurial culture among the poor and most marginalized categories to secure a source of income and create job opportunities (Kimbu & Ngoasong, 2016).

4.2.2 Enhancing value chain in tourism entrepreneurship

To make the tourism industry more beneficial for local communities, tourism value chain might rely on motivating enterprises that provide a wide range of tourism services and products to use creative design thinking and innovations in increasing the positive impacts in the local contexts where their businesses are operated (Mahato et al., 2021). In this vein, plans and strategies on the regional level need to be undertaken in order to support local entrepreneurs in clustering and establishing business chains (Güzel et al., 2021).

Moreover, when considering severe competition in the tourist market, local small enterprises need to boost the collaboration by sourcing out some product components to each other and building strong partnerships and alliances among them in order to deliver competitive tourist services and products, in return, this will lead to increase the integration between the various tourism providers as well as increase tourism contribution to local economic development (Weiermair et al., 2006).

4.2.3 Encouraging differentiation and innovation

Tourism product differentiation and innovation are necessitated due to the highly competitive environment and radical changes the tourism industry witnesses in terms of new consumer, technological, and environmental trends along with increasing demand for unique and novel tourism experiences and the advent of many innovative tools in the tourism market (e.g. sharing economy platforms) which might be seen as threat and opportunity for the brick and mortar tourism businesses (Daniel et al., 2017).

Entrepreneurs have to consider innovation in their businesses due to its critical role in achieving sustainable business stability and survival in the long-run. This is particularly important considering the fact that entrepreneurs in tourism are usually prone to the crises and fluctuations in generated income due to the seasonality, hence, innovative tools should be adopted to develop new and attractive tourism products to mitigate crises and seasonality consequences (Jaafar et al., 2015).

Enterprises with innovative vision and practices are more likely to reach economic growth and have better access to new markets (Ahmad et al., 2022). Besides identifying market and community needs while considering the various resource constraints and potential challenges, entrepreneurs have to design their strategies carefully in order to enhance the business competitiveness in the market and brand themselves as creative product designers and producers (Mahato et al., 2021). In addition, the emerging technological trends require entrepreneurs to periodically revise their strategies and operational techniques to be aligned with these novel technological tools as this will be beneficial in terms of reaching flexible prices, reducing communication and distribution-related costs, and affronting some market entry barriers (Fuchs et al., 2010).

Local governments are called to run projects to help entrepreneurs explore local potential opportunities in tourism and seek innovative mechanisms to improve their operations (Güzel et al., 2021). Moreover, governments are invited to finance initiatives to develop new products and promote partnerships between small and large enterprises in order to overcome marketing barriers nascent entrepreneurs commonly face (Jaafar et al., 2015). This could be also made through strengthening the public-private partnership and establishing innovation platforms that bring together all relevant stakeholders including government bodies, external investors and experts, and NGOs with local people to facilitate learning, and organizational, institutional, and technological innovation, and enhance entrepreneurial processes and practices (Wu et al., 2022). The platforms can boost the entrepreneurial embeddedness which, in return, will pave the way for acquiring and exchanging knowledge and necessary skills (Wu et al., 2022).

4.2.4 Branding, franchising and internationalization in Entrepreneurship

Expanding businesses and creating international brands are perhaps the most silent indicators of entrepreneurial success. After achieving success on the local level, tourism entrepreneurs might seek business growth and expansion through franchising as well as endeavouring to penetrate the international market which might imply further investment needs and increase the affronted risks.

The tendency for internationalization has been promoted by the revolutionary advances in information and communication technology over the past few decades that have massively contributed to the businesses' international orientation, formation of strong relationships and networking with international partners, and increasing businesses' ability to penetrate foreign tourist markets at a staggering pace. Information and communication technology has also facilitated exploring new business opportunities and reaching distant markets at minimum cost and risk (Glavas et al., 2014). Despite the several advantages that could be reached through internationalization, both local businesses and tourist destinations might face certain challenges. On one hand, small tourist destinations invaded by multinational companies might not be able to provide these large businesses with their needs of qualified and well-trained employees opening the windows for foreign workers to come which, in turn, will result in increasing the economic leakage (Booth et al., 2020), while on the other hand, it could be challenging for local entrepreneurial firms to maintain the balance between building relationship with the large international businesses and the need to avoid being totally controlled by them (Zapalska & Brozik, 2004).

Branding is another important aspect of the business's endeavour towards growth. On a local level, government support should be directed towards developing networking efforts and cooperation between local entrepreneurs to strengthen their product identity and formulate a distinctive destination brand (Güzel et al., 2021). In this vein, the diffusion of social media platforms represented a turning point in promoting and branding the local entrepreneurial activities at no/minimum costs as people, young generations in particular, are seeking and chasing novelty (Wu et al., 2022).

Franchising is also an indicator of success and expansion and it contributes to a stronger brand image of the franchisor. Through building franchise partnerships, the franchisor can gain access to the franchisee's local market knowledge, however, the selection process of partners should be carefully handled through considering certain criteria such as the franchisee's financial resources, knowledge of the local market, access to the labour market, reputation, and past partnerships; to avoid any damage to the franchisor's business image (Altinay et al., 2013). From a franchisee's perspective, the franchise agreement is usually followed by nascent entrepreneurs who prefer to use an existing business formula of success instead of building a new one from scratch. The franchisee entrepreneurs can benefit from the franchisor's brand and image in the tourist markets, operational systems, supporting services, and networking, in return, they are demanded to pay franchisors a royalty and other requested fees. However, the franchisees are more likely to be imitative entrepreneurs who although highly accepted in the market, are expected to affront severe competition (Koh & Hatten, 2002).

5. Situation Analysis for OIC Member Countries

5.1. Institutions, structures and Networks in OIC member states and their role in tourism entrepreneurship

SESRIC (2006) discusses that the promotion of international tourism among OIC members was explored as an important managerial implication in a report (SESRIC, 2006). It was suggested that actions should consider local communities with economical and practical support, as well as develop entrepreneurial capacities in small and medium-sized enterprises to improve the competitiveness of tourism products and services by involving other OIC member countries (SESRIC, 2006). Therefore, institutionalization and structural innovations are considered important processes for addressing this implication. Tourism entrepreneurship requires a wide range of institutions, structures, and networks that should be involved in the process of expanding entrepreneurial activities. These guide for entrepreneurs to reduce or overcome uncertainty. Entrepreneurial activities depend on formal and informal rules, so institutions, structures, and networks play a vital role in framing entrepreneurship (Sautet, 2015).

In OIC member countries, the formal and informal institutional environment provides essential guidance for individuals who wish to utilize the resources at their disposal. Entrepreneurs in these countries desire to use qualified institutions that allow them to exploit resources and opportunities, rather than relying on the economy having various resources. To respond to entrepreneurs' calls, OIC members have created and developed numerous institutions, structures, and networks, as these impact entrepreneurial decision-making and incentives to start a business and engage in value-adding activities (Audretsch, Belitski, Caiazza, & Desai, 2022).

The major items mentioned above are highly interrelated since one cannot exist without the other. To this end, OIC countries have established significant institutions funded for professional and economic purposes within their borders. The following are a few examples that represent the overall institutional efforts of OIC member countries:

- Ministry for the Promotion of Private Investment, Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) and National Entrepreneurship (Mali)
- Ministry of Trade, Industry and Youth Entrepreneurship (Niger)
- The National Confederation of Entrepreneurs (Employers) Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan (ASK) (Azerbaijan)
- The Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism Entrepreneurial Development Centre (Brunei Darussalam)
- “Damu Entrepreneurship Development Fund” and “The National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of the Republic of Kazakhstan "Atameken” (Kazakhstan)
- Ministry of Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives (Malaysia)
- SME and Entrepreneur Federation of Maldives (Maldives)
- Small Businesses and Private Entrepreneurship’s Export Promotion Fund (Uzbekistan)
- Small and medium enterprises development organization (KOSGEB) (Türkiye)

The development of supportive institutions is essential in providing entrepreneurs with the necessary resources and support to start and grow their businesses. These institutions provide funding and technical assistance to tourism entrepreneurs in OIC member countries. For example, tourism entrepreneurs in Türkiye have received significant grants from KOSGEB to start their tourism businesses, such as opening hotels. In addition, the

Islamic Development Bank (IDB), an important funding institutional provider, helps OIC member countries foster economic development and social progress. By providing access to funding, institutions can help entrepreneurs overcome financial barriers and invest in their businesses.

Tourism-specific structures, such as tourism boards and associations, can aid entrepreneurs in accessing information and resources related to the industry. These structures can also facilitate networking opportunities, which are vital for creating positive relationships and partnerships that can lead to business growth and development. Zamani-Farahani and Eid (2016) investigated tourism in OIC member countries and highlighted its importance in terms of foreign investment and financial reserves. The authors emphasized the importance of institutions, structures, and networks by illustrating the benefits of these efforts. Although tourism entrepreneurial activities differ among OIC member countries, with some (such as Saudi Arabia and Iran) focused on Muslim-friendly tourism investments (i.e., hotels, restaurants, etc.) and others on international, liberal, and leisure-focused investments, their institutions and structures serve common purposes for tourism entrepreneurs, such as helping them find economic sources, reducing poverty, and providing economic growth (Zamani-Farahani & Eid, 2016).

Networks for tourism entrepreneurship are critical for entrepreneurs to access information, resources, and expertise for collaboration and partnership in tourism investments. Furthermore, networks play a crucial role in creating significant opportunities for OIC member states. Recognizing the importance of networks in tourism entrepreneurial activities, SESRIC has started to prepare a program focusing on Tourism Capacity Building (Tourism-CaB). According to this program, OIC member countries should promote sustainable tourism development and entrepreneurship through training and capacity building. Moreover, COMCEC organized a Training of Trainers (ToT) Course on 'Promoting Entrepreneurship for Tourism Industry Competitiveness'. Similarly, the Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) aims to network with stakeholders to create entrepreneurial activities. In its latest seminar, ITC aimed to introduce tourism industry players, ranging from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), hoteliers, travel agencies, postgraduates, community-based businesses, mosque volunteers, and more, to Islamic Tourism and the Muslim-friendly ecosystem.

Institutions have a significant impact on tourism entrepreneurship in various ways. Formal institutions, such as governments, regulatory bodies, and industry associations, create an enabling environment for tourism entrepreneurs by providing a legal framework, infrastructure, and access to resources (Zamani-Farahani & Eid, 2016). These institutions also play a vital role in promoting tourism and creating awareness of the opportunities available to entrepreneurs. Moreover, informal institutions, such as social norms, cultural values, and traditions, can also impact tourism entrepreneurship. For example, in some cultures, entrepreneurship may not be considered a socially acceptable career choice, which can discourage individuals from pursuing it. On the other hand, in cultures that value innovation and risk-taking, entrepreneurship may be more encouraged and supported (Koe Hwee Nga & Shamuganathan, 2010).

Researchers have long recognized that institutions, structures, and networks play a key role in enhancing tourism entrepreneurship. These entities are essential for supporting tourism entrepreneurship in OIC member states. Providing entrepreneurs with access to resources, information, and networking opportunities, institutions, structures, and networks can help promote the growth and development of the tourism industry, which can have significant economic and social benefits for both entrepreneurs and the wider community.

In sum, professionalization, institutionalization, and internalization are crucial for creating a strong entrepreneurship culture in the countries by giving importance to institutions, structures, and networks in OIC member states. For example, they create a conducive atmosphere for businesses to thrive and expand, facilitating the connection between businesses and the necessary resources and expertise that lead to their success. In particular, in OIC member countries, these can promote professionalization with training and development opportunities for individuals. This aids in ensuring that individuals have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in their activities. Further, in terms of professionalization, ethical standards, fair competition and a commitment to continuous improvement can occur in member countries' entrepreneurial environments. Moreover, institutions, structures, and networks could also enhance institutionalization in such countries to be more formal and structured. The institutionalization can help entrepreneurs to create more defined roles and responsibilities, which in turn improve efficiency and

productivity that may attract potential investors to OIC countries. Finally, to internalize across the globe, built entrepreneurial capacity should adopt its practices and standards

5. 2. Characteristics of Entrepreneurship OIC member states

In OIC member countries, entrepreneurship is a critical driver of economic growth and a promoter of social change. Therefore, understanding the characteristics of successful entrepreneurship in these countries is crucial for policymakers, investors, and entrepreneurs themselves to formulate, organize, and manage business ventures (Khyareh & Amini, 2021). It would be better to illustrate the current economic situation in a sector context to comprehend the overall characteristics.

SMEs constitute the majority of businesses in OIC member countries and play a crucial role in national economic development by creating job opportunities (Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries, 2022a). Additionally, OIC Member States are home to 350.8 million youths (aged 15-24 years), accounting for 18.5% of their total population and 29% of the world's total youth population as of 2022 (Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries, 2022b). Llisterri et al. (2006) highlighted in their research that young entrepreneurs, who are generally well-educated and belong to the middle or upper-middle class, play a relatively larger role among high-growth entrepreneurs. Considering this, OIC has launched youth entrepreneurship activities within its programs, such as the Jointoic Youth Strategy and the VIII Kazan OIC Youth Entrepreneurship Forum. Despite the significant contribution of these characteristics to the economy, the most pressing problem faced by OIC member countries is internationalization. To address this, OIC has prepared a report on "Increasing Internationalization of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in OIC Member Countries," which highlights principles and recommendations for making SMEs structure global. In the forthcoming periods, it is estimated that these actions will have a vital impact on the OIC members' economy by promoting the development of entrepreneurship (The Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC, 2022).

To better understand the current characteristics of entrepreneurship in OIC member states, two major perspectives should be considered; entrepreneurship itself and the entrepreneur.

From the first perspective, it is stated that the most significant characteristic of entrepreneurship is that goods and services can be marketed through small-sized enterprises, which are regarded as the smallest unit of a country's economy. Additionally, entrepreneurship can influence the economy itself and change economic parameters (Özdevecioğlu & Karaca, 2015). Further, it is highlighted that entrepreneurship should have the following characteristics.

- Choosing what is marketable (i.e., products and services), in the targeted market,
- Aiming to make a profit,
- Human and material resources should be focused on basic elements,
- In financial terms, it can consist of foreign and equity capital components,
- Making possible multiple functions such as finance, production sales, and recording, etc.

A research report in Malaysia has focused on entrepreneurship development and explored the characteristics of entrepreneurship. So, Gautam and Singh (2015) summarized these characteristics as shown below.

- It is a function of innovation
- It is a function of leadership
- It is an organization-building function.
- It is a function of high achievement
- It involves the creation and operation of an enterprise.
- It is concerned with unique combinations of resources that make existing methods or products obsolete.
- It is concerned with employing, managing, and developing the factors of production.
- It is a process of creating value for customers by exploiting untapped opportunities.
- It is a strong and positive orientation towards growth in sales, income, assets, and employment.

A study by Pokrajčić (2004) focusing on the characteristics of entrepreneurship in Indonesia has revealed several significant traits of entrepreneurs. These include confidence, task orientation, outcome-driven mindset, risk-taking, leadership, originality, and future orientation. Based on the characteristics of successful entrepreneurs, Pokrajčić (2004) stated that an entrepreneur's success comes from these traits, and "personality traits," "ability to learn from experience," and "ability to adjust to his/her environment" are major determinants of an entrepreneur's characteristics. Similarly, Burbar and Shkukhani (2021) explored the characteristics of entrepreneurs in Palestine and found that being self-confident, passionately seeking new opportunities with a good network of professionals, being patient, persistent, determined, and adaptable to change were the most important attributes of entrepreneurs.

Kamaç and Kışman (2020) investigated the history and development of Turkish entrepreneurship. According to the authors, entrepreneurs who attempted to enter economic activities in the 1980s were solely profit-driven, had low levels of education, lacked professional behaviour, and did not have a vision or mission. The authors proposed that a novel free market economy and the desire to open up to the world have resulted in the emergence of new types of entrepreneurs and their characteristics. For example, the authors define new entrepreneurs and state that they should have the following characteristics: (I) being dynamic, open to change, and having a desire to develop themselves, (II) following professional management guidelines, (III) providing high-quality products and services, (IV) having a good education level, (V) meeting the expectations of different people, and (VI) aiming to provide customer satisfaction.

Self-confidence, independence, the ability to learn from failure, the need for achievement motivation, risk-taking tendencies, and innovativeness are regarded as vital characteristics of tourism entrepreneurs (Jaafar et al., 2011). Based on these characteristics, entrepreneurs can enter the industry or cope with the challenges they face in the industry.

5.3. Drivers and Challenges of tourism entrepreneurship in OIC

There is wide agreement that nations with more access to finance typically have a higher rate of entrepreneurship, thus leading to greater economic development. However,

entrepreneurs in OIC member countries often suffer from a lack of financial capital in the market, which makes it difficult for them to enter new business ventures in the tourism and hospitality industry. The availability of funding for a new business is a major driver of tourism entrepreneurs in terms of supporting their service performance (Jaafar et al., 2012). Some authors relate psychological attributes such as personality traits to drive tourism entrepreneurs while attempting to invest their savings in the industry. Therefore, this attribute is considered the most important driver of tourism entrepreneurs (Haddoud et al., 2022).

Destinations require entrepreneurs and new business start-ups to serve their growing tourism market and create economic and social value. Furthermore, the tourism industry demands entrepreneurial behaviours to apply necessary innovations. In OIC countries, tourism has not received the desired market share in the global travel industry. A report titled “International Tourism in The OIC Countries: Prospects and Challenges” has attempted to find the role of tourism in regional integration and proposed entrepreneurial activities to stimulate growth in these countries. These activities are believed to improve the quality and competitiveness of tourism products and services (Organization of Islamic Cooperation, 2020). To create appropriate strategies for tourism entrepreneurship, it is necessary to review the drivers and challenges that exist.

Addressing challenges that tourism entrepreneurship faces is vital to fostering and developing the tourism industry in OIC member countries. In this sense, policy-makers need to address various challenges include lacking or inadequate infrastructure, lack of finance, exiting policies, and international sanctions (Bagherifard et al., 2013). Despite their desire to engage in entrepreneurial activities, migrant and ethnic minorities are often challenged by legislative and administrative challenges, such as bureaucracy, complex procedures; market-related issues including a lack of qualified human resources, an influential black market, market ambiguity and instability, high turnover rates, unfamiliarity with the market environment, and limited market growth; financial challenges such as limited access to financial resources and high tax rates; and socio-cultural challenges, such as the language barrier, and social insecurity (Alrawadieh et al., 2019).

5.4. Current needs and requirements for local tourism entrepreneurs to grow

OIC member countries lack a social structure to promote and support entrepreneurship and other local improvement efforts. Furthermore, the latest pandemic has severely impacted the economic activities of local communities in OIC states. To overcome pandemic-related issues, these countries are developing their entrepreneur facilities or microeconomic entrepreneur activities for economic recovery (Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries, 2022c).

To understand the current needs for local tourism entrepreneurship in OIC countries, it is essential to understand the current situation of the tourism industry and create developmental strategies (Dalgin et al., 2015). While the tourism industry accepts traditional systems for its operations, new technologies are welcomed by service providers to gain a competitive advantage in the global tourism industry. Thus, local entrepreneurs should adapt to industry requirements. The following current needs and requirements should be considered by local tourism entrepreneurs.

Access to financial resources is one of the major needs for local tourism entrepreneurs to grow in OIC member countries. Local areas in these countries have limited economic sources, and entrepreneurs in such areas cannot access funding, impacting their ability to invest in their local tourism businesses (COMCEC, 2016b). Therefore, financial institutions should provide reasonable and accessible financing options to local tourism entrepreneurs to improve their infrastructure, enhance their local tourism services, and increase their marketing attempts to bring potential visitors to their countries.

There is a lack of human capital in OIC member countries for local tourism entrepreneurship. Capacity-building programs for training, mentorship, and coaching services can help local tourism entrepreneurs obtain the necessary skills and knowledge to develop their business processes, tourist services, and marketing strategies (Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries, 2022a; 2022b).

Technology is essential in various fields of the tourism industry to deliver services to tourists. Therefore, local tourism entrepreneurs should prioritize the use of technology in

their services to improve their businesses' competence and efficacy. Technology can facilitate business actions, achieve tourist relationships, and market products and services (Maraqqa & Darmawan, 2016). To enable entrepreneurs to use technology effectively, there is a need for the development of digital infrastructure, including high-speed internet (Ulbrich, 2023). Governments and other stakeholders should provide incentives and support for entrepreneurs to adopt technology in their businesses. This will help them to reach new international tourists, increase revenue, and compete effectively with other businesses in the sector (Abdullah, 2019; COMCEC, 2022).

Innovation and product development are key requirements for local entrepreneurs in OIC member countries beyond their need to grow (COMCEC, 2022). Local tourism entrepreneurs should create new and unique tourism products and services to fulfil changing preferences, needs, and wants of travellers. Providing high-quality, personalized experiences that differentiate their business from competitors across the world is critical for local tourism entrepreneurs in OIC member countries. They may also invest in various research programs and developments to explore popular trends and opportunities in the tourism markets. Therefore, innovating and improving their core services and products can help local entrepreneurs attract more visitors to the destination and benefit from their enterprises.

In summary, local entrepreneurship is a dynamic process that involves vision, change, and creation. It requires the application of energy and passion towards the creation and implementation of new ideas and creative solutions (Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, 2013). Therefore, local tourism entrepreneurs should have passion, perseverance, and persistence, leading to entrepreneurial success and policy support.

5.5. Development of local tourism entrepreneurship and paths to growth

The main reason behind the low expenditure per capita in tourism is the lack of tourism activities and a low standard of service. Due to restricted resources, OIC countries often acquire foreign franchises to gain access to advantageous know-how, enabling them to benefit from cutting-edge technology and other advantages brought by the franchisor.

While international brands and management firms are working to improve service quality, they are also causing significant economic loss by transferring profits' commissions to the franchisor, expatriate staff wages, and management fees. Addressing these challenges requires a focus on tourism entrepreneurship and strengthening local entrepreneurial abilities. This approach can create more opportunities and promote economic growth.

The literature abundantly recognizes the significance of local tourism entrepreneurship in the economic development of countries. Research conducted on this type of entrepreneurship is well-documented regarding its economic benefits and contribution to enhancing residents' quality of life (Cihangir & Demirhan, 2021). Moreover, since OIC member countries also prioritize sustainability in their policies, it has been highlighted that local tourism entrepreneurship should be developed based on visitors' demands for local, minor, and authentic tourism services and products. These values are considered important in local regions, stimulating tourism entrepreneurship (Çamur & Cihangir, 2017).

Local tourism entrepreneurship is responsible for a significant portion of economic growth and job creation in local regions of OIC member countries and is considered a "key strategy for national development and competitiveness" (Güzel et al., 2021). The importance of this type of entrepreneurship largely depends on the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) since the majority of tourism entrepreneurship activities are dominated by SMEs in both developed and developing destinations. Moreover, these enterprises play an essential role in job creation, output growth, export growth, participation in global trade relations, poverty alleviation, economic empowerment, and broader wealth distribution (COMCEC, 2022).

The development of local tourism entrepreneurship in OIC member countries depends on several significant factors, including social, economic, and legislative factors that can drive individuals to participate in entrepreneurship activities and create the aforementioned benefits. Moreover, OIC members have experienced different levels of development in local tourism entrepreneurship and continue to increase their capital, including human, social, political, financial, physical, natural, and psychological capital, to further promote local tourism entrepreneurship (Aliyev, 2023).

The development of local tourism entrepreneurship in OIC member countries has the potential to generate employment opportunities, create income, and promote economic progress (OIC, 2018). However, OIC members face several obstacles, including limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient government support (COMCEC, 2019). Overcoming these challenges is crucial for the development of local entrepreneurship, and local authorities should take steps to address these issues for the betterment of OIC member countries. Moreover, OIC members can adopt strategies to facilitate the development of local tourism entrepreneurship.

Access to finance is one of the significant obstacles that OIC countries face in local tourism entrepreneurship. Providing access to finance for entrepreneurs in the industry is seen as a path to growth in OIC countries by promoting local tourism entrepreneurship (COMCEC, 2019). However, the majority of local tourism entrepreneurs lack the essential capital to start or expand their businesses (Haneef, Muhammad & Pramanik, 2014). To overcome this issue and develop entrepreneurship in OIC member countries, governmental bodies can collaborate with financial organizations to deliver reasonably priced loans and other financial products to them. Moreover, national authorities can establish venture capital funds to support innovative tourism start-ups for the development of entrepreneurship growth (Deloitte, 2023).

Enhancing infrastructure is crucial to sustaining the development of local tourism entrepreneurship (Nazmfar et al., 2019). Investing in better roads, accommodations, and other local facilities can lead to greater tourist attraction and more growth opportunities. Unfortunately, many OIC countries are struggling with insufficient infrastructure, including transport, communication, and energy (İhsanoğlu, 2009). Governments can make significant investments in infrastructure to enhance the competitiveness of the tourism industry and boost its appeal to tourists. By modernizing existing attractions and increasing access points, they can create an environment that accommodates more travelers. Moreover, governments can collaborate with private sector organizations to construct necessary tourist infrastructure (Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries, 2022c), such as accommodations, vacation spots, and amusement parks.

To encourage local tourism entrepreneurship, governments can provide training and education to help progress their development (Zamani-Farahani & Eid, 2016). Such efforts would benefit both tourists and businesses alike. Running a profitable tourism business can be challenging for entrepreneurs without the necessary experience or expertise. However, with the proper guidance and resources, it is possible to build a successful venture in this field. Governments should invest in training and educational workshops for local tourism entrepreneurs to ensure their success. These programs provide them with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in the global tourism environment. Governments can collaborate with universities and educational institutions to create courses and programs related to the tourism sector. This could open up new job opportunities in this field and be beneficial for all (Dabour, 2003).

Governments can further encourage local tourism businesses by creating a supportive business ecosystem. This would assist potential entrepreneurs in taking advantage of the opportunities present in this sector. To stimulate business growth, governments can take steps to simplify the bureaucratic process, improve regulations' comprehension, and provide tax breaks. Additionally, governments can establish tourism promotion bodies to promote their countries as ideal vacation spots and attract more visitors. This would further benefit the local economy and create more jobs. By creating a suitable business climate, governments have the power to foster entrepreneurship and stimulate economic growth within the tourism sector. This could help attract investments and create new jobs, leading to a prosperous economy.

5. 6. **Infra-structure and super-structure needs, and supporting services for tourism entrepreneurship in OIC**

Although tourism is known as an experience-based industry, substantial infrastructure and superstructures are key elements of tourism development. They are crucial in tourists' decision-making and are also considered important for investors. In order to meet the needs required for the tourism industry to develop its services and products, long-term government support in OIC member countries is necessary.

Although some infrastructure and superstructure need and supporting services for tourism entrepreneurship are partially provided, a report prepared by the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (2022) indicated that some OIC member countries, such as Niger, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Afghanistan, need to improve their structural needs for economic growth worldwide.

Nowadays, the lack of infrastructure and superstructures are the most pressing issues that the majority of countries face in tourism development. Although locals benefit from these structures, their development mostly depends on economic activities in the regions. Unless they are developed, insufficient structures can hinder many tourism initiatives (Saraç & Türkay, 2019). For this reason, in an OIC member country like Türkiye, improving infrastructure, superstructures, and supporting services in tourism destinations is crucial. For example, Türkiye launched a "Development of Tourism Infrastructure Small Scale Infrastructure Support Program" and encouraged local authorities to improve their structures and services (Development Agency, 2015).

In some OIC countries, inadequate and unstable electricity supply, telecommunications, transportation routes, low technological capacity, and water supply are among the few infrastructures needed for the operation of tourism enterprises. Governments should improve these limited resources to encourage people to participate in entrepreneurial activities. In recent years, digital infrastructure has become the most important attribute that entrepreneurs consider when investing in tourism services. Additionally, COMCEC sees technological infrastructure as a driver of innovation (Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation, 2022). Although local authorities are responsible for most infrastructure, they often have limited knowledge and competency to achieve large projects. Considering that infrastructure aims to increase competitiveness in tourism and attract international visitors, tourism entrepreneurs should be supported with these investments.

OIC member countries have rich cultural and natural attractions that can stimulate a large number of potential national and international tourists. However, the inadequate superstructure in the majority of OIC member countries, especially in local destinations, is a major challenge for tourism entrepreneurship since these structures are considered the core facilities and services that support and improve the tourism industry. Therefore, OIC

countries are required to invest in such areas to promote entrepreneurship in tourism. For example, constructing airports, roads, and transportation systems can help targeted tourists access tourist destinations. Additionally, hotels, restaurants, travel-related companies, and other hospitality services are major supporting services in tourism. Thus, investing in these services partially completes tourism development in the destinations. However, these steps are not enough to achieve desired tourism development in the region. OIC member countries can identify major tourism destinations and attract tourism entrepreneurs to invest their assets in such supporting tourism services.

Some OIC members lack certain services that are essential for tourism. Safety and security measures, healthcare facilities, and emergency services are some of the services that tourists prioritize during their visits to destinations. To address this, OIC has developed some action programs that are related to tourism and create trust for entrepreneurs who wish to invest in tourism services in OIC member countries. By investing in the overall superstructure environment, OIC countries can create a conducive environment for tourism entrepreneurship, which can lead to the creation of job opportunities, regional economic growth, and poverty reduction – all of which are major issues in OIC countries.

The tourism industry requires a wide range of ancillary services to facilitate and support primary tourism services in destinations. These services are desirable to make any travel complete for tourists and play a vital role in tourism-related products and services, despite having indirect impacts on tourism development. Tour guides or escorts, theme parks, souvenirs and shopping environments, car rentals, tourism brochures (online or offline), travel SIM cards, airport-related services, hotel-based services, and foreign exchange are some of the vital ancillary services that tourists may demand during their visitation (Anthony Camilleri, 2018). While some OIC member countries provide these services for tourists, others cannot offer them. Therefore, the availability of these services is critical in terms of creating a tourism entrepreneurship environment in member countries.

In summary, tourism entrepreneurs identify, create, and develop new business ventures in the industry while interacting with tourism demand and supply in destinations. If they desire to connect with potential demand, tourism supply should be provided to help them achieve their goals. OIC members should focus on improving their tourism supply to

promote tourism entrepreneurship. Member countries may have specific attractions, and they should create appropriate strategies for these attractions.

5. 7. Improving local entrepreneurial capacity in tourism

OIC member countries prioritize local entrepreneurship in their core plans and development agenda. The key to the success of local entrepreneurship is mostly based on the availability of enterprises, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Improving these enterprises' capacity depends on creating intensive capital for local areas. Moreover, the tourism industry is a highly competitive field of activity in the world. Considering the major role of both aspects, it should be noted that they are the way to create new entrepreneurial activities. Additionally, entrepreneurs' knowledge of managing risks and organizing the business environment is a crucial aspect of improving local entrepreneurial capacity in tourism due to its nature.

In a strategic roadmap focusing on the period between 2020 and 2025 for OIC members, major necessities and priority areas have been determined. According to the roadmap, education and training for entrepreneurship are crucial for new starters to undertake independent jobs in the country. It is stated that "entrepreneurs must acquire initial training, develop skills through various means such as vocational training, informal training, and on-the-job training, gain access to a paid job, and finally start self-employment" (Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries, 2019). Education and training are the best ways to improve local tourism entrepreneurship skills. In particular, OIC member countries' local potential lacks a basic entrepreneurship education. For this, Within OIC, every country aims at various tailored entrepreneurship training schemes for youth, women, and the unemployed.

According to a report on "Training Program on Entrepreneurship Development for OIC Countries," member countries should create a common training-based platform to promote entrepreneurship and create a roadmap for stable and sustainable economic growth (Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, 2013). This program aims to enhance the knowledge of local entrepreneurs on generating ideas, developing various business models, managing financing and budgeting, legal and

regulatory issues, marketing, organizational functions, and entrepreneurial growth. Building tourism entrepreneurial capacity through training can help members create local brands within OIC member countries, reduce leakages, and promote sustainable tourism development.

Creating networks is a vital skill that entrepreneurs can use to improve their business opportunities. Connecting with professionals across the tourism and hospitality industry broadens their network of potential tourists, visitors, or travellers. In OIC member countries, enhancing networks is considered a catalyst for promoting trade and economic growth (Maraqa & Darmawan, 2016). Che Senik et al. (2011) highlighted in their paper that institutions, business associates, and personal relations create networking opportunities for local businesses and entrepreneurship. They also drew an overall picture of the process from local to internationalization, with the implications that networking functions (initiative awareness, trigger, accomplish, and strengthen/sustain) are critical linkages for internationalization.

A study conducted in an OIC member country, Gambia, by Carlisle et al. (2013) has provided important implications for local economic development, highlighting that innovation is the most important asset of a local destination. The advancement and quality of the international tourism industry depend largely on collaborative capacity-building attempts through stakeholders. The authors emphasized that local destinations should be aware of their opportunities and list them through any association of small-scale enterprises in tourism.

The competitiveness of local economies is determined not only by their technology but also by their skills. Therefore, the use of technology by local tourism entrepreneurs can lead to success for OIC member countries, as it plays a major role in economic growth (Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries, 2019). Considering the importance of technology in local tourism products (Purnomo, 2021), entrepreneurs can use these tools in their product development and marketing to increase competitiveness (Sharafutdinov et al., 2020). Technology skills also aim to attract potential visitors to local destinations and allow local entrepreneurs to share information about their products and services. Moreover, technology helps local entrepreneurs reduce labour costs,

improve operational efficiency, and provide well-improved tourism products and services (Jadhav & Mundhe, 2011).

Government policies are critical for improving local entrepreneurship in tourism as they provide funding for locals to start their businesses. Additionally, nearly all OIC countries provide various incentives for foreign investors, such as exemptions from income tax, and sales tax, and fewer required permits and licenses, which can benefit foreign entrepreneurs attempting to conduct business in member countries (The Islamic Centre for Development of Trade, 2022). These incentives can also provide opportunities for locals who desire to open tourism enterprises or develop tourism products and services.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has developed a framework to build national entrepreneurial capacity in countries. Policymakers can follow these guidelines to promote entrepreneurship. UNCTAD has investigated some OIC member countries, such as Malaysia and Pakistan while creating this strategy's goals and priorities. OIC member countries also use these guidelines to promote inclusive and sustainable tourism development while improving local entrepreneurial capacity.

Boosting entrepreneurship in the tourism sector can bring various advantages to OIC member countries. It encourages the optimal use of tourism potential, promotes innovation, and facilitates destination development. Alternative strategies to support tourism entrepreneurship in OIC member countries include investing in infrastructure in OIC destinations, and adapting legislation and bureaucracy to create a more favorable investment environment through subsidies, credits, land allocations, and tax reductions. Additionally, offering capacity-building programs for local human resources and supporting local entrepreneurs, intra-OIC investors, and brands can facilitate the sustainable planned development of member country destinations.

5.8. Future needs of tourism entrepreneurs and the transformations of tourism entrepreneurship

To achieve success in the tourism industry, destinations require various transformations and must keep up with the contemporary world. While OIC member countries are currently building their capacity, they are also determining the future needs of tourism entrepreneurs. To address this, countries are identifying the future needs of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) based on the development of the tourism industry. In particular, they are following recent and future tourism trends to capitalize on opportunities in the industry.

Tourism entrepreneurship is characterized by new developments in businesses, attractions, services, and more. Successful tourism entrepreneurs are known for being innovative, creative, and focused on the needs of tourists. They are also eager to follow emerging trends and changing tourist preferences in the industry. At this point, the tourism industry requires new ideas to promote its attractions for long-term success and sustainability.

Initially, the tourism industry is based on investments that require funding, which is considered the most significant challenge that tourism entrepreneurs face in their entrepreneurial activities. This challenge will also be relevant for future tourism entrepreneurs. To overcome this issue, OIC member countries can provide a platform that helps entrepreneurs find financial capital for their investments. Additionally, human capital is another future need of tourism entrepreneurs.

Tourism is critical for OIC member countries, and the organization has identified major programs that member countries should prioritize (Organization of Islamic Cooperation, 2018). Firstly, OIC countries should raise public awareness of their tourism assets, including attractions, resources, and facilities, and provide detailed information on tourism values to attract potential visitors. Countries should also enhance tourism infrastructure, support joint projects, and encourage authorities to prepare national and regional tourism strategies to attract tourism entrepreneurs to the industry. Additionally, appropriate legal, institutional, and administrative conditions are crucial for expanding tourism activities in

the countries. Planners and developers can frame these conditions to promote entrepreneurial tourism activities, as these help potential entrepreneurs encourage and facilitate tourism investments.

Statistical, Economic, and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (2022c) has proposed some future needs related to tourism entrepreneurship that member countries should consider. At the OIC cooperation level, it has been suggested that:

- Official tourism promotion organizations of the OIC countries should organize their capacity building and prepare various training programs including creating networks, cooperation, tourism development etc.
- The image of the OIC countries should be positive to attract tourists and encourage entrepreneurs to make investments in the tourism industry of OIC members
- Easing visa policies and developing regional solutions to make OIC members more attractive to investors
- OIC member countries should improve their regional transport networks (i.e., roads, airports and railways) for intra-OIC tourism.
- OIC members should devise joint regional tourism policies for effective tourism development since integrity gives confidence to tourism entrepreneurs in the future.

In addition to the suggestions made by the Centre, there are also national-level proposals for OIC member countries. Investing in basic tourism-related infrastructure, improving safety, developing public-private cooperation, diversifying tourism destination services through entrepreneurs, and raising awareness to improve entrepreneurial capacities and managerial skills are the most important needs that can help tourism development in OIC member countries. The cooperation and national-level needs are the challenges that OIC member countries face in implementing sustainability and developing the tourism industry (Dabour, 2003). Therefore, to make tourism more attractive in OIC countries, authorities should concentrate on fulfilling these needs to attract tourism entrepreneurs.

The tourism industry has been transformed by the emergence of Covid-19, and tourism entrepreneurship has also been impacted across OIC member countries. In particular, the

digital transformation has shifted the tourism industry from traditional to modernized services. For example, during the lockdowns, the majority of tourism ventures were exclusively built on various digital platforms, offering virtual city tours, online cooking classes, and other services. Additionally, some tourism-related services sold their products through online platforms to earn extra revenue. This has led to the emergence of a new form of entrepreneurship in tourism: digital entrepreneurship in tourism. The digital transformation in tourism entrepreneurship has spread across OIC member countries, and cooperation between OIC and the Digital Cooperation Organization has been established to promote digitalization in the public and private sectors for a sustainable digital economy (SmartCrowd, 2023).

As a specific example of OIC member countries, Nigeria has been reviewed by Etokakpan et al. (2015) regarding the entrepreneurial development of the tourism industry using a transformational approach. According to the authors, business identification skills, business selection skills, and business analysis skills are essential for transforming the industry and entrepreneurial activities in the future. Therefore, the authors proposed that member countries should establish a tourism entrepreneurial development centre to capture tourism opportunities for investors. Considering conventional tourism entrepreneurship, OIC member countries should recognize the importance of transformations in the industry to adapt to the new world of tourism.

5. 9. Policies, legislation, facilitation and certification related to tourism entrepreneurship in OIC

The success of tourism entrepreneurship largely depends on effective tourism policies and programs organized by public or private associations for sustainable and inclusive growth in countries (OECD, 2017). Most OIC member countries have their specific policies for tourism development (Organization of Islamic Cooperation, 2018). In particular, various organizations, such as the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Islamic Centre for the Development of Trade, and the Islamic Development Bank, cooperate to develop programs and decisive policies for tourism development. Through these policies, OIC countries address the various needs of tourism entrepreneurs, including access to funding, utilization of tourism resources, and human capital development. An article by Salmani et

al. (2014), which examines the dynamic economic impact of tourism on OIC members, found that tourism expansion across regions determines economic growth.

Facilitating tourism entrepreneurship in OIC member countries generally involves creating a business-friendly regulatory environment to make tourism investments more attractive. This largely depends on the legislative framework in these countries, which can offer a wide range of opportunities, while some countries may constrain tourism investments for sustainable tourism development. For instance, in Saudi Arabia, the new law for increasing entrepreneurship capacity provides a stimulating entrepreneurial environment by providing businesses with access to funding. Furthermore, the law regulates and enables firms to offer their products and services online, which is expected to accelerate the digital transformation of entrepreneurial activities (Narayanan, 2023). The legislative process also makes it easier to increase certified tourism products and services for OIC members (COMCEC, 2016a).

Although tourism entrepreneurship is often seen as an innate skill, it is believed that this skill can also be acquired through various certifications or with endowments. Many organizations, platforms, and programs offer training in tourism entrepreneurship. For example, during the recent health crisis, many SMEs failed to manage the crisis and had to shut down operations. However, certified entrepreneurial programs can teach investors how to avoid risks during difficult times by providing them with strategic thinking skills.

Regulatory reforms and appropriate certifications in OIC member countries are policy options aimed at creating incentives for the tourism economy, strengthening destination competitiveness, and facilitating tourism entrepreneurship, innovation, and job creation in the tourism and hospitality sectors. While OIC member countries create policies to encourage tourism entrepreneurs economically, various institutions have also started certified training programs. These policies, legislative, facilitation, and certification efforts related to tourism entrepreneurship should be based on the following features: creating a sustainable entrepreneurial culture, reducing regulatory burdens to access national and international markets, providing a second chance for failed tourism entrepreneurs, enabling tourism entrepreneurs to use digitalization in their services, and focusing on resilience during difficult times.

To draw a comprehensive overview of tourism entrepreneurship in OIC countries and explore strategies to enhance the role of tourism entrepreneurship in destination competitiveness, the present report draws on a mixed-method approach delving into the drivers, barriers, and success factors of tourism entrepreneurship. The report is based on a sequential qualitative-quantitative investigation involving three OIC countries; Türkiye, Jordan, and the Gambia.

6. METHODOLOGY

The following section will focus on the research approach, sampling, data collection methods, and data analysis employed in the present study. The research is based on a mixed-methods sequential explanatory study. The qualitative phase is used to inform and guide the quantitative phase.

6.1. Case Study Approach

The study draws on a mixed-method approach to understand the drivers, barriers, and success factors of tourism entrepreneurship as well as the strategies that can be adopted by OIC countries to enhance the role of tourism entrepreneurship in destination competitiveness. This study draws on a sequential qualitative-quantitative research design. A qualitative study is conducted to understand entrepreneurship motives, challenges, success factors, as well as the role of government support. Based on an extensive review of tourism entrepreneurship literature as well as initial qualitative findings, a survey is designed to measure motives for, barriers to, and success factors of tourism entrepreneurship as well as perceptions of strategies and tools used by governments to encourage and support tourism entrepreneurship.

6.2. Qualitative Stage

For the purpose of the current investigation, a qualitative research approach using semi-structured interviews was adopted. This approach is deemed useful in gaining deeper insights into under-studied topics (Creswell et al., 2007). This approach is particularly useful in research addressing issues related to tourism entrepreneurship (Alrawadieh & Alrawadieh, 2018).

6.2.1 Semi-structured Interviews with entrepreneurs and industry experts

To collect the qualitative data for the present study, in-depth interviews were conducted with tourism and hospitality entrepreneurs as well as tourism experts in Jordan and the Gambia. A convenience sample technique was adopted; however, an attempt was made to cover various sub-sectors within the tourism and hospitality industry, including food and beverage facilities, lodging businesses, travel agencies, and ancillary tourism businesses. Semi-structured interviews were conducted over a period of nine weeks from 20 April to 22 June 2023. Upon informants' consent, the interviews were digitally recorded and lasted an average of 45 minutes, with the shortest lasting Participants were ensured complete anonymity on their identities and confidentiality of their data. Interview protocol and questions were determined following an extensive review of the relevant literature (Chen & Elston, 2013; Chu et al., 2011; Alrawadieh & Alrawadieh, 2018; Fu et al., 2019; Fu et al., 2022; Güzel et al., 2021; Kahraman et al., 2023). Informants were asked several questions with the aim of understanding their motives to undertake entrepreneurial activities within the tourism sector, the challenges they encounter, their success factors, and their perceptions of government support in the creation and running of their businesses. The data collection process was completed with a satisfactory level of theoretical saturation being achieved following 29 interviews (14 from Jordan and 15 from the Gambia). A general profile of the informants is presented in Table 1. These interviews were transcribed verbatim following each interview. The data analysis process is explained in the following section.

Table 1. General profile of participants

Code	Country	Gender	Age	Education	Field
P1	Jordan	Male	67	BA	Travel agency
P2	Jordan	Male	51	Ph.D.	Petra Development & Tourism Region Authority
P3	Jordan	Male	47	BA	Petra Development & Tourism Region Authority
P4	Jordan	Female	48	BA	Jordan Restaurants Association (JRA)
P5	Jordan	Male	45	BA	Hotel
P6	Jordan	Male	48	Ph.D.	Tourism expert
P7	Jordan	Male	44	BA	Hotel
P8	Jordan	Male	48	BA	Hotel
P9	Jordan	Male	34	College	Jordan Hotel Association
P10	Jordan	Male	64	BA	Ministry of Tourism & Antiquities
P11	Jordan	Female	52	BA	Ministry of Tourism & Antiquities
P12	Jordan	Female	47	BA	Ministry of Tourism & Antiquities
P13	Jordan	Female	54	MA	Ministry of Tourism & Antiquities
P14	Jordan	Female	39	MA	Ministry of Investment
P15	The Gambia	Male	63	High school	Hotel
P16	The Gambia	Male	55	MA	Hotel and Beach Bar
P17	The Gambia	Female	44	College	Hotel
P18	The Gambia	Male	42	MA	Restaurant
P19	The Gambia	Male	35	College	Beach bar and Restaurant
P20	The Gambia	Male	34	MA	Hotel
P21	The Gambia	Female	37	Professional qualification	Restaurant
P22	The Gambia	Female	40	Professional qualification	Travel agency
P23	The Gambia	Male	47	Secondary school	Bar and Restaurant
P24	The Gambia	Male	48	MA	Official at Gambia Tourism Board
P25	The Gambia	Male	47	MA	Official at The Gambia Investment & Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA)
P26	The Gambia	Male	40	MA	DPS at Ministry of Tourism & Culture
P27	The Gambia	Male	39	High School	Travel agency
P28	The Gambia	Female	60	BA	Travel agency
P29	The Gambia	Male	46	College	Travel agency

6.2.2 Thematic Content Analysis

The study adapts the six-stage thematic content analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). The interview transcripts were carefully read several times by members of the research team with extensive research expertise in qualitative research. Initial coding and themes were discussed and agreed upon. Qualitative data collected from Jordan was examined in the source language (i.e., Arabic) during the first three stages of thematic analysis. This approach is deemed to be useful and highly reliable (Esfehani & Walters, 2018). Data collected from the Gambia, however, was translated into English and analyzed using the thematic content analysis (Braun & Clarke). Extensive authentic *in vivo* quotations have been utilized to enhance the reliability and credibility of the analysis while also facilitating a better understanding of the findings (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).

6.2.3 Findings

The qualitative data from tourism entrepreneurs and tourism experts in both Jordan and the Gambia highlights the crucial role of the tourism industry in contributing to economic growth through boosting local entrepreneurship attracting foreign investment, creating jobs, and attracting foreign currency. This is unsurprising given that the total contribution of travel and tourism to Jordan's GDP is 16.2% (WTTC, 2022) and 20% to the Gambian GDP (UNCTAD, 2019). The data also show that the tourism industry is a lucrative area for venturing given the comparatively low initial capital and limited know-how required. The following sections outlines in detail the key drivers of entrepreneurship, challenges, and success factors.

Key drivers to venture in tourism

Content analysis of the qualitative data reveals various motives for venturing into tourism and hospitality. These motives have been grouped under two broad categories, *personal motives* and *contextual motives* (see Figure 5).

Personal motives refer to those intrinsic drivers that stimulate entrepreneurship action. These are often shaped by both economic and social values. Informants mention the *desire to make a profit, desire to be their own boss, seek independence and self-reliance, desire to continue the family legacy, exiting work experience in the field, family involvement in tourism,*

desire to live a fulfilling life, desire to contribute to the local economy, interest in the cultural benefits of tourism, and challenging social barriers as key drivers for venturing in tourism.

Unsurprisingly, the economic benefits of venturing into tourism through generating income, achieving independence, and being own boss have been widely highlighted. For instance, P18 notes:

“Independence and self-reliance [are my motives], to be independent and able to do what I want without undue restrictions from the boss [...] I don’t have to depend on someone else for my financial needs”.

Desire to continue the family legacy, family involvement in tourism, and exciting work experience in the field also seem to be influential motives. Confirming this, P17 notes: *“What motivated me is [...] to build a legacy that my family can continue”*. P16 mentions:

“My work experience in the hospitality industry in another motivating factor. I had formerly worked in the hotel industry prior to travelling to Switzerland. Whilst in Switzerland I had worked in the hospitality industry as well. I have been in the business for over twenty-five years both in managerial and employee positions. Working in the hospitality industry in Switzerland has given me a lot of experience.”

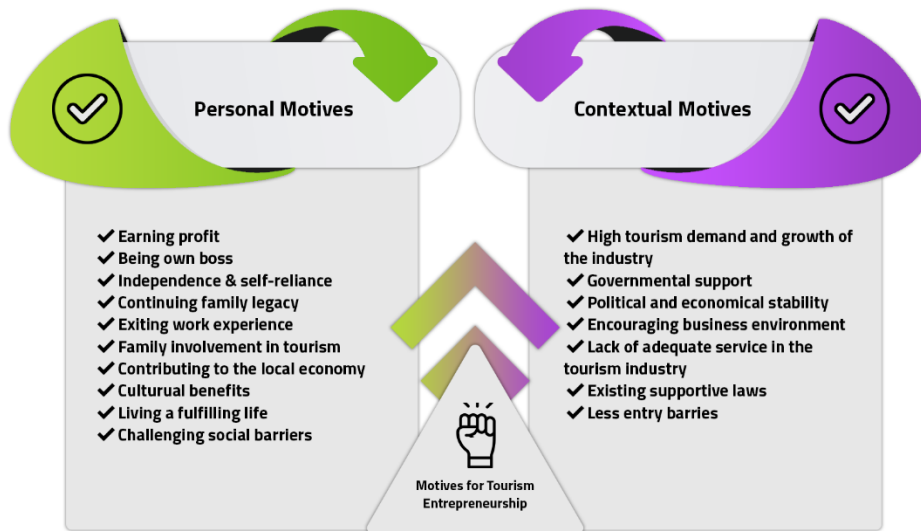
Many informants were also driven by the desire to contribute to the local economy and the development of their countries through creating jobs. For instance, P18 mentions:

“Having my own business to train young people has been my dream. I have had a vision of impacting the life of young people by training them to acquire life skills in gastronomy to enable them to earn a living”.

Interestingly, tourism entrepreneurship seems to be a path to challenge social barriers and unfavourable stereotyping. This is especially valid for women entrepreneurs who view their business as a way to gain social status in a male-dominated environment. This is well captured in P17’s words:

“I also wanted to break barriers in a male-dominated sector and serve as a role model for many young women... As a woman, starting a business that is male and foreign-dominated was not easy at all.”

Figure 5. Key drivers to venture in tourism



Contextual factors refer to those extrinsic drivers that stimulate entrepreneurship action. Informants seem to be driven by various contextual motives including *high tourism demand and growth of the industry, support from the government, political and economic stability, encouraging business environment, lack of adequate service in the tourism industry, fewer entry barriers (know-how and initial capital), and existing supportive laws.*

As in many OIC countries, tourism in both Jordan and Gambia is flourishing and is likely to further grow in the coming decades. Informants highlight the opportunity in the market as

evidenced in the high tourism demand and growth in the industry as a crucial factor underlying their decision to venture into tourism. This is captured in P8's words:

"I decided to start my [small lodging] business because I noticed a significant increase in tourist arrivals [to Petra, Jordan] and growth in tourist demand as well as the need for more beds. I recognized the limited bed capacity in Petra".

Similarly, P17 notes: *"What motivated me is the fact that the tourism sector contributes 30% of the [Gambia's] GDP, it is therefore a lucrative business."*

Governmental support, encouraging business environment, and existing supportive laws were also mentioned as key drivers of tourism entrepreneurship. Confirming this, P6 notes that:

"Over the last decade, Jordan has been endeavouring to attract investments though creating a lucrative business environment by

Political and economic stability is also mentioned as a key factor encouraging tourism entrepreneurial action. This is unsurprising given the intertwining nature of stability and tourism development in destinations (Causevic & Lynch, 2013). P1 notes:

"it is important to understand that there can be no tourism without safety and stability. Tourism cannot, in anyway, thrive in the absence of political stability, in Jordan, we are lucky to enjoy this stability".

This is also confirmed by P6, who mentions that *"venturing is driven by the political and economic stability in Jordan".*

Finally, it is worth mentioning that tourism entrepreneurs can be driven by several different factors, both personal and contextual, at the same time. P15 notes:

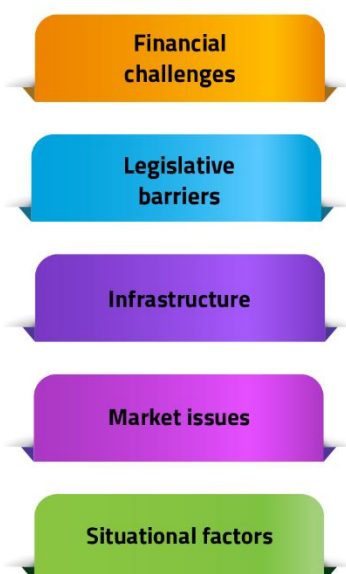
"At the time [in 2001], there were a few hotels, and they were all located in one area called Senegambia [in the Gambia]. There was no intense competition. I felt investing in the tourism sector was a way of gaining revenue yet still contributing to the country's development. Another reason that motivated me was being my own boss. I have always wanted to be my own boss. The stability of the country was another very good reason that motivated me to start a

business in the tourism sector. The laws governing businesses are also part of those things that motivated me to start a business”.

Challenges of tourism entrepreneurship

Informants were also asked about the key challenges they encountered during their entrepreneurial journey. The content analysis of the qualitative data reveals a wide range of barriers or challenges that tourism entrepreneurs are likely to navigate over different stages of their business. These were grouped under five key categories; *financial challenges*, *legislative barriers*, *infrastructure*, *market issues*, and *situational factors* (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Challenges of tourism entrepreneurship



Financial challenges including lack of initial capital, accessibility to loans, access to financing, high prices of energy/water bills, high rental prices, high operational costs, and economic instability were mentioned as key barriers hampering tourism entrepreneurial activities. For instance, P23 mentions: *“Having access to financing was a hassle. There was no means through which we could take a loan to finance the business”*. P29 notes: *“The instability of the foreign exchange rate is a very big challenge. We do all the bookings in foreign currencies, so the instability of the exchange rate and the constant depreciation of the Dalasi*

[currency of the Gambia] is a real problem. Sometimes, you do your conversion of US Dollar to dalasi as sixty Dalasi just for it to be fifty-eight Dalasi the following day". Similarly, P23 mentions: "The currency is not stable, today the exchange rate is this and tomorrow is that, and our currency never seems to be at the winning side". P29 mentions: "the annual increment of rentals is a real problem. The agents for rental services are constantly increasing rents. You will have an agreement with them; set up your office, fully furnished, and you are known in that location, and they will wake up one day and increase the rent".

Not less significant than the financial challenges are the legislative barriers. Informants mentioned high taxes, restrictive laws, outdated existing laws, unstable existing laws, vague legislative structure, lack of reliable data for investors, and bureaucracy as key challenges. For instance, P21 mentions: "The tax usually at the start of the business is very tough as you are usually in the loss position [...]. In the Gambia, there are Municipal taxes, Tourism Development Taxes as well as central government taxes which strain the performance of the business at start-up." P26 notes: "Tourism businesses often complain about the bureaucracy involved in the licensing process. To register, different institutions are involved [in the process] which means you need to go to each of these institutions to complete the registration and licensing process. This can be sometimes discouraging to start-ups".

Infrastructure-related barriers were also evident in the qualitative data. Informants mentioned various issues including unreliable water and electricity supply, poor accessibility to beaches, and poor internet services. For instance, P28 notes: "It has been very difficult for us to have access to a reliable supply of electricity, water, and internet. Electricity, water, and internet supply have been very bad. Besides poor service, the cost of these services is also very high for start-up". Similarly, P23 mentions: "You could only use a bicycle or walk to get access to the beach bar".

High competition, shortage of trained and qualified human resources, fluctuation in tourist arrivals, seasonality, weak efforts to diversification of tourism offerings, finding a suitable location, and the industry being dominated by foreign/international businesses (e.g., foreign tour operators) were also mentioned as key barriers that are inherently associated with tourism and hospitality business. For instance, P22 notes: "There was a huge competition in the market which makes it difficult for new entrants like my business". P17

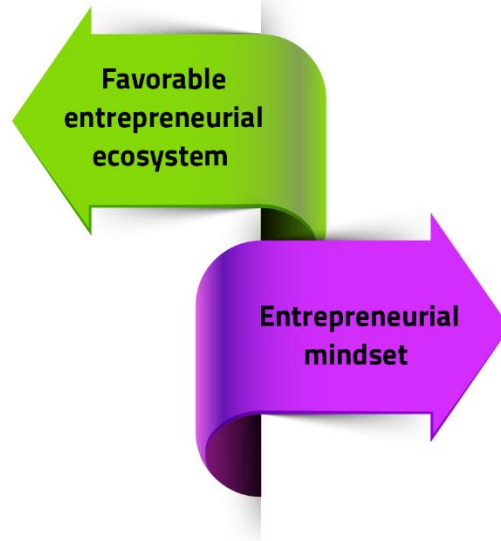
claims: *"Sometimes we hire staff that claim to be well qualified by issuing [fake?] certificates whilst they do not have the knowledge, understanding and training they need to manage or work for the hotel"*. P23 mentions: *"The tourist season lasts for only 5 months and after that, we are out of business for the rest of the seven months. This is difficult for the sustainability [of our business]"*.

Some informants also highlight some situational factors such as crisis (e.g., Ebola and Covid-19), instability in the region (e.g., Middle East), and bias towards women (i.e., gender gap) as potential challenges with significant negative impact on their tourism entrepreneurial activities. For instance, P16 notes: *"After building the hotel there was a lot of economic instability such as the Ebola crisis, Thomas Cook went bankrupt and that affected tourist arrivals, the COVID 19 pandemic also affected the tourism sector. For over 2 years we had no guests coming"*. Similarly, P23 notes: *"In the tourism sector, any little shock can affect business and sales. A typical example was the outbreak of Covid-19 and the Ebola outbreak"*.

Enablers of tourism entrepreneurship

After identifying the core challenges, informants were enquired about their trajectories to navigate these challenges and the key factors that help entrepreneurs the most to survive. Content analysis of the qualitative data reveals that a favourable entrepreneurial ecosystem and entrepreneurial mindset were the core broad factors crucial to the survival of tourism businesses (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Enablers of tourism entrepreneurship



Informants view a favourable entrepreneurial ecosystem through various indicators including streamlined accessibility to finance, friendly tax policies, removing barriers to start-ups, friendly business policies, more incentives, governmental support, product development, aiming toward competitive advantage, and overall resilience of the tourism sector (Figure 8) For instance. P7 mentions: *“tourism sector should be viewed as a significant driver of the local economy and thus be supported so it can be resilient to challenges [...]. For it to be resilient, it is also crucial to develop tourism products to respond to the changing demands in the international market. For instance, medical tourism in Jordan is great, however, now we have tough competitors like Türkiye, India, and Thailand. Our traditional market from the Gulf countries has switched to these countries given their lower prices even though their quality is not better than ours”*.

Figure 8. Indicators of favorable entrepreneurial ecosystem



Alongside the favourable entrepreneurial ecosystem, informants highlight the role of various factors with relevance to the entrepreneurial mindset including creativity, hiring the right people, focusing on customer satisfaction and loyalty, cost control and cutting costs, networking, and political engagement, competing in quality services, persistence, and patience, cutting personal pending and changing lifestyle, securing informal sources of

initial income, past experience, and building and maintaining a customer base (See Figure 9). P2 mentions, “*Innovation and creativity are the keys to survival in the tourism industry*”. P29 notes: “*You need to take it easy and be patient with the governmental agencies. Since we cannot take the government to court for delayed payments, we had no chance but to be patient with them. If we complain, they [governmental agencies] would not want to do business with us again. Therefore, we had to be friendly with them even though they owe us money*”.

Figure 9. Elements of entrepreneurial mindset



Tourism entrepreneurs seem to be *tough cookies* that are likely to challenge existing barriers using their own resources. For instance, to deal with shortage in water and electricity supply, P5 mentions: “*we had no chance but to buy tank-car to bring water [to our hotel]. To solve the electricity issue, we purchased an electricity generation*”. This, of course, is often mentioned with a sense of lamentation given that it’s the government’s responsibility, not the entrepreneurs, to provide an adequate infrastructure. It is also viewed as a loss of resources that could have been better utilized. Capturing this, P16 notes “*to overcome this [lack of accessibility], I constructed an access road to my hotel at a huge cost which could have been invested in upgrading my hotel*”.

6.2.4 The role of government in supporting tourism entrepreneurship

One key objective of the qualitative stage in this study is to understand the role of the government in supporting tourism entrepreneurship. Informants were initially asked about their perceptions of the role of the government (either encouraging or discouraging) and what tools and resources they benefitted from in their entrepreneurial activities. Data from both case studies (Jordan and the Gambia) shows that governments appreciate the role of entrepreneurship in economic growth and sustainable development. Informants also seem to be aware of the government's role in encouraging and supporting tourism entrepreneurship. P3 notes: *the [Jordanian] government pays great attention to encouraging and attracting investments. The government introduced an A-class investor card [a card issued by Jordan Investment Commission and granted to non-Jordanians under specified investment conditions] and [tax] exemptions for investors*". Similarly, P15 mentions: *"The conducive atmosphere is always available to start and grow your business. I was able to get my business registration and advice from some tourism experts with government departments"*. Tourism entrepreneurs seem to have benefitted from a wide range of resources made available by the government including tax reduction (especially to venture into less developed regions), land allocation (e.g., the case of the Gambia), and advisory support.

Informants were also asked about what the government could do to encourage venturing into tourism. Qualitative data from both entrepreneurs and tourism experts show that despite existing support, there is more room for improvement. Specifically, there seems to be agreement on the need to streamline licensing and business registration procedures, updating existing regulations, improving infrastructure (e.g., roads, water, and electricity supply), introducing a more encouraging tax exemption on nascent businesses, and increasing destination marketing efforts. P9 mentions: *"In some countries such as Egypt, investors are exempted from taxes, electricity and water bills for the first five years. We need the same [in Jordan], why not supporting nascent businesses by exempting them from paying taxes for the first two years at least? This is important to help them survive"*. P17 notes: *"The role of the government at the start-up was encouraging. They allocated the land on which the hotel was built and also made the paperwork very smooth. However, as the business is growing the government is not doing much to support or encourage us. They are not promoting the*

tourism sector, and everything is dying down. As we speak, not even 10% of the rooms are occupied. Customers are not coming". Informants also highlight other issues that governments need to focus on to encourage entrepreneurship including training tourism and hospitality staff, encouraging niche tourism, improving the attractiveness of tourism jobs by involving them in social security systems, awarding performing tourism businesses, encouraging low-cost flights to destinations, de-centralizing support to tourism businesses through empowering local authorities (e.g., municipalities), and improving accessibility to tourism sites.

6.2.5 Success factors of tourism entrepreneurs

Informants were asked about the key indicators of the success of tourism and hospitality businesses. Content analysis of qualitative data reveals a wide range of indicators both at organizational and personal levels. Unsurprisingly, these indicators are perceived to be largely intercorrelated and intertwined.

In terms of the organizational indicators, informants mention sustained profit-generating, achieving customer satisfaction and loyalty, excelling in service provision, organizational resilience, ability to survive crises, expansion, good reputation, adding value to tourism offerings through innovation, and creating jobs to the local community, as key organizational indicators of the success of tourism and hospitality businesses. For example, P7 mentions: *"There are several indicators of success, if we consider hotels [the informant's business], revenue per available room (RevPAR) is key to understanding performance. Another important indicator is the continuity of business around the year without being affected by seasonality. I cannot wait for the summer break in Saudi Arabia [a key tourist generator region to Jordan] to start the season and sell my rooms. I rather need to achieve an occupancy rate of 70% or 80% around the year not in a season of the year"*. Similarly, when asked if they considered themselves to be successful entrepreneurs, P17 confirms: *Yes, I am a successful entrepreneur because I have been able to expand, innovate, make substantial profit, improve on my service, and meet the expectations of my customers. The business has been running for a very long time and sustainable. In the business I have trained a lot of people who can also operate their own hotels, I have also built strong relationships that even ended up being family. I have learned a lot and will continue to innovate. I am also contributing to the national development"*.

In terms of the personal indicators, informants mention past experience in the same line of business, creativity, personal financial assets (vs loans), patience, ability to cope with emerging challenges, being passionate about business, persistence, and perseverance, working hard and diligence, adaptability, decisiveness, learning from own mistakes, ability to build networks, strong interpersonal skills, and good leadership as key personal indicators of success of tourism and hospitality businesses (See Figure 10). P28 notes: “I have been and I continue to be passionate about the work I do [...]. I have an excellent network and make use of these networks to expand and grow my business”. P20 mentions: “I consider myself a good communicator and negotiator. I am a people person. I treat my employees and customers with respect and dignity. I make sure that their needs are my wishes”.

Figure 10. Characteristics of the successful entrepreneur



6.3. Quantitative Stage

Based on the qualitative stage, a survey was designed and conducted on 157 tourism entrepreneurs and experts in OIC countries. The survey looked into the motives for venturing in tourism, barriers to entrepreneurs, and success factors. Perceptions of strategies and tools used by governments to encourage and support tourism entrepreneurship were also measured. The findings as descriptive statistics are presented both in reports for each case country as well as the policy recommendations.

7. Case countries

Three case countries were chosen based on their geographical representation from the official three Regional Groups of the OIC Member States. Jordan was selected from the Arab Group, Türkiye from the Asian Group, and the Gambia from the African Group. For the sake of comparison and benchmarking, two developed countries from outside the OIC were also used (i.e., the UK and Australia). The contribution of tourism and travel industry to the GDP as well as the significant growth in tourism entrepreneurship were used to identify these countries. This section will provide an overview of each case country with a focus on tourism entrepreneurship, its development and characteristics, drivers of tourism entrepreneurship, challenges hindering entrepreneurship, and factors contributing to the success of tourism businesses. Finally, policy recommendations customized for each country are presented.

7.1. Case Country- Türkiye

7.1.1 General Outlook

Over the last decade, Türkiye has grown in popularity as a key tourist destination attracting over 50 million tourists in 2022 (TUIK, 2023), a remarkable milestone in the country's tourism industry indicating a speedy recovery and notable resilience in the aftermath of the pandemic. While figures for tourist arrivals are not (and should not) be the sole indicator of success, Türkiye is ranked third in terms of tourist arrivals (UNWTO, 2023a) and 12th in terms of tourism revenues (AtlasBig, 2023). In the aftermath of the pandemic, Türkiye's tourism seems to be highly resilient contributing significantly to the economic growth in the country. International tourism receipts also indicate that Türkiye has fully recovered its pre-pandemic levels (UNWTO, 2023b). Türkiye is a considerably successful and highly

competitive destination, it is vital to consider the role of tourism service provision through tourism and hospitality businesses as a crucial element in achieving and sustaining the competitiveness of Türkiye as a tourist destination. Alongside its rich cultural heritage and the diversity of the tourist product, Türkiye has a strong tourism infrastructure and superstructure. Currently, there are over 17,794 lodging facilities with a bed capacity of 1.862.327 (Çelik, 2023). The number of travel agencies has also doubled from around 6000 in 2010 to over 12000 in 2020 (Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, n.d). While the current tourism supply in the country seems to adequately respond to the increasing tourism demand following two years of limited mobility due to the pandemic, venturing into tourism remains an area that deserves attention given the vital role of tourism entrepreneurship in the long-term success of tourism destinations.

As will be thoroughly detailed, Türkiye enjoys a promising entrepreneurship ecosystem that encourages venturing and supports business growth through various tools including financial incentives, access to funding opportunities, and training/knowledge transfer support. The European Union integration process has also encouraged Türkiye to further support entrepreneurship through relaxing regulations and streamlining legal and institutional procedures. Despite the important overall contribution of entrepreneurship as a whole to economic growth, tourism entrepreneurship is particularly crucial to enhancing the competitiveness of Türkiye as a tourist destination. Fostering tourism entrepreneurship as a path to enhance destination competitiveness is necessary as Türkiye has become among the world's top five tourist destinations (UNWTO, 2023a) which raises the need for more effort to sustain and maintain the current position and achieve sustainability and further success. As will be seen in detail, Türkiye has significant potential in terms of its conducive environment to support tourism entrepreneurship. One key advantage and distinctive feature that contributes to Türkiye's potential in terms of entrepreneurship is its highly young population. According to recent figures, 15.3% of the Turkish population consists of youth aged 15-24. This puts Türkiye at the top of all EU countries in terms of the young population (TUIK, 2022). Moreover, according to the latest Global Entrepreneurial Report (2014), Türkiye is ranked the second most entrepreneurial country among 33 countries including the USA, Japan, China, India, and Germany.

Tourism entrepreneurship in Türkiye evolved in parallel with tourism development. Until the 1980s, tourism's contribution to the Turkish economy was very limited with a share of less than 1% of total fixed investments and a share of around 0.8% of the gross national product (Bilgiçli & Altinkaynak, 2016). From 1980 onwards, tourism steadily developed putting Türkiye in an advanced position in terms of tourist arrivals and tourism receipts. Crucial to the sustainability and competitiveness of the *tourist product* is the quality of tourism services provided in the destination. Policy reports (e.g., COMCEC, 2021) indicate that, like many OIC countries, low per capita spending is a major challenge in Turkish tourism, which is partially attributed to the scarcity of tourism activities. Therefore, fostering entrepreneurship and business growth in tourism is likely to contribute significantly to the success of tourism destinations through enhancing the tourist experience, prolonging the length of stay, and increasing tourist expenditure.

Despite its potential, the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Türkiye is challenged by some factors that limit the contribution of entrepreneurship in general, and tourism entrepreneurship, in particular. As seen in Table 2, Türkiye is ranking relatively low in the domain of open economies (i.e., investment environment, enterprise conditions, infrastructure and market access, and economic quality). The recent report of Global Entrepreneurship Monitor also indicates that Türkiye scores low in terms of government efforts to mitigate the impact of the crisis (i.e., the recent pandemic) on new start-ups and supporting women entrepreneurs (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2022).

While Türkiye has considerably succeeded in achieving sustained economic growth over the last two decades which contributed to the notable increase in entrepreneurial activities as well as foreign investment in the country (Onder & Nyadera, 2020), Türkiye has been traditionally exposed to various crises; both internal and external, including terror attacks, political tensions, and recently Covid-19. The economic crisis in the aftermath of the pandemic is one of the ongoing and influential crises negatively affecting entrepreneurship due to high inflation rates and currency volatility. Despite these crises, the Turkish entrepreneurial sector is viewed as resilient with notable growth in the Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) rate (i.e., 15.7%) and Established Business Ownership (EBO) rate (i.e., 11%) despite the recent pandemic crisis and economic instability (Global

Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2022). The resiliency of the entrepreneurial ecosystem is a necessary element to reduce failure rates and enhance the sustainability and survival of existent businesses. The role of government in supporting tourism and hospitality business is therefore crucial, particularly in times of crisis (COMCEC, 2021).

Table 2. Türkiye's prosperity ranking

	Ranking 2023	Inclusive Societies				Open Economies				Empowered People			
		Safety and security	Personal freedom	Governance	Social capital	Investment environment	Enterprise conditions	Infrastructure and market access	Economic quality	Living conditions	Health	Education	Natural environment
Türkiye	95	147	152	128	137	68	65	50	71	59	63	74	86

Source: The 2023 Legatum Prosperity Index

Overall, the importance of entrepreneurship for community and destination development is widely acknowledged (Fu et al., 2019). As a popular tourist destination, Türkiye has significant potential and a wide range of opportunities for both local tourism entrepreneurs and foreign investors. Tourism entrepreneurship in Türkiye has played a vital role in the development and growth of the tourism industry, contributing to the country's economy, creating employment opportunities, and promoting sustainable tourism practices. Therefore, supporting tourism entrepreneurship in Türkiye through fostering a conducive environment is likely to further contribute to the competitiveness of the destination. This cannot be achieved without identifying key barriers and challenges hindering the entrepreneurial ecosystem, tackling these barriers and challenges, while also fostering and building on success factors through developing efficient strategies to enhance the role and contribution of tourism entrepreneurship in the destination competitiveness of Türkiye.

7.1.2 Tourism entrepreneurship, its development and characteristics

To understand the evolution and development of tourism entrepreneurship in Türkiye, it is necessary first to briefly track tourism development in the country. This is necessary given that entrepreneurship has always been both; a crucial driver of, and a significantly impacted ecosystem by tourism development.

Briefly, despite some limited efforts to harness the power of tourism as a tool for development in Türkiye since the 1960s, it was not until the 1980s that tourism was given serious attention, and efforts were made to capitalize on tourism as a path to economic growth. During this stage, the Tourism Encouragement Law in 1982 was issued giving pace to the development of tourism and contributing to rapid growth in tourist arrivals and tourism receipts (Yolal, 2016). This period has also witnessed a shift towards liberalization of the economy and inherently tourism policies, infrastructure development (e.g., construction of roads and airports), active marketing and promotion, and tourism incentives. These efforts helped Türkiye emerge as a major tourist destination. Since then, Türkiye has grown as a global tourism destination appealing to different segments within the travel market including leisure tourists, business travellers, and culture and heritage tourists (COMCEC, 2021). While Türkiye hosted only 16.4 million tourists in 2003, after two decades, the number of arrivals reached over 50 million in 2022. It might be indicative to note that in April 2003, the General Directorate of Investment and Enterprises was established under the umbrella of the Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Culture and Tourism encouraging tourism entrepreneurship and improving the provision of quality tourist services in the country (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2023).

Despite these challenges, venturing into tourism and hospitality in Türkiye is viewed as lucrative given the increasing demand and the market opportunity as well as the limited required know-how in the tourism industry (e.g., souvenir shops, food and beverage businesses). Tourism entrepreneurship in Türkiye has significantly contributed to the development of the country's tourism industry. Since the shift to a liberal economy in the 1980s and the government's efforts to capitalize on tourism, Türkiye has witnessed a significant increase in the number of tourism and hospitality businesses including lodging businesses, restaurants, and travel agencies. Through the increasing number of these

businesses, tourism entrepreneurship has contributed to the growth and diversification of the tourism offering in Türkiye.

To obtain deeper insights into the tourism entrepreneurship in Türkiye, it is worthwhile reflecting on the key characteristics of this sub-sector of the economy. First, tourism entrepreneurship in Türkiye seems to be largely characterized by the prevalence of small- or medium-sized family businesses (Pirnar, 2015; Avci et al., 2010). While this is the case in several countries, both developed and developing, Türkiye is characterized by strong family traditions that are also reflected in entrepreneurial activities. Relationships and networks amongst Turkish small- or medium- businesses are also governed by traditional values and family/social environment (Zcan, 1995). However, despite the collective economic contribution of these businesses, they are usually limited in terms of resources to reach internationalization and expand beyond the local market.

Another key characteristic of tourism entrepreneurship in Türkiye is the richness and diversity of services offered by tourism businesses contributing to the diversification of tourist products. Along the mainstream market (leisure traveller and cultural heritage market), tourism entrepreneurs seem to have been attentive to niche tourism segments including medical tourism, adventure tourism, and gastronomic tourism. This has helped to attract a wider range of tourists and promote sustainable tourism practices while also contributing to a strong local destination image (Güzel et al., 2021). It should also be noted that ethnic food and beverage businesses have significantly increased over the last decade as a result of the increased tourist demand from specific market segments (specifically the Middle East including the Gulf countries).

Tourism entrepreneurship in Türkiye is also featured by a considerably strong ability to innovate and adopt. This is important given that tourism entrepreneurship is highly sensitive to rapid changes in tourist behaviour, tourist preferences, and industry trends (Pirnar, 2015). To stay competitive, tourism entrepreneurs in Türkiye are highly responsive to technological advancements and marketing strategies. Many tourism and hospitality entrepreneurs have adopted online platforms, social media marketing, and other digital tools to promote their businesses and attract customers. Celebrity restaurateurs such as Nusret and CZN Burak are popular examples of hospitality entrepreneurs thriving and

expanding internationally thanks to their active presence on and creative use of social media platforms.

Efficient collaboration and networking among tourism entrepreneurs in Türkiye can also be considered as a key characteristic of tourism entrepreneurship. Tourism and hospitality businesses such as hotels, restaurants, and tour operators collaborate to create synergies, cross-promote their offerings, and provide comprehensive tourism packages. This collaborative approach has helped to create a more integrated and cohesive tourism ecosystem in Türkiye.

Understanding entrepreneurial motives, barriers to entrepreneurship, and success factors, as well as the role of governmental support from the perspectives of entrepreneurs and tourism experts is key proposing knowledge-based policy recommendations. To this end, the following sections are based on quantitative data collected from a sample of 50 respondents (35 tourism entrepreneurs across different sub-sectors of the tourism and hospitality industry and 15 tourism experts). The general profile of the respondents is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive profile of respondents (The Turkish sample)

<i>Gender</i>	N	%	<i>Marital Status</i>	N	%
Male	40	80.0	Single	18	36.0
Female	10	20.0	Married	31	62.0
Total	50	100.0	Other	1	2.0
			Total	50	100.0
<i>Age</i>	N	%	<i>Education</i>	N	%
25-34 years old	13	26.0	High school graduate or less	6	12.0
35-44 years old	27	54.0	College graduate/undergraduate	22	44.0
45-54 years old	8	16.0	Postgraduate	13	26.0
55-64 years old	1	2.0	Doctoral degree	9	18.0
65 and above	1	2.0	Professional qualification	0	0
Total	50	100.0	Total	50	100.0
<i>Current position</i>	N	%			
Hotelier	11	22.0			
Restaurateur	13	26.0			
Travel agent	11	22.0			
Tourism expert	15	30.0			
Total	50	100.0			

7.1.3 Drivers of tourism entrepreneurship

The underlying motives explaining why individuals engage in entrepreneurial activities have been extensively examined in existent literature (e.g., Akbaba, 2012; Cetin et al., 2022). Overall, these factors include the desire for independence, self-realization, and personal development (e.g., Smith & Miner, 1983; Gatewood et al., 1995). Existing research also distinguishes between opportunity- and necessity-driven tourism and entrepreneurship (Li et al., 2020). It should be noted, however, that entrepreneurial action is largely impacted by various factors including cultural norms, attitudes, and institutional environment making the *context* where venturing takes place of paramount significance.

In the specific case of Türkiye, venturing into tourism is arguably driven by several factors including the desire to be own boss, enjoying working in tourism, generating income, lack of employment opportunities, and benefiting from the opportunities created through tourism (Akbaba, 2012). Overall, factors that motivate individuals in Türkiye to venture can be categorized under three broad categories, namely: extrinsic rewards (e.g. economic motives), intrinsic rewards (e.g. self-achievement, self-development, and independence), and family security/desire to continue a family tradition (Benzing et al., 2009). It should be noted that entrepreneurial motives are usually complex and involve more than a factor, albeit, with varying relative importance for the entrepreneur. The above-mentioned four categories are briefly detailed here.

The current economic circumstances in Türkiye seem to be influential in shaping individuals' motivations to engage in entrepreneurial activities in tourism. On the one hand, the economic growth and reforms, most of which were undertaken as part of the EU integration process, have encouraged entrepreneurs to benefit from simplified bureaucratic procedures (Onder & Nyadera, 2020). On the other hand, however, the current economic crisis and the scarcity of jobs have *pushed* towards self-employment through venturing in an attempt to secure alternative sources of income to make and sustain livelihood. The recent report of Global Entrepreneurship Monitor indicates around 55% of entrepreneurs in Türkiye are driven by the desire to earn a living. (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2022). In this vein, being a country dominated by the young generation with around half of the population being under 30 years old, the unemployment issue is an important challenge. The women's rate of unemployment is higher compared with men, which pushes women to seek other sources of income (Landig, 2011). To surmount this issue, the Turkish government has adopted several strategies to raise awareness for and support entrepreneurial activities as a young people's alternative to getting hired (Öner & Kunday, 2016).

Intrinsic motives including the desire for autonomy and independence, the desire to achieve self-satisfaction, personal growth, and personal freedom are also cited as drivers of entrepreneurship in Türkiye (Benzing et al., 2009). Turkish entrepreneurs pursue personal

satisfaction and happiness through entrepreneurial activities (Landig, 2011). For some, entrepreneurship is a path to foster their power and gain more prestige (Kozan et al., 2006).

Family security and the desire to continue a family tradition are also common drivers among tourism entrepreneurs in Türkiye (Memili et al., 2020). According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, over 40% of entrepreneurs in Türkiye are motivated by the desire to continue a family tradition (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2022). Getting involved in the family business as a motive for venturing is associated with the desire to be own boss, achieve financial independence, and seize potential entrepreneurial opportunities (Ahmad, 2015). On the other hand, family size can be a determinant factor in pushing people to enterprise, especially for those big families where securing an alternative source of income becomes imperative to provide for the family's needs (Cetindamar et al., 2012). Tourism entrepreneurs in Türkiye were presented with potential motives for starting a business in tourism and hospitality and were asked to indicate how important these were for them when getting started their business using a scale ranging from 1 = Not important at all to 5= Very important. Results (see Table 4) show that the desire to become "financially" independent, the desire to enjoy a good lifestyle, and personal satisfaction and growth are the key drivers of entrepreneurship. Motives such as providing jobs for family members, earning extra money in spare time, and building a business to pass on were rated the least important. It should be noted, however, that the motives outlined above are valid for profit-oriented businesses. As in mainstream literature across other contexts, Türkiye's social entrepreneurship is driven mainly by non-financial factors including a desire to push toward positive change and to address social challenges (Eris et al., 2022). The non-financial motives can be also seen in some family businesses that might be driven by the desire to preserve the socio-emotional wealth of family members (Memili et al., 2020).

Table 4. Drivers of tourism entrepreneurship in Türkiye

Drivers of tourism entrepreneurship in Türkiye *	Mean	Std. D
To permit me to become "financially" independent	4.49	0.66
To enjoy a good lifestyle	4.43	0.81
For my own satisfaction and growth	4.37	0.91
To be able to use my past experience and training	4.31	1.11
To be my own boss	4.23	0.94
To live in the right environment	4.20	0.99
To maintain my personal freedom	4.17	1.07
To make lots of money	4.00	0.87
To gain prestige by operating a business	4.00	1.14
To keep my family together	3.91	1.36
To try a different way to improve living	3.91	0.92
To keep this property in the family	3.71	1.25
To pursue a low-risk, manageable investment	3.69	1.16
To prove I can do it	3.66	1.37
To provide a retirement income	3.63	1.29
To earn a living because jobs are scarce	3.63	1.19
To meet interesting people	3.60	1.12
To fill a market gap	3.60	1.03
To provide me with a challenge	3.54	1.20
To build a business to pass on	3.51	1.34
To earn extra money in spare time	3.46	1.40
To provide job for family members	3.17	1.32

*Based only on responses from tourism entrepreneurs ($N = 35$).

7.2. Barriers and challenges to tourism entrepreneurship

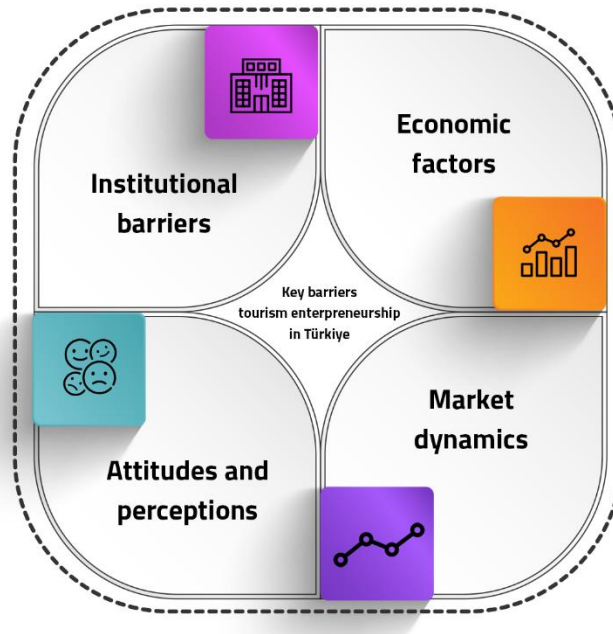
Tourism entrepreneurship in Türkiye is hindered by several factors, some of which are common across different sectors of the economy while others are more inherently related to tourism. Overall, key barriers to tourism entrepreneurship in Türkiye can be grouped under four key themes; namely, economic factors, institutional barriers, attitudes and perceptions, and market dynamics (see Figure 11).

The unfavourable economic environment with severe market fluctuations, high inflation, and economic instability is likely to result in discouraging entrepreneurship (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016). These have decreased investor confidence and led to increasing fear of failure. Under such economic circumstances, obtaining funding becomes significantly difficult which further reduces market entry and adds further stress to existing businesses struggling to survive. Interestingly, while 59.3% claim to have the knowledge, skills, and experience to start a business, only 31.9% saw good opportunities to start a business where they lived (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2022).

Institutional barriers also play a significant role in hindering tourism entrepreneurship. Complicated regulatory and bureaucratic procedures, and challenges related to obtaining permits, licenses, and complying with regulations can be challenging for aspiring tourism entrepreneurs, especially those with limited resources and expertise in dealing with regulatory requirements. This can hinder their ability to start or expand their businesses and create additional burdens in terms of time, effort, and costs, hence hampering tourism entrepreneurship in Türkiye.

Attitudes and perceptions of both prospective and existent entrepreneurs can negatively shape their entrepreneurship actions. Specifically, fear of failure emerges as a key barrier to venturing. It is argued that nearly 40% of adults in Türkiye fear failure. Cultural norms and gender roles might also be considered as potential constraints to entrepreneurship. This may partially explain why entrepreneurial activities in Türkiye are predominated by males with the number of male entrepreneurs being more than double the number of women (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2022). The role of training in fostering attitudes and perceptions of prospective entrepreneurs is acknowledged. However, Türkiye seems to fall behind in terms of the provision of entrepreneurship training either in undergraduate and postgraduate programs or independently from the formal educational system. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2023), the proportion of individuals in Türkiye who had received any training in starting a business, either in school or after school is as low as only 6%. Thus, a lack of entrepreneurial education and training is a missing opportunity to improve attitudes towards venturing.

Figure 11. Key barriers tourism entrepreneurship in Türkiye



Finally, market-related challenges have a significant impact on tourism entrepreneurship. As discussed earlier, Türkiye has become a highly popular destination attracting a significant number of tourists every year, as a result, the market can be highly competitive, particularly in popular tourist destinations (e.g., Istanbul, Antalya). This can make it challenging for tourism entrepreneurs to differentiate themselves, attract customers, and maintain profitability. Moreover, revenue fluctuations due to seasonality are a key challenge for tourism entrepreneurs whereby peak seasons provide higher business opportunities while low seasons are likely to result in financial constraints for tourism business owners. Another market-related challenge is a competition culture based on cutting prices rather than product differentiation (Avcı et al., 2010).

Tourism entrepreneurs and tourism experts in Türkiye were presented with potential barriers/challenges hindering tourism entrepreneurship and were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each barrier/challenge using scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. Results (Table 5) indicate that factors including high inflation rate and interest rates, severe competition, and instability are the most

prominent barriers to entrepreneurship. Interestingly, respondents rated lack of knowledge of what business is good for them as a potential challenge/barrier to be the least significance.

Table 5. Barriers to tourism entrepreneurship in Türkiye

Barriers to tourism entrepreneurship in Türkiye	Mean	Std. D
Inflation rate is high	4.66	0.66
Interest rates are high	4.50	0.68
The industry competition is high	4.42	0.81
Unstable conditions of the country	4.32	1.15
The cost for raw materials is high	4.24	1.00
Lack of proper entrepreneurship education and training	4.20	0.97
Customers in tourism and hospitality industry are picky	4.10	0.84
Lack of incentives to venture in tourism and hospitality	3.98	0.94
Employee turnover rate is high	3.92	1.03
It is hard to hire qualified employees	3.90	0.86
Fear of failure	3.88	1.14
Fear of financial loss	3.86	1.07
Do not have enough money to start a new business	3.84	1.18
Do not have enough support from the government	3.82	1.19
It is hard to find the right location to start a business	3.74	1.23
Lack of knowledge, skills, or experience required to start a new business	3.56	1.36
Too much hassle of getting a business license	3.54	1.18
Lack of the access to the financial and lending institutions	3.50	1.07
The labor fee is expensive	3.36	1.21
Do not know what business is good for me	3.12	1.45

7.3. Success factors of tourism entrepreneurship

Destination competitiveness is largely dependent on tourism service provision in the destination and inherently tourism entrepreneurship. As discussed earlier, Türkiye has recognized the importance of supporting tourism and hospitality business start-ups and attracting foreign investment as a key path to tourism development. The Turkish government has implemented various supportive policies to encourage and promote tourism entrepreneurship. This includes offering financial incentives, facilitating access to funding and loans, providing training and capacity-building programs, and simplifying regulatory procedures for tourism businesses. These government initiatives have helped to create a favourable environment for tourism entrepreneurship in Türkiye.

One key factor contributing to the success of tourism entrepreneurship in Türkiye is the increased demand. Few would disagree that Türkiye enjoys a strategic location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia making it an important gateway for travellers from various regions. The richness of the tourist products (e.g., historical sites, cultural heritage, beaches, and coastal areas) makes Türkiye an attractive tourist destination. Türkiye has attracted over 50 million tourists in 2022 putting the country, for the first time, in an advanced rank among the top five tourist destinations in terms of tourist arrivals (UNWTO, 2023a). This increase in demand (i.e., tourists) usually encourages supply (i.e., tourism businesses) through venturing into tourism and hospitality.

Crucial to the success of tourism entrepreneurship in Türkiye is the government's support to foster entrepreneurship in tourism. Several supportive tools including tax exemptions, funding opportunities, and streamlined regulations have contributed to the development and success of tourism entrepreneurship. For example, the existing Tourism Encouragement Law and its amendments aim to encourage tourism entrepreneurship through introducing several benefits including tax reduction as well as access to loans and funding opportunities for tourism entrepreneurs (Dalgın vd., 2015). Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Culture and Tourism's General Directorate of Investment and Enterprises assumes a critical role in supporting local and foreign tourism investors/entrepreneurs through giving incentives and allocating public lands for tourism development projects and initiatives. Other government-led programs such as Small and Medium Enterprises

Development and Support Organization, known as KOSGEB, also play a significant role in supporting prospective entrepreneurs through providing funding opportunities.

The entrepreneurial orientation of the Turkish population is also a key factor contributing to the success of tourism entrepreneurship. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2023), Türkiye is among the countries with the “healthiest” entrepreneurial anatomies. While it’s unclear to what extent this is impacted by education given that the entrepreneurship rate for non-graduates exceeds that of graduates (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2022), it is obvious that Turkish entrepreneurs are open to innovation with over 50% of entrepreneurs planning to use more digital technology in the near future to grow their business (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2022). Strategic entrepreneurial features such as having a vision, being able to see opportunities, self-questioning, and innovation are also crucial factors contributing to the success of Turkish tourism entrepreneurs (Güzel et al., 2021). In this vein, it should be noted that an increasing number of Turkish hospitality businesses/brands have gained international recognition and expanded beyond Türkiye thanks to the celebrity of these businesses’ owners and their ability to harness the power of social media through creating attractive content.

Tourism entrepreneurs and tourism experts in Türkiye were presented with potential success factors and were asked to indicate how important these were for them using a scale ranging from 1 = Not important at all to 5= Very important. As presented in Table 6, respondents view good general management skills, good customer service reputation for honesty are the most important factors leading to the success of tourism businesses. Political involvement and support of family and friends are however rated the least in importance. In sum, as a maturing economy with a strong tourism entrepreneurial orientation, Türkiye is privileged with a set of factors that significantly contribute to the success of tourism entrepreneurship in the country. These include increased demand, supportive policies, and the entrepreneurial orientation of locals. If success factors are monitored and fostered and barriers to success are tackled, Türkiye’s tourism entrepreneurship is likely to further thrive in the years to come.

Table 6. Success factors of tourism entrepreneurship in Türkiye

	Mean	Std. D
Good general management skills	4.68	0.62
Good customer service	4.64	0.66
Reputation for honesty	4.58	0.84
Ability to manage personnel	4.56	0.76
Maintenance of accurate records of sales/expenses	4.36	0.90
Good location	4.34	0.87
Marketing factors including sales and promotion	4.30	0.86
Appropriate training	4.30	0.89
Satisfactory government support	4.30	0.81
Charisma, friendliness to customers	4.28	1.03
Good product at a competitive price	4.26	0.88
Previous business experience	4.24	0.87
Hard work	4.18	0.87
Stable and supportive political and social environment	4.16	0.98
Access to capital	4.10	1.13
Strong networks with relevant stakeholders	4.08	0.80
Community involvement	4.00	0.90
Support of family and friends	3.70	1.15
Political involvement	3.58	1.14

7. 4. Governmental strategies and tools to encourage and sustain entrepreneurship

Based on the qualitative enquiry in Stage 1 and an extensive review of the literature, a total of 17 items were identified to measure respondents' perceptions of strategies and tools that the government uses to encourage and sustain venturing into tourism. Turkish tourism entrepreneurs and tourism experts were asked to rate, using a scale ranging from 1 = Not important at all to 5= Very important, a set of potential strategies and tools used by the government to encourage and sustain tourism entrepreneurship (see Table 7). Unsurprisingly, political stability, encouraging innovation, and offering entrepreneurial

education and training were rated as the most important strategies/tools whereas land allocation was viewed as the least important.

Table 7. Governmental strategies to encourage and sustain entrepreneurship in Türkiye

	Mean	Std. D
Political stability	4.54	0.86
Encouraging innovation	4.52	0.61
Offering entrepreneurial education and training	4.40	0.64
Tax reduction	4.38	0.78
Creating a supportive legal frameworks/procedure	4.38	0.75
Finance scheme for small and medium enterprises	4.34	0.89
Reducing bureaucratic procedures	4.34	0.87
Helping entrepreneurs access networks	4.34	0.85
Improving labor laws	4.34	0.75
Providing policy encouragement and incentives	4.30	0.97
Legal assistance	4.28	0.95
Credit/loan facilities	4.24	0.96
Fostering a culture of entrepreneurship	4.24	0.80
Lower interest rates	4.20	0.90
Tax exemptions	4.18	0.98
HR support (social security contributions)	4.16	0.89
Land allocation	3.82	1.02

7. 5. Policy Recommendations for Türkiye

- The high inflation rate in Türkiye is likely to be among the key obstacles in the face of both; local entrepreneurship and foreign investment. The increasing inflation rates and interest rates are likely to hinder market entry. Therefore, prioritizing inflation is a key to encouraging and sustaining entrepreneurship in tourism. Until the inflation rate is stabilized, short-term government intervention tools can be

used to support early-stage tourism entrepreneurial activities that are most likely to be vulnerable to economic instability.

- Encouraging and supporting women's entrepreneurship in tourism is important. This can be achieved through allocating special funding opportunities for women entrepreneurs and those nascent entrepreneurs in particular. Capitalizing on the rich Anatolian culture and traditions in Türkiye can also be a path to fostering women's engagement and participation in entrepreneurial activities even at small scales (e.g., handicrafts). This can empower women (through providing them with the source of income), and increase their participation and contribution to the local economy, while also contributing to the sustainability of cultural traditions, often considered an important asset for tourism. On a more micro level, there is a scope to link local women micro-entrepreneurs with specific skills (e.g., bread making, homemade and authentic food cooking) with tourism service providers (e.g., hotels) to create a win-win partnership benefitting both professional service providers and local women.
- Enhancing entrepreneurial resilience through efficient crisis management is essential to respond to internal (e.g., economic instability) and external (e.g., pandemic) crises. This necessitates a closer eye on vulnerable businesses that are likely to be negatively impacted during crises and tailoring support programs to ensure survival. It is also imperative to monitor and measure the efficiency of these support programs/ tools in enhancing resilience to prioritize those most efficient.
- Access to entrepreneurial finance seems to be a significant challenge under the current economic circumstances. As noted by other recent reports (e.g., Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2022), there might be scope for more effort to incentivize lending to tourism entrepreneurs either through governmental funding programs or by securing loans made by the financial sector. This should lead to easier business entry and business survival rates.

The rate of entrepreneurship training in Türkiye is currently low. To increase tourism entrepreneurial activities in particular, extant tourism and hospitality programs should design and offer modules focusing on entrepreneurship. These modules should be goal-oriented arming potential entrepreneurs with the necessary knowledge and skills to

identify opportunities in the market and navigate various processes of business entry including paths to obtaining starting capital. Turkish universities may also establish university-based incubation centres to promote entrepreneurial culture in society.

7. 6. Case Country- Jordan

7.6.1 General Outlook

Tourism is a rapidly growing sector in Jordan, as the country is known as a popular tourist destination for its rich history, culture, and natural attractions. Moreover, the tourism industry is a major pillar of Jordan's economy, contributing 16.2% to Jordan's GDP with 5.3 million visitors and revenues of 4.1 billion JD in 2019 (Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2020; WTTC, 2022). In 2022, the country welcomed 5.05 million tourists (Quintero, 2023), indicating a quick recovery in the aftermath of the pandemic. Jordan's tourism sector contributes substantially to the country's economy by creating employment opportunities and exports, despite being hit severely by the recent health crisis. However, the country is gradually recovering, with planners and developers taking steps to attract more visitors. To achieve this, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities has declared a tourism strategy (2021-2025) that includes four major steps: response, recovery, resilience, and reforms. Additionally, the strategy involves strategic objectives and a number of action plans aimed at rebuilding tourism in the future.

According to the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report (2019), Jordan's cultural resources and business travel have shown significant improvement. Harahsheh et al. (2020) highlighted Jordan's position as one of the top ten halal tourism destinations, alongside Malaysia, UAE, Türkiye, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Qatar, Tunisia, and Egypt. Jordan has also been selected by Lonely Planet, a renowned travel guidebook publisher, as one of the 30 destinations to inspire travellers to visit in 2023.

Jordan has a wide range of cultural and natural assets that are attractive to various entrepreneurs. These attractions draw numerous tourists each year, and their numbers are expected to increase in the coming years. For instance, Statista Market Insights (2023) predicts growth in Jordan's tourism services, including hotels, package holidays, and vacation rentals, between 2023 and 2027. During this period, the country aims to develop several types of tourism, such as wellness tourism (including wellness, medical, faith-based,

and adventure tourism), MICE tourism, and domestic tourism. Investments in these areas are projected to increase (Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2020). The Jordan Investment Commission (upgraded later to ministry level) (2021) has provided useful guidance for entrepreneurs interested in investing in leisure and medical tourism. The commission has highlighted Jordan's importance due to its diverse scenery, landscapes, climates, and distinctive cultural and religious heritage, combined with outdoor and adventure tourism experiences.

According to the World Bank's Doing Business Report (2020), Jordan's economy has exhibited notable improvement, ranking 75th out of 190 countries, up from 104th in 2019. The report noted that "for the first time, Jordan has been selected this year among the top 3 business climate improvers by jumping an unprecedented 29 ranks in the 2020 Doing Business rankings, thanks to a series of economic reforms enacted over the past." Furthermore, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2019/2020 Report revealed Jordan's significant achievements in various areas of entrepreneurial framework conditions, such as internal market dynamics, commercial and legal frameworks, and physical infrastructure. Additionally, the Prosperity Index ranks Jordan 86th out of 176 countries based on countries' annual prosperity ratings. However, Jordan's lowest score for open economies (investment environment and enterprise conditions) is reflected in Table 8 of the report. In inclusive societies, Jordan's ranking for safety and security is 74th. Despite some challenges, these significant indicators may encourage new business ventures in Jordan.

Table 8. Jordan's prosperity ranking

	Ranking 2023	Inclusive Societies				Open Economies				Empowered People			
		Safety and security	Personal freedom	Governance	Social capital	Investment environment	Enterprise conditions	Infrastructure and market access	Economic quality	Living conditions	Health	Education	Natural environment
Jordan	86	74	116	68	152	50	41	67	121	61	100	90	146

Source: The 2023 Legatum Prosperity Index

Jordan recognizes the importance of new businesses in boosting its economy and aims to enhance entrepreneurial capacity. There are numerous government and donor programs in place to support entrepreneurs in the country. Jordan's national entrepreneurship policy (2021) states that the government has supported some entrepreneurs through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Union, the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development, the Innovative Startups and SMEs Fund (ISSF) funded by the World Bank, and the King Abdullah II Fund for Development (Ministry of

Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship, 2021). The country also makes efforts to include women in entrepreneurship training programs, such as the Arab Women Empowerment in Technology and Entrepreneurship Program (AWETE). The country also provides tax incentives for new entrepreneurs to encourage individuals to start their own businesses. In such a context, a recent study showed that the majority of young people (48%) in Jordan have a positive attitude toward entrepreneurship and aim to start their own enterprises or business projects within five years (Assaad et al., 2021) despite their challenges derived from the lack of educational and training programs on entrepreneurship.

Jordan boasts a business-friendly economy that is relatively open to investment opportunities. In recent years, the government has been proactive in implementing a series of economic and legislative reforms aimed at enhancing the investment climate and attracting foreign direct investment. As a result, Jordan's ranking in the World Bank's Doing Business report has improved, establishing the country as a "moderately easy" place to conduct business (World Bank Group, 2020). In particular, phases that might be followed by investors (either locals or foreigners) were summarized for entrepreneurial activities (i.e., hotel and tourist facilities, tourist restaurants, information technology) in the country based on The Investment Environment Law No. 21 of 2022 (Invest Jordan, 2022). Based on this Law (Article 7), the Ministry of Investment is the main reference authority for all investments in Jordan and it is responsible for setting the required strategies and plans to promote local and foreign investment. The article (8) of the same law has alluded to the formation of the Investment Council that is chaired by the Prime Minister. This council approves all investment policies, defines the targeted sectors and priorities, approves the national investment map, and suggests any required regulatory or legislative changes to improve the investment climate in Jordan. In addition, the law has introduced a wide range of incentives for investors (outside the Development and Free Zones) including the custom duties exemption and a zero-sales tax rate on all fixed assets, production requirements and inputs, and the spare parts required to run the business (article 9). The investments that recruit at least 250 Jordanians or are established in the less-developed regions of the Jordan are also entitled for an exemption or reduction by more than 30% of income tax for five years (article 10). Moreover, according to this law, a committee called "Incentive and Exemptions Committee" can suggest an array of additional incentives and exemptions to be

approved by the Council of Ministers to certain economic activities in any region of the country (article 13).

The recently enacted Regulating the Investment Environment Regulation (2023), that has been issued according to the article (51) of The Investment Environment Law No. 21 of 2022, has introduced a comprehensive range of incentives designed to facilitate business investment at both local and international levels. These measures aim to stimulate widespread economic growth and attract investments across the country. Under this regulation, investors can take advantage of various benefits, including access to foreign labour, exemptions from customs duties and sales tax, income tax incentives for specific regions, and additional incentives for select sectors (Regulating the Investment Environment Regulation, 2023). The regulation has specified the additional incentives that economic activities that hire not less than 350 Jordanians can benefit from including the exemption from the rent of land, the contribution in the electric energy bills, tax reduction on building and lands, and the deduction of the establishing infrastructure services costs (Regulating the Investment Environment Regulation, 2023). In addition to these incentives, the Ministry of Investment provides valuable online assistance to entrepreneurs, which has proven to be an effective means of attracting investors. Furthermore, Jordan boasts several strengths that contribute to its favourable business environment. The country's strategic geographical location, competitive labour costs, government support, and the presence of free trade agreements all contribute to accelerating investments and making Jordan an attractive destination for investors. These advantages provide investors with the opportunity to access a large market and thrive in their business endeavours.

The significance of entrepreneurship is widely recognized by destination practitioners for its contributions to the country's economy and its communities (Mehtap et al., 2017). Jordan, being a major tourism destination, offers abundant investment opportunities and resources for entrepreneurs. Additionally, tourism plays a pivotal role in the country's economy and is prioritized on the destination agenda for economic development. It provides employment opportunities, contributes to GDP through tourism receipts, and facilitates the improvement of infrastructure and superstructures. As tourism has flourished in the country, there has been a corresponding increase in tourism

entrepreneurship, reflected by the emergence of new tourism start-ups in the destination. Promoting tourism entrepreneurship is expected to enhance the destination's competitiveness. This can be achieved by addressing the barriers and challenges that entrepreneurs in the tourism sector face. Lastly, identifying the critical success factors for tourism entrepreneurship will assist destination planners and developers in formulating appropriate strategies to foster its importance within society.

Tourism entrepreneurship, its development and characteristics

It should be noted that exploring tourism entrepreneurship and its characteristics in Jordan mostly depends on understanding the significance of tourism development. Jordan is a major tourist destination due to its rich history and culture. The country boasts several tourist centres including Aqaba, Petra, and the Dead Sea. Aqaba, located on the Red Sea coast, is a popular destination for scuba diving and snorkelling because of its diverse marine life and coral reefs. Aqaba was launched as a Special Economic Zone in 2001 with a friendly legislative environment in which investors enjoy various incentives. Petra, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the New Seven Wonders of the World, is known for its ancient Nabataean ruins. The Dead Sea attracts visitors for health tourism since its high salinity and low altitude are said to have healing properties, and the area is a popular destination for relaxation (Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, 2019; Ekodialog, 2023). The country is home to various natural attractions, such as Dana Biosphere Reserve, Shaumari Wildlife Reserve, Ajloun Forest Reserve, and Mujib Biosphere Reserve, offering scenery and opportunities for outdoor activities, including hiking, camping, and wildlife viewing (Jordan Tourism Board, 2023). Moreover, Jordan has numerous archaeological and tourist sites, which can aid destination planners in designing various cultural-based tourism activities.

Both private and public institutions in Jordan are dedicated to employing effective marketing strategies to brand, position, and promote the country's tourism attractions. Their collective efforts aim to establish Jordan as a preferred destination for international visitors. Key institutions involved in these initiatives include the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the National Tourism Council, and the Jordan Tourism Board (Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, 2019). As per the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities' monthly bulletin, Jordan experienced a record-breaking influx of tourists in the first quarter of 2023,

with a remarkable 1.476 million visitors, reflecting a 90.7% increase compared to the same period in 2022. This surge in tourism serves as an indication of the country's growing allure among international travellers.

Recognizing the economic significance of tourism, the government of Jordan organizes various events specifically tailored for tourism entrepreneurs to foster networks and promote sustainable tourism entrepreneurship (ENICBMED, 2023). Additionally, the Jordan Tourism Development Project funded by US-Aid provided extensive support to local entrepreneurs, offering assistance in branding their products and providing guidance on organizing and marketing their services (USAID, 2008). The project also established partnerships with several organizations to bolster tourism development in the country, offering grants and loans to local entrepreneurs and businesses. Continuously striving to attract tourists, tourism entrepreneurs in Jordan constantly devise new and innovative ways to showcase the country (Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, 2020). This includes developing fresh tourism products and services while seeking novel avenues for marketing Jordan to potential travellers. Notably, tourism entrepreneurs in Jordan are deeply committed to sustainable tourism practices (ENICBMED, 2023), aiming to minimize the adverse environmental and social impacts of tourism while maximizing the positive benefits (Al-mughrabi, 2007). Consequently, tourism entrepreneurship emerges as a key catalyst for economic growth in Jordan, and its continuing expansion is expected in the coming years, as it generates employment, and revenue, and promotes sustainable development in the country. According to the Economic Modernization Vision (2022-2033), tourism has been labelled as one of the high-value industries and among the main economic growth priorities.

The tourism industry in Jordan heavily relies on the contribution of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which constitute over 95 per cent of all tourism businesses (European Bank, 2020). These enterprises continuously innovate to entice tourists to visit the country, devising fresh tourism products, services, and innovative marketing strategies (USAID, 2020). In today's highly competitive tourism market, tourism entrepreneurs need to embrace these approaches in order to stand out from their competitors. Notably, these efforts are significant in enhancing the overall tourism experience at destinations, ultimately influencing visitors' future behavioural intentions.

Despite the lack of official statistics on the number of family businesses operating in Jordan, recent research indicates their significance in the country's business landscape (Saidat et al., 2022). Family-owned enterprises have been identified as leaders within Jordan's business community (Saidat et al., 2022). Moreover, the majority of tourism enterprises in Jordan are confirmed to be family-owned businesses (Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, 2019; Pillmayer & Sherle, 2014), emphasizing their importance in the tourism industry.

In accordance with the country's national-level sustainable tourism master plan, tourism entrepreneurs in the area also engage in sustainable practices, aiming to minimize the negative impacts of tourism on the environment and society (ECO Consult, 2022). As an illustration, a non-profit organization outlines key principles for individuals providing services to visitors, promoting environmentally friendly operations, supporting the protection of cultural and natural heritage, and enhancing the social and economic well-being of local communities (Safari Tours, 2023). These efforts contribute to the overall goal of sustainable tourism in the region.

Tourism entrepreneurs in Jordan have displayed remarkable resilience in the face of various challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the Syrian refugee crisis. Despite these obstacles, they have shown their ability to adapt and overcome these crises. Moreover, the government has provided support to tourism enterprises to facilitate the industry's recovery and transition to the new normal (Kebede et al., 2021). As a result of the collective efforts of tourism entrepreneurs in response to these crises, the industry has experienced a revival and has begun generating significant revenue. For instance, in 2022, tourism receipts reached the same level as before (\$5.3 billion), and the government expects further growth in 2023 (Statista Market Insights, 2023; Le Monde, 2023). This demonstrates the industry's aspiration to be competitive in relation to both developing and developed destinations.

A crucial characteristic of tourism entrepreneurship is its global nature, rather than being confined to the local market, as entrepreneurs strive to achieve their marketing objectives. To accomplish this, they leverage the power of effective digital technology (Hasouneh & Alzeat, 2020). Technology is playing an increasingly significant role in Jordan's tourism industry, and entrepreneurs are capitalizing on this trend to develop new and innovative

tourism businesses. Furthermore, technology is being utilized by tourism entrepreneurs to enhance the efficiency and sustainability of their operations. One example is the use of Virtual Reality (VR) tours as a marketing tool for attractions. These tours evoke feelings of anticipation and excitement among potential travellers, thereby increasing their interest in visiting the Jordanian tourist sites (the famous city of Petra in particular) in person (Shatnawi et al., 2020). By embracing technology, tourism entrepreneurs are able to expand their reach and provide enhanced experiences for their customers.

Jordan boasts a diverse array of natural and cultural attractions that make it an attractive destination for investors. The Jordanian government is committed to supporting business infrastructure and developing new incentive solutions (i.e., increasing entrepreneurs' digital capacity, temporary employment incentives, youth technology employment, and training programs) for some issues (i.e., "*financial and logistical support*", "*the challenge of distributing work*", "*owning operating experiences*", "*obtaining information*", "*commercial relations*", and "*networking*") in collaboration with the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship, Chambers of Industry, Chambers of Commerce, and other stakeholders through extensive legislation (Alawamleh et al., 2023). Additionally, the government provides support for programs such as the Queen Rania Centre for Entrepreneurship, which fosters networks among entrepreneurs. These approaches and comprehensive programs aid tourism entrepreneurs in creating a more competitive business environment at both national and international levels. This strategy positions Jordan as a prime destination for tourism entrepreneurship, with robust support from the government to assist businesses in succeeding in this market.

The following sections are based on quantitative data collected from a sample of 60 respondents (52 tourism entrepreneurs across different sub-sectors of the tourism and hospitality industry and eight tourism experts). The general profile of the respondents is presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Descriptive profile of respondents (The Jordanian sample)

<i>Gender</i>	N	%	<i>Marital Status</i>	N	%
Male	50	83.3	Single	14	23.3
Female	10	16.7	Married	46	76.7
Total	60	100.0	Other	0	0
			Total	60	100.0
<i>Age</i>	N	%	<i>Education</i>	N	%
25-34 years old	12	20.0	High school graduate or less	10	16.7
35-44 years old	10	16.7	College graduate/undergraduate	37	61.7
45-54 years old	19	31.7	Postgraduate	8	13.3
55-64 years old	14	23.3	Doctoral degree	5	8.3
65 and above	5	8.3	Professional qualification	0	0
Total	60	100.0	Total	60	100.0
<i>Current position</i>	N	%			
Hotelier	19	31.7			
Restaurateur	20	33.4			
Travel agent	8	13.3			
Giftshop	5	8.3			
Tourism expert	8	13.3			
Total	60	100.0			

7.6.2 Drivers of tourism entrepreneurship

Quantitative data collected from Jordanian tourism entrepreneurs (see Table 10) show that the desire to live in the right environment, the desire to enjoy a good lifestyle, providing a retirement income, and the desire to become "financially" independent are the key drivers of entrepreneurship. Motives such as keeping the property in the family, meeting interesting people, and the desire to gain prestige by operating a business were rated the least important.

Table 10. Drivers of tourism entrepreneurship in Jordan

Drivers of tourism entrepreneurship in Jordan*	Mean	Std. D
To live in the right environment	4.27	0.77
To enjoy a good lifestyle	4.27	0.77
To provide a retirement income	4.27	0.82
To permit me to become "financially" independent	4.27	0.82
For my own satisfaction and growth	4.19	0.82
To earn a living because jobs are scarce	4.19	0.77
To try a different way to improve living	4.15	0.87
To maintain my personal freedom	4.10	0.87
To be able to use my past experience and training	4.08	0.93
To fill a market gap	4.06	0.89
To build a business to pass on	4.04	1.08
To pursue a low-risk, manageable investment	3.96	1.08
To provide job for family members	3.94	1.13
To provide me with a challenge	3.90	1.01
To keep my family together	3.88	1.00
To prove I can do it	3.88	1.10
To earn extra money in spare time	3.75	1.05
To be my own boss	3.67	1.18
To make lots of money	3.65	1.03
To gain prestige by operating a business	3.54	1.09
To meet interesting people	3.52	1.26
To keep this property in the family	3.46	1.20

*Based only on responses from tourism entrepreneurs (N 52).

7.6.3 Barriers and challenges to tourism entrepreneurship

The quantitative data collected from tourism entrepreneurs and tourism experts (see Table 11) indicate that factors including high inflation rate and interest rates, lack of support from the government, and lack of incentives to venture into tourism and hospitality are the most prominent barriers to entrepreneurship. Interestingly, respondents rated meeting the needs of picky customers in the tourism and hospitality industry and lack of knowledge of what business is good for them as potential challenges/barriers to be the least significant. Respondents' ratings of barriers in Jordan are notably similar to their counterparts in Türkiye.

Table 11. Barriers to tourism entrepreneurship in Jordan

Barriers to tourism entrepreneurship in Jordan	Mean	Std. D
Interest rates are high	4.47	0.62
Do not have enough support from the government	4.35	0.86
Lack of incentives to venture in tourism and hospitality	4.25	0.89
Inflation rate is high	4.20	0.75
Lack of the access to the financial and lending institutions	4.15	0.90
The cost for raw materials is high	4.00	0.86
Employee turnover rate is high	3.98	1.05
Too much hassle of getting a business license	3.98	1.00
It is hard to hire qualified employees	3.83	1.03
Fear of financial loss	3.82	1.08
Lack of proper entrepreneurship education and training	3.73	1.07
Do not have enough money to start a new business	3.63	1.07
The industry competition is high	3.60	1.12
Fear of failure	3.57	1.23
The labor fee is expensive	3.50	1.10
Unstable conditions of the country	3.40	1.28
Lack of knowledge, skills, or experience required to start a new business	3.35	1.16
It is hard to find the right location to start a business	3.13	1.13
Do not know what business is good for me	2.97	1.13
Customers in tourism and hospitality industry are picky	2.90	1.26

7.6.4 Success factors of tourism entrepreneurship

As presented in Table 12, for Jordanian tourism entrepreneurs and tourism experts, good customer service, reputation for honesty, good general management skills, and hard work are the most important qualities of successful tourism ventures. Except for access to capital ($\bar{x} = 3.97$), all indicators of success were rated highly ($\bar{x} = >4$).

Table 12. Success factors of tourism entrepreneurship in Jordan

	Mean	Std. D
Good customer service	4.77	0.53
Reputation for honesty	4.68	0.54
Good general management skills	4.68	0.57
Hard work	4.68	0.54
Charisma, friendliness to customers	4.65	0.73
Good location	4.53	0.70
Marketing factors including sales and promotion	4.52	0.68
Good product at a competitive price	4.47	0.68
Appropriate training	4.37	0.78
Ability to manage personnel	4.35	0.78
Previous business experience	4.33	0.80
Maintenance of accurate records of sales/expenses	4.28	0.87
Strong networks with relevant stakeholders	4.25	0.84
Community involvement	4.22	0.87
Political involvement	4.17	0.99
Stable and supportive political and social environment	4.17	1.04
Support of family and friends	4.02	1.11
Satisfactory government support	4.00	1.30
Access to capital	3.97	1.02

7.6.5 Governmental strategies and tools to encourage and sustain entrepreneurship

Given that the core barriers to tourism entrepreneurship were more related to economic and financial factors, it becomes unsurprising that tourism entrepreneurs and tourism experts rate strategies oriented towards mitigating these economic and financial challenges as the most important. In this vein, tax reduction ($\bar{x} = 4.70$) tax exemptions ($\bar{x} = 4.67$), and lower interest rates ($\bar{x} = 4.67$) were viewed as the most important strategies/tools used by the government to encourage and sustain entrepreneurship in Jordan (see Table 13).

Table 13. Governmental strategies to encourage and sustain entrepreneurship in Jordan

	Mean	Std. D
Tax reduction	4.70	0.56
Tax exemptions	4.67	0.63
Lower interest rates	4.67	0.60
Providing policy encouragement and incentives	4.63	0.49
Finance scheme for small and medium enterprises	4.57	0.65
Reducing bureaucratic procedures	4.57	0.62
Improving labor laws	4.55	0.62
Creating a supportive legal frameworks/procedure	4.53	0.62
Credit/loan facilities	4.52	0.65
HR support (social security contributions)	4.50	0.75
Helping entrepreneurs access networks	4.48	0.62
Offering entrepreneurial education and training	4.42	0.67
Land allocation	4.42	0.98
Fostering a culture of entrepreneurship	4.42	0.79
Encouraging innovation	4.37	0.71
Political stability	4.35	0.68
Legal assistance	4.30	0.74

7.6.6 Policy Recommendations for Jordan

The field study in Jordan shows that tourism is a key driver of the economy and thus encouraging entrepreneurship in tourism and hospitality is viewed as a path to both sustainable development of tourism and economic growth in the country. This is unsurprising given that the total contribution of travel and tourism to Jordan's GDP is 16.2% (WTTC, 2022). Based on a field study involving qualitative and quantitative data collected from Jordanian tourism entrepreneurs and tourism experts, the following policy recommendations are outlined:

Understandably, cultural and heritage tourism is heavily emphasized in Jordan given the richness of archaeological and heritage sites. To ensure long-term and sustainable

competitiveness, there is a scope to differentiate tourism offerings through investing in niche tourism types. In this vein, Jordan has significant potential to become an attractive destination for wellness tourism as well as medical tourism. This could be possible through introducing special incentives customized to encourage niche tourism.

Tourism entrepreneurship is apparently challenged by economic factors including high inflation rates and high interest rates as well as structural challenges including insufficient governmental support and insufficient incentives to venture into tourism and hospitality. High inflation and interest rates have become a challenge in several economies, both developed and developing, following the recent pandemic as well as the Ukrainian-Russian war. There is a scope to revise existing support and incentive programs to encourage venturing in tourism and hospitality. Short-term government intervention tools can be used to support early-stage tourism entrepreneurial activities that are most likely to be vulnerable to economic instability triggered by high inflation rates and high-interest rates. According to the interviews, the government needs to give more incentives to investors enterprising in the less-developed regions in the country to render their ventures more feasible.

Despite existing efforts to encourage and support entrepreneurship, tourism entrepreneurs and tourism experts in Jordan seem to view lack of governmental support and lack of incentives as key barriers. The interviews with entrepreneurs and experts revealed the necessity of reducing utility bills (electricity, water, sewage, etc.) incurred by the tourism and hospitality businesses to minimize the operational costs and increase their ability to maintain a competitive advantage in the tourist markets on both regional and international level.

In addition, the entrepreneurs alluded to the high burden of interest rates on the bank loans. Thus, the government is invited to seek tools in collaboration with lending institutions to offer tourism and hospitality loans at lower interest rates and create financial schemes to surmount the barriers related to accessing financial resources. This is particularly important to the nascent entrepreneurs who are in need for financial support in the start-up phases.

Moreover, the interviews highlighted the challenges related to the shortage of highly skilled people in the Jordanian tourism and hospitality labour market. This requires establishing more vocational and traditional academic programs to meet the increasing demand. On the other hand, government and relevant tourism and hospitality associations are also invited to conduct training programs for employees already working in the market to enhance their knowledge and skills in providing services according to the international standards. These actions will support the existing businesses in their endeavours to grow and encourage the new entrepreneurs to venture in the Jordanian tourism and hospitality market.

Finally, interviews showed the need to improve the infrastructure including roads, water, electricity, and sewage to pave the way for entrepreneurship especially in the less-developed region. In addition, entrepreneurs expressed the desire to accelerate digitalization in performing governmental procedures (e.g. licensing). Jordan has introduced many online services through launching some e-government initiatives (e.g. SANAD App), however, more efforts need to be exerted to facilitate the various bureaucratic procedures.

7.7. Case Country- The Gambia

7.7.1 General Outlook

The Gambia is one of the poorest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a low GDP per capita of \$861.08 (Statista, 2023). While the country's overall economy has struggled to grow, tourism has emerged as a crucial sector, alongside re-exporting trade and agriculture (The World Bank, 2022a). In the post-Covid-19 era, the Gambia's tourism industry has proven to be a resilient sub-sector of the economy contributing to the GDP with 20% (UNCTAD, 2019). Despite experiencing a significant decline in 2020, the country saw a remarkable 15% increase in tourist arrivals in 2021. Tourism revenues have generally been on the rise since 1995, even in the face of challenges such as the Ebola outbreak and the Covid-19 pandemic, which were followed by subsequent increases in tourist numbers and receipts (The World Bank, 2022b). Particularly noteworthy is the substantial surge in tourist arrivals, reaching 182,795 visitors (+56%) in 2022 for the Gambia (Hoiye, 2023). According to the Exporter Guide for the Gambia, the growing number of hotels is reflective of the increasing influx of tourists. The report also highlights that travellers to the Gambia are typically from middle

and high-income brackets, which incentivizes investors to contribute to the region (USDA, 2020).

Given the significant impact of tourism on the Gambian economy, the industry serves as a critical source of employment creation, with more than 115,000 jobs directly or indirectly created by the tourism sector in 2019 (Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency, 2022). Additionally, tourism generates foreign currency for the country. Therefore, policy reports such as “The Tourism Policy Action Plan: Tourism Sector of the Gambia” propose various strategies for long-term tourism development, such as increasing tourist activities, promoting community-based tourism, branding Gambia as a tourist destination, expanding tourism businesses, and improving human resources. The Gambia has also accredited tertiary institutions specializing in tourism-related fields, such as the Gambia Tourism & Hospitality Institute (Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), 2022). Moreover, the country received the Golden Sun Award for Tourism Destination of the Year in 2019, thanks to its unique positioning as the Smiling Coast (Gambiana, 2019). These initiatives highlight the Gambian government's commitment to developing the tourism industry in a sustainable, effective, and inclusive manner while enabling businesses to thrive and contribute to the country's overall economic growth.

Some reports, however, paint a pessimistic picture of the current situation of Gambian tourism in comparison to other countries worldwide. For instance, The World Economic Forum (2019) assessed destinations' competitiveness and ranked Gambia 111th out of 140 countries. In this evaluation, indicators such as "safety and security" and "sustainability" received particularly high scores. These factors are crucial for the development of tourism destinations. Additionally, the country was positioned 90th in terms of "Travel & Tourism Policy and Enabling Conditions." This suggests that tourism has the potential to thrive in the Gambia if resources are utilized correctly and efficiently. Furthermore, the country views tourism as a means to address its economic weaknesses (The Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC), 2017). Despite the challenges identified in these reports, it's important to recognize the opportunities that exist for the Gambia to enhance its tourism industry by focusing on safety, sustainability, and effective policy implementation. With concerted

efforts, the country can better position itself as a desirable destination for travellers and achieve economic growth which eventually would foster entrepreneurial activities in tourism and hospitality services.

Several initiatives have been undertaken by the government to attract tourism investors to the Gambia by highlighting the destination's advantages. These include the potential for tourism demand growth, a wide range of tourist attractions, ease of travel, a vibrant culture, and a young population. The country also boasts competitive costs and a strong focus on safety (Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency, 2022). Given the country's tourism potential, entrepreneurship might play a crucial role in attracting visitors, improving service quality, and generating income for the region. Furthermore, the Gambia offers abundant resources and investment opportunities for tourism entrepreneurs in areas such as cruise transport, eco-tourism, and recreational fishing. To incentivize entrepreneurs, the Gambian government provides free-charge lands and offers accelerated investments in 4 and 5-star hotels, convention centres, sports and entertainment centres, ecotourism, and river tourism within designated new zones (Foreign Economic Relations Board, 2014). These initiatives demonstrate the government's commitment to fostering entrepreneurship and attracting investment, ultimately leading to the development of a thriving and diverse tourism sector in the Gambia.

The Gambia Tourism Strategy has identified four major programs, with sector value chain development positioned as the third step in the implementation of the strategy. In this phase, the improvement of skills and entrepreneurial behaviours plays a central role in fostering institutional development. To achieve this goal, it has been recognized that engaging youth is particularly fitting (International Trade Centre, 2019). Furthermore, tourism entrepreneurs in the country face certain challenges, which have partially been alleviated through the efforts of Gambian non-governmental organizations to facilitate access to the tourism value chain. For example, formulating national entrepreneurship policy, organizing training programs for young entrepreneurs, mentorship and leadership training are some of the initiatives that were considered by authorities (International Trade Center, 2020; United Nations, 2017; European Union, 2019). These initiatives aim to support local entrepreneurs in overcoming obstacles and maximizing their contribution to the

tourism sector in the Gambia. By focusing on skills development and providing opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs, the country can enhance the sustainability and growth of its tourism industry, ultimately benefiting both the economy and the local community (ODI, 2008).

According to the Global Competitiveness Report 2017-2018, the Gambia has potential to achieve greater economic growth in Africa (World Economic Forum, 2017). The country offers a diverse range of entrepreneurship activities and fosters an encouraging environment for investors looking to embark on new business ventures. Additionally, the United Nations (2017) has launched efforts to formulate a national entrepreneurship policy for the Gambia, with a focus on improving the regulatory environment, enhancing entrepreneurship education and skills development, facilitating technology exchange and innovation, improving access to finance, and promoting awareness and networking. In terms of overall prosperity, as ranked by the prosperity index that considers various indicators, the Gambia is placed 116th out of 176 countries (see Table 14). Notably, the country achieves its highest scores in two key sections related to entrepreneurship: open economies and empowered people. However, its scores in areas related to inclusive societies such as safety and security, governance, and social capital are comparatively lower.

While the current entrepreneurial landscape in the Gambia may seem limited, the national entrepreneurship policy strives to stimulate and strengthen the economy, targeting a minimum growth rate of 7%. This growth will be driven by the support and ingenuity of self-reliant and innovative local entrepreneurs. In the long term, the Gambia aspires to become a prosperous and sustainable middle-income economy, distinguishing itself from other sub-Saharan countries (United Nations, 2017). By nurturing entrepreneurship and providing a conducive environment for business development, the Gambia can unlock its economic potential and pave the way for long-term prosperity and success.

The Gambia offers numerous incentives to promote and advance entrepreneurial activities, with the support of various institutions. By doing so, the country aims to maintain its competitive position in the region and compete with other developed and developing nations. For instance, the Gambia Investment & Export Promotion Agency, established in 2010, serves as a national agency dedicated to promoting and facilitating private sector

investments in the Gambia. Additionally, both governmental (such as MOTIE and GIEPA) and private sector institutions (including GCCI and AmCham) in the Gambia have taken initiatives (i.e., creating entrepreneurial policies, giving education programs about entrepreneurship for young Gambians, training programs on technology for women in the Gambia) to provide vital support services to entrepreneurs (Badje, 2023; United Nations, 2017).

Table 14. Gambia's prosperity ranking

		Inclusive Societies				Open Economies				Empowered People			
	Ranking 2023	Safety and security	Personal freedom	Governance	Social capital	Investment environment	Enterprise conditions	Infrastructure and market access	Economic quality	Living conditions	Health	Education	Natural environment
The Gambia	116	82	102	65	64	108	67	135	150	129	139	142	82

Source: The 2023 Legatum Prosperity Index

Recognizing the service sector as the main driver of economic growth, the Gambia prioritizes entrepreneurial initiatives, particularly within the tourism and hospitality industry. The World Bank supports this notion by approving \$68 million for tourism

diversification in the Gambia (The World Bank, 2022c). Furthermore, in 2019, the European Union commenced a training program for young entrepreneurs centred around "Regional Networking and Youth Empowerment." This training program emphasizes service-related sectors, such as tourism, food, and wellness, as key themes for participants to consider in their activities (European Union, 2019).

In sum, the Gambia's tourism industry has been growing in recent years, and the government is committed to developing it further. The country has a number of advantages as a tourist destination, including its safety, sustainability, and diverse range of attractions. The government is also providing incentives to attract tourism investors and entrepreneurs. These initiatives have the potential to make the Gambia a major tourism destination in Africa.

7.7.2 Tourism entrepreneurship, its development and characteristics

Although the Gambia gained independence in 1965, the country continues to strive for resource improvement across various sectors, with a particular focus on tourism. This establishes the origins of tourism in The Gambia in the early 1970s, during the period when the country was under British Colonial rule. Following the democratic transition in September 1996, an average of 100,000 annual visitors was recorded (Bellagamba, 2009).

The Gambia boasts a range of tourist attractions that have the potential to captivate a significant share of the international tourism market. With its spectacular landscapes, rivers, beaches, and rural areas, the country can invest in developing these attractions for different types of tourism, such as water-based tourism, eco-tourism, and recreational tourism (Attemene & Eguavo, 2017). Additionally, The Gambia offers an array of authentic activities for visitors to engage in, guided by knowledgeable tourist guides in the region. These activities include visiting villages, exploring the history of the African slave trade, witnessing Gambian wrestling matches, and partaking in home-cooking excursions (McClymont, 2023). The combination of these experiences makes the Gambia an authentic and trustworthy tourism destination.

Tourism entrepreneurship begins with the development of the tourism industry in a destination. The Gambia's tourism statistics have been recorded by tourism organizations since 1995 (The World Data, 2023). The country holds a notable place in African tourism

history, as it was the first destination visited by 300 Swedish tourists who participated in a tour organized by a tour operator in 1965 (Attemene & Eguavoen, 2017). This initial influx of tourists led to a continuous stream of visitors to The Gambia in subsequent years. In the 1970s, the tourism industry in The Gambia received a significant boost with the introduction of charter flights from Europe, facilitating increased tourist flows (Access Gambia, 2023). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, The Gambia experienced continued growth in tourism, becoming a popular destination for European tourists seeking a winter sun holiday. This period also saw the diversification of the tourism industry, with the development of new offerings such as eco-tourism and cultural tourism.

The tourism industry in the Gambia is currently in its developmental stages, presenting several opportunities for entrepreneurs to venture into new businesses. Tourism entrepreneurship in the Gambia is a thriving sector that offers numerous avenues for growth. The country boasts a rich array of natural and cultural attractions that can serve as valuable assets for the creation of successful tourism enterprises (UNESCO Office Dakar and Regional Bureau for Education in Africa, 2017). There are several compelling reasons why tourism entrepreneurship in the Gambia is an attractive endeavour (Della-Giusta & Phillip, 2006; Voice Gambia, 2019). The country's abundant natural resources and vibrant cultural heritage provide a strong foundation for the success of tourism businesses (Rid et al., 2014). Furthermore, the government's commitment to the development of the tourism industry creates a favourable environment for growth and expansion in the sector (Anadolu Agency, 2019). In sum, with its untapped potential and supportive government initiatives, the Gambia presents a promising landscape for entrepreneurs seeking to make their mark in the tourism industry.

The Gambia Tourism Board (GTB) is a key organization that provides entrepreneurs with essential information on business registration, licensing, and financing. Additionally, the GTB offers training programs and workshops to further enhance your entrepreneurial skills. Moreover, there are other organizations such as the Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI) and the Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA) that can provide further assistance in starting a tourism business in the Gambia (Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency, 2023). Thus, it can be concluded that tourism

entrepreneurs can benefit from the institutions operated in the Gambia. With this characteristic, tourism entrepreneurship is aided by governmental and non-governmental organizations providing them with information and consultancy services.

The following sections are based on quantitative data collected from a sample of 47 respondents (38 tourism entrepreneurs across different sub-sectors of the tourism and hospitality industry and nine tourism experts). The general profile of the respondents is presented in Table 15.

Table 15. Descriptive profile of respondents (The Gambian sample)

<i>Gender</i>	N	%	<i>Marital Status</i>	N	%
Male	31	66.0	Single	1	2.1
Female	16	34.0	Married	39	83.0
Total	47	100.0	Other	7	14.9
			Total	47	100.0
<i>Age</i>	N	%	<i>Education</i>	N	%
25-34 years old	8	17.0	High school graduate or less	7	14.9
35-44 years old	14	29.8	College graduate/undergraduate	21	44.7
45-54 years old	22	46.8	Postgraduate	8	17.0
55-64 years old	2	4.3	Doctoral degree	0	0.0
65 and above	1	2.1	Professional qualification	11	23.4
Total	47	100.0	Total	47	100.0
<i>Current position</i>	N	%			
Hotelier	13	27.7			
Restaurateur	14	29.8			
Travel agent	11	23.4			
Tourism expert	9	19.1			
Total	47	100.0			

7.7.3 Drivers of tourism entrepreneurship

Quantitative data from Gambian tourism entrepreneurs shows that entrepreneurs are generally driven by the desire to become "financially" independent, desire for personal satisfaction and growth, and the desire to maintain personal freedom. This indicates that push factors are more influential in driving the tourism entrepreneurial action in the Gambia. Drivers including "to be my own boss" and "to keep this property in the family" were rated as the least important (See Table 16).

Table 16. Drivers of tourism entrepreneurship in the Gambia

Drivers of tourism entrepreneurship in the Gambia*	Mean	Std. D
To permit me to become "financially" independent	4.50	.60
For my own satisfaction and growth	4.34	.84
To maintain my personal freedom	4.34	.74
To provide me with a challenge	4.26	.68
To build a business to pass on	4.21	.62
To live in the right environment	4.15	.88
To gain prestige by operating a business	4.10	.89
To make lots of money	4.07	.96
To meet interesting people	4.07	.88
To provide a retirement income	4.07	.85
To fill a market gap	4.07	.88
To pursue a low-risk, manageable investment	4.05	.98
To try a different way to improve living	4.05	.83
To be able to use my past experience and training	4.05	.86
To enjoy a good lifestyle	4.02	.97
To earn a living because jobs are scarce	3.92	.94
To keep my family together	3.89	1.06
To earn extra money in spare time	3.86	.84
To provide job for family members	3.84	.91
To prove I can do it	3.76	.91
To keep this property in the family	3.63	1.10
To be my own boss	3.55	1.36

*Based only on responses from tourism entrepreneurs (N 38).

7.7.4 Barriers and challenges to tourism entrepreneurship

For tourism entrepreneurs in the Gambia, it appears that venturing is challenged by economic (i.e., high inflation rate and high interest rates) as well as financial factors (i.e., lack of access to financial and lending institutions). Moreover, the lack of support from the government is highly rated by respondents. Gambian tourism entrepreneurs and tourism experts do not seem to be challenged by a lack of knowledge of what business is good for them, difficulty in hiring qualified employees, unstable conditions of the country, or any high costs of labour force (See Table 17).

Table 17. Barriers to tourism entrepreneurship in the Gambia

Barriers to tourism entrepreneurship in the Gambia	Mean	Std. D
Inflation rate is high	4.28	0.62
Interest rates are high	4.21	0.83
Lack of the access to the financial and lending institutions	4.09	0.83
Do not have enough support from the government	4.02	1.01
The cost for raw materials is high	3.89	1.07
It is hard to find the right location to start a business	3.83	1.01
The industry competition is high	3.83	1.01
Lack of incentives to venture in tourism and hospitality	3.81	1.01
Customers in tourism and hospitality industry are picky	3.72	0.90
Lack of proper entrepreneurship education and training	3.64	1.13
Do not have enough money to start a new business	3.49	1.14
Fear of financial loss	3.49	1.10
Fear of failure	3.49	1.21
Too much hassle of getting a business license	3.43	1.12
Employee turnover rate is high	3.32	1.25
Lack of knowledge, skills, or experience required to start a new business	3.00	1.12
The labor fee is expensive	2.94	1.21
Unstable conditions of the country	2.94	1.34
It is hard to hire qualified employees	2.85	1.32
Do not know what business is good for me	2.85	1.12

7.7.5 Success factors of tourism entrepreneurship

As presented in Table 18, respondents in the Gambia viewed good customer service, appropriate training, and good general management skills as the most important factors contributing to the success of tourism entrepreneurship. Political involvement, community involvement, and support of family and friends were viewed as the least important.

Table 18. Success factors of tourism entrepreneurship in the Gambia

	Mean	Std. D
Good customer service	4.74	0.49
Appropriate training	4.64	0.53
Good general management skills	4.60	0.54
Hard work	4.57	0.62
Access to capital	4.57	0.68
Good product at a competitive price	4.55	0.62
Maintenance of accurate records of sales/expenses	4.55	0.54
Reputation for honesty	4.53	0.58
Charisma, friendliness to customers	4.53	0.75
Good location	4.53	0.65
Ability to manage personnel	4.43	0.58
Strong networks with relevant stakeholders	4.40	0.65
Stable and supportive political and social environment	4.40	0.80
Marketing factors including sales and promotion	4.38	0.74
Satisfactory government support	4.28	0.90
Previous business experience	4.23	0.76
Support of family and friends	4.11	0.98
Community involvement	3.98	0.85
Political involvement	3.43	1.23

7.7.6 Governmental strategies and tools to encourage and sustain entrepreneurship

As presented in Table 19, respondents view almost all items as highly important. Specifically, the need to reduce interest rates, foster political stability, and create finance schemes to support small and medium enterprises seem to be pressing issues that are likely to foster tourism entrepreneurship. Interestingly, while tax reduction is highly rated in

importance ($\bar{x} = 4.38$), tax exemptions are rated as the least important strategy/tool ($\bar{x} = 3.28$).

Table 19. Governmental strategies to encourage and sustain entrepreneurship in Gambia

	Mean	Std. D
Lower interest rates	4.66	0.56
Political stability	4.62	0.53
Finance scheme for small and medium enterprises	4.53	0.62
Offering entrepreneurial education and training	4.53	0.55
Credit/loan facilities	4.47	0.55
Providing policy encouragement and incentives	4.43	0.62
Encouraging innovation	4.43	0.62
Improving labor laws	4.43	0.58
Tax reduction	4.38	0.82
Helping entrepreneurs access networks	4.32	0.73
Creating a supportive legal frameworks/procedure	4.30	0.62
Reducing bureaucratic procedures	4.28	0.95
Fostering a culture of entrepreneurship	4.28	0.54
Land allocation	4.23	0.76
Legal assistance	4.17	0.82
HR support (social security contributions)	4.11	0.73
Tax exemptions	3.28	1.56

7.7.7 Policy Recommendations for the Gambia

The field study in the Gambia supported by qualitative and quantitative data from tourism entrepreneurs and tourism experts highlights the crucial role of the tourism industry in contributing to economic growth through boosting local entrepreneurship and attracting foreign investment, creating jobs, and attracting foreign currency. This is unsurprising given that the total contribution of travel and tourism to the Gambian GDP is 20% (UNCTAD, 2019). The data also show that the tourism industry is a lucrative area for venturing given the comparatively low initial capital and limited know-how required as well as the growing potential of the Gambia as a nascent tourist destination. Based on this field study, policy

recommendations oriented towards facilitating and promoting tourism entrepreneurship in the Gambia are outlined below:

Bureaucracy seems to be a key challenge hindering entrepreneurial activities, especially at the initial stage of starting a business. There is a scope to streamline regulatory frameworks and licensing procedures. This will help businesses get started and flourish while also reducing failure rates.

There is a scope to improve infrastructure to support and sustain tourism development while also improving the provision of tourism services. Unreliable water and electricity supply as well as shortage in accessibility to tourist attractions and recreation hubs have been frequently highlighted by informants in the Gambian field study. Long-term and strategic plans should be developed to improve the infrastructure in destinations. When resources are limited, partnerships with the private sector and tourism entrepreneurs can be established so they can contribute to the development of the infrastructure on a win-win basis (through tax exemptions and special incentives).

While the number of international arrivals alone should not be viewed as a parameter of success for destinations, it cannot be neglected as an important factor encouraging venturing into the tourism and hospitality industry. The Gambia has the potential to engage in more aggressive marketing efforts to induce greater tourist demand.

7.8. Case Country- United Kingdom

7.8.1 General Outlook

The United Kingdom (UK) has remained one of the top tourist destinations in the world as it received 30.54 million tourists in 2022 which is five times higher than the previous year (UNWTO, 2023a). This makes the UK the sixth most visited destination in the world and the fourth in Europe. The tourist receipts also increased by 129 percent in 2022 as compared to 2021 which shows a remarkable recovery from the pandemic. UNWTO tourism recovery tracker shows that the UK is the 2nd best performer globally in the list of Year-to-Date change for the year 2022 vs. 2021 (UNWTO, 2023b). Though the tourist inflow in 2022 is twenty-three per cent lower than in 2019, the tourist spending rose from \$58.6 Billion to \$68.2 Billion in 2022 (UNWTO, 2023a). The UK ranks third in the world and second in Europe in terms of tourist receipts. Similarly, the per-capita tourists' receipts (i.e., \$2232)

for the UK are more than double as compared to the global average (i.e., \$922). According to the Travel and Tourism Development Index, the UK is ranked the fifth best country for non-leisure travel (Statista, 2021) as well as the fifth among the tourist-friendly countries (WEF, 2017). In addition to inbound travellers, the UK enjoys a large local market when it comes to tourists' travel and spending. In 2021, the UK has seen 119 Million overnight trips between April – December 2021 which spent £27 (\$33.3) billion (VisitBritain, 2022).

The tourism sector in the UK offers 2.6 Million jobs while generating \$130 billion in revenue both directly and indirectly (VisitBritain, 2019). The number of Value Added Tax (VAT) registered tourism-related businesses, including hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, transportation services, and event planners, reached a total of 208,880 in the year 2019. Furthermore, there are 33,374 serviced accommodation businesses with 786,775 bedrooms and 1,768,795 bed spaces (VisitBritain, 2019). The tourism sector is expected to grow by 3.6 per cent while attracting £268 (\$331) Billion in revenue and supporting 3.8 million jobs till 2025 (Ridgway, 2019). The proposed deal further aims to develop new skills for contemporary industry needs, establish new tourism zones, and improve connectivity across the whole country. The current tourism value in the UK and planned tourism sector present multiple avenues for tourism entrepreneurs.

The UK provides a promising environment for entrepreneurs as it is ranked 8th in the world in terms of ease of doing business (The World Bank, 2019). The UK is the 4th best country in Europe according to the National Entrepreneurship Context Index of Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM, 2022). According to the prosperity index which uses several prosperity indicators to rank countries, the UK is ranked 12th out of 176 countries. As shown in Table 20, the UK is among the top 10 countries in terms of investment environment and enterprise conditions. Similarly, the UK's 12th position in infrastructure and market access corroborates its stature to support the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The education, social capital, governance, and safety and security rankings also encourage business venturing in the UK.

Table 20. UK prosperity ranking

		Inclusive Societies				Open Economies				Empowered People			
	Ranking 2023	Safety and security	Personal freedom	Governance	Social capital	Investment environment	Enterprise conditions	Infrastructure and market access	Economic quality	Living conditions	Health	Education	Natural environment
UK	12	21	17	15	15	10	10	12	15	9	34	14	22

Source: The 2023 Legatum Prosperity Index

The UK is offering several incentives to enhance its entrepreneurial outlook and to sustain its competitive position in Europe as well as globally. For instance, there are more than 1,500 government funding and private programs available for starting a small business in the UK (UKStartups, 2023). This makes the UK the largest entrepreneurial finance system in Europe (Brown et al., 2020). The UK government also provides several tax reliefs and incentives including Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS), Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme (SEIS), Social Investment Tax Relief (SITR), and Venture Capital Trust (VCT). Such tax incentives and financial support systems work as precursors of entrepreneurship in the UK. Similarly, the UK offers several industrial sector deals to enhance productivity, skills, employment, and innovation in the aerospace, artificial intelligence, automotive, construction, creative industries, life sciences, and tourism sectors (GOV.UK, 2019). These deals are focused on improving the infrastructure, business environment, people empowerment, and idea generation. In addition, the UK is the home of some of the oldest and top-ranked universities in the world which are imparting knowledge, skills, and capabilities needed for contemporary entrepreneurial practices. Recent research has shown that universities play a vital role in contemporary knowledge-based entrepreneurial

economies and boost entrepreneurial firms' performance and sales growth (Link & Sarala, 2019). As a result, the UK enjoys a capable, highly skilled, and creative workforce.

Though the UK endeavours to offer a conducive environment for business venturing it faces several challenges. For instance, the Covid-19 pandemic has adversely affected UK's entrepreneurial finance such that there was a 31 per cent decrease in seed and early-stage funding in 2020 (Brown et al., 2020). While the UK is recovering fast from the pandemic effects, it has not reached its 2019 peak levels. The political uncertainty that emerged due to Brexit also posed challenges to the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the UK (Sohns & Wójcik, 2020). The Brexit was estimated to reduce investment in the UK by 11 per cent and the overall productivity by 5 percent over the three years (Bloom et al., 2019). Brown *et al.* (2019) also documented the adverse impact of Brexit on small and medium-sized enterprises. As the aftermath of Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic, the UK is experiencing high inflation and slower economic growth in several sectors. In addition to post-pandemic and Brexit challenges, the UK's entrepreneurial ecosystem faces several challenges including the highly competitive and mature market structure, high wages and tax rates, and government regulations pertaining to worker protection and environmental sustainability. Due to these challenges, the UK shows the lowest productivity in general and in the tourism sector in particular across G7 countries (Kim et al., 2021).

However, entrepreneurship is all about capitalizing on the available opportunities while tackling the potential challenges. That is why the importance of entrepreneurship for community and destination development is widely acknowledged (Fu et al., 2019). UK's travel and tourism market offers a blend of opportunities and challenges for entrepreneurs. Particularly, the post-pandemic influx of tourists presents a lucrative opportunity for new business ventures as many small and medium-scale businesses went out of business during the pandemic. To fill this void, the UK government may create a conducive environment that helps in fostering tourism-related entrepreneurial ventures. Therefore, it is pertinent to document the key success factors in the realm of tourism entrepreneurship and identify the significant barriers and challenges hindering the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the UK market. This may pave the way to devise relevant and efficient strategies to foster the role and contribution of tourism entrepreneurship in the destination competitiveness of the UK.

7.8.2 Tourism entrepreneurship, its development and characteristics

UK remains one of the world's most desirable tourist destinations over the years due to its rich history, culture, vibrant lifestyle, and natural landscape. The UK has iconic historical landmarks such as the Tower of London, Stonehenge, and Buckingham Palace as well as renowned historical sites like Bath, Edinburgh Castle, and Windsor Castle. The UK has a wide range of tourism attractions including picturesque landscapes, cosmopolitan cities (e.g., London, Edinburgh, and Manchester), museums, theatres, shopping centres, and business centres. All these factors made the UK an attractive travel destination resulting in a high influx of inbound travellers. Recent data shows that the UK is consistently receiving more than 30 million international tourists since 2009 with the highest volume of 39.54 million in 2017 (UNWTO, 2023a). The persistent inflow of international travellers and the growing number of domestic overnight trips are the outcomes of the UK's continuous tourism policy. For instance, in 1969 the government developed the Tourism Act and established "British Tourism Authority" and "Tourist Boards" to provide financial assistance to start new businesses in the tourism and hospitality sector, to renovate the conditions of the existing business, and registration of these businesses (Legislation.gov.uk, n.d.). The act further emphasized promoting tourism in the UK to attract international travellers and local tourists. Similarly, in 1980 the Conservative government linked tourism with job creation to further enhance the contribution of the tourism industry to the overall development of the economy (Goodall, 1987).

The UK government reviewed tourism policy in 2011 in the aftermath of 2008's global economic crisis to boost the private sector participation in uplifting the tourism sector in the country (Kennell & Chaperon, 2013). In the same year, the Prime Minister of the UK launched a great campaign for the London Olympics 2012 aiming to increase tourists by 4 million and expecting £1 billion in tourist receipts (BBC, 2011). Recently, the UK government introduced the Tourism Sector Deal 2019 to enhance the revenue and employment opportunities in the tourism industry. This deal mainly focuses on creating tourism zones, improving connectivity across tourism destinations, and instilling contemporary skills to meet the tourism industry's requirements (Ridgway, 2019). The deal proposes several incentives and funding opportunities for entrepreneurial initiatives in the tourism sector. For example, tourism-related small and medium enterprises will receive

training to improve their digital skills, management, and leadership. The deal also plans to build 130,000 new bedrooms by 2025 and a dedicated tourism data hub. The establishment of tourism zones is also proposed to improve the agglomeration of tourism businesses and local organizations to enhance productivity. The deal has another core focus to supply a skilled and trained workforce for the tourism businesses. For this purpose, the deal will offer 30,000 apprenticeships per year by 2025 and will organize a mentoring program focused on helping 10,000 employees develop their careers and ensure they can be promoted within the tourism sector. The UK government offers 135 different funding schemes for start-up businesses. Besides these funding options, the UK government's tourism website visitbritain.org provides a comprehensive guide on locating relevant resources, government grants, loans, account management options, resolving financial disputes, and finding local support for the business. Here is the list of some funding options for tourism businesses,

- DMC and Inbound Tour Operator Amplification & Distribution Fund
- Discover England Fund Large-Scale Projects
- Gateway Innovation Fund
- Escape the Everyday DMO Marketing Fund 2022
- COVID-19 Destination Management Resilience Scheme
- Northern Tourism Growth Fund
- South West Tourism Growth Fund

The government support and efforts for the development of the tourism industry and providing an enabling environment present rewarding opportunity for tourism entrepreneurs venturing in the UK. The entrepreneurial initiatives significantly contributed to the UK's tourism industry which is considered one of the key contributors to the overall economy (Bosworth & Farrell, 2011; Goodall, 1987; Kennell & Chaperon, 2013). A comprehensive understanding of the UK's tourism entrepreneurship may not be possible without grasping the key characteristics of this important sub-sector of the economy. There exists a multitude of sector-specific characteristics that distinguish the UK's tourism entrepreneurship while suggesting attractive opportunities for new business start-ups. First, small and medium-sized enterprises make up most of the UK's 208,880 registered tourism-related businesses. This is because the tourism sector is considered one of the

lucrative sectors for entrepreneurial initiatives due to the low entry barriers (Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2020). Furthermore, the ease of doing and registering new businesses motivates tourism entrepreneurs to start small and medium-sized businesses. The availability of government funding and easy access to financial capital from private banks and investment firms flourishes the number of tourism entrepreneurial ventures. The availability of such funding and incentive opportunities gave rise to public-private partnerships in the tourism sector in the UK. However, the public-private partnership and tourism entrepreneurship in the UK remain concentrated in urban areas (Bahaire & Elliott-White, 1999).

Commercial home enterprise and host is another type of tourism entrepreneurship that is quite common in the UK where the family offers living and catering services to the tourists at their homes (Lynch, 2005). In rural areas, farm tourism is an additional form of tourism entrepreneurship in the UK (Phelan & Sharpley, 2011) where farm owners offer accommodation, recreational, and other hospitality services at their private farms (Bosworth & Wilson-Youlden, 2019). This sector is predominated by female entrepreneurs in the unplanned regions of the UK. Similarly, family-owned rural tourism entrepreneurship like accommodation providers, caravan parks, holiday cottages, and pup/hotels are also common in the UK which directly contributes to rural development (Bosworth & Farrell, 2011).

Another characteristic of the UK's entrepreneurial business in the tourism sector is that they are effectively using digital technologies to augment their tourism services. The use of social media, websites, travel bloggers and vloggers, user-generated content, and influencer marketing is rapidly increasing among tourism entrepreneurs. This may have emerged due to the government's extensive efforts in providing digital skills to small business owners. Recently, VisitBritain invited local tourism entrepreneurs, travel destinations, and attractions to use the #lovegreatbritain hashtag in their digital marketing campaigns to further intensify the government's multi-million campaign to attract tourists from North America, Europe, and the Middle East (Mayling, 2023). In addition, Alford and Jones (2020) document that the UK's universities are enabling tourism entrepreneurs to adopt and utilize digital marketing technologies to enhance their business growth through better customer

engagement. Nonetheless, the use of digital marketing technologies by tourism entrepreneurs is still not common across the globe (Kelliher et al., 2018).

The UK tourism market is very rich and diverse when it comes to tourism services. Tourism entrepreneurs in the UK are offering services for different tourism activities including, sports, leisure, adventure, sightseeing, family entertainment, and cultural tourism. For instance, tourism entrepreneurs are capitalizing on London's status as one of the prominent financial hubs of the world for attracting business tourists. In 2017, business tourism accounted for more than a quarter of the total inbound tourism in the UK with 8.4 million trips and 592 business meetings. Tourism entrepreneurs in the UK are mostly engaged in offering holiday and group tour services as the tourists visiting the UK for holidays make up 40 percent of the total tourists (Nistor & Nicula, 2021). UK tourism entrepreneurs also have huge opportunities to attract a diverse range of sports tourism e.g., Olympics, Cricket tournaments (e.g., World Cup, Ashes series), Rugby league world cup, Commonwealth Games etc. The UK occupies a leadership role in hosting sports events and championships as well as cultural events. Tourism entrepreneurs in the UK also enjoy a large inbound travel for "visiting friends and relatives" as the UK is home to a diverse population who belong to different nationalities and their family and friends frequently visit them. In 2015, the number of family and friend visits was 9.83 million which constitutes a large number of tourist influx to the UK (Nistor & Nicula, 2021).

UK has a large number of outbound tourists as 93 million people travelled outside the UK to other destinations in 2019, they spent \$70.60 billion (UNWTO, 2023a). Tourism entrepreneurs in the UK also take advantage of the large number of outbound travellers by providing them with tourism-related services in other destinations. The entrepreneurs organize business, holiday, and group trips for outbound tourists. In addition, they also provide informational, consulting, and booking services to the large market of domestic travellers.

7.8.3 Drivers of tourism entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship initiatives result from a multitude of personal, interpersonal, and external/ contextual factors. For instance, some entrepreneurs start new ventures as an influence of their family norms and business orientations, while others may be more

motivated due to their internal desire for financial independence and risk-taking personality. In recent years, universities have actively promoted entrepreneurial culture among students and trained them to build start-up businesses. However, the drivers of entrepreneurial venturing may vary across industries and business types. In the tourism industry, entrepreneurship initiatives are not entirely driven by the desire for profitability and economic gains instead nature preservation, community, and destination development are also key drivers of tourism entrepreneurship (Cetin et al., 2022; Fu et al., 2019). Wang et al. (2019) divide tourism entrepreneurship motives in two factors i.e., pull factors and push factors. The pull factors are driven by the desire to earn additional income, owning a business, continuing a family venture, and prepare for retirement. On the other hand, push factors are more internal in nature which pertain to an individual's interest in entrepreneurship, outgoing personality, self-contentment, and community development.

Bosworth and Wilson-Youlden (2019) identified the five most common drivers of tourism entrepreneurship in the UK which are autonomy, competitive aggression, innovativeness, pro-activeness, and risk-taking. Tourism entrepreneurs instigated by autonomy motive start their businesses to gain financial independence and mitigate uncertainties relating to income generation. UK entrepreneurs also engage in entrepreneurial venturing to fulfil achievement needs and earn higher profits than their counterparts. Like other entrepreneurs, tourism entrepreneurs in the UK are involved in small businesses due to their risk-taking personality. They take investment risks, financial risks, and social and personal risks by starting entrepreneurial ventures. Innovativeness is another key motive for UK tourism entrepreneurs. This group takes pleasure in applying new and creative ideas to fulfil consumer needs in novel ways. A growth mindset and need for recognition are the key attributes of the pro-activeness motive which drive UK tourism entrepreneurs toward business venturing. Besides these five key motives, Bosworth and Wilson-Youlden (2019) suggest that quality of life, environmental values, and working for own small business to avert social isolation are the important factors that motivate the British to engage in tourism entrepreneurship.

Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM, 2022) provides four motivational factors of UK entrepreneurs i) to make a difference, ii) to build great wealth, iii) to continue family tradition, and iv) to earn a living. Their statistics indicate that “to build great wealth” is the

most prominent motivational factor among UK entrepreneurs. Interestingly this factor is staggeringly high for male entrepreneurs (73 %) and lower for female (39%) entrepreneurs. On the other hand, female entrepreneurs are highly motivated to start entrepreneurial ventures to make a difference (60%) and to earn a living (58%). The third most influential motivation among the UK's male entrepreneurs is to earn a living through entrepreneurial business. While continuing family tradition is the fourth common motivational factor among male and female entrepreneurs.

Basu (2004) finds that ethnic family entrepreneurs in the UK are pursuing the tourism business for financial independence, profitability, wealth accumulation, comfortable lifestyle, and reputation in the community. The study further argued that most family entrepreneurs got work experience, and then started their entrepreneurial ventures. Tourism entrepreneurship doesn't require as much technical expertise as other sectors such as IT, medical, and manufacturing, which is a core impetus for entrepreneurial ventures in the UK. This sector is also very conducive for all age groups and the UK's population at retiring age is increasingly engaging in farm and agricultural tourism. In-migrant tourism entrepreneurship is another motive for starting a small entrepreneurship business where people who live in urban areas but want to have a simple, calm, and relaxing lifestyle start a tourism business in rural areas (Bosworth & Farrell, 2011). In addition, universities' efforts to inculcate entrepreneurial orientation among UK graduates play a vital role in the rise of entrepreneurial ventures in the UK in general and in the tourism sector in particular.

7.8.4 Barriers and challenges to tourism entrepreneurship

Embarking on an entrepreneurial venture in the UK's tourism sector poses significant challenges and hurdles like other sectors in the economy. These challenges can be segmented into four groups i.e., market dynamics, economic factors, institutional barriers, and attitudes and perceptions (see Figure 12). Market dynamics play a significant role in hindering new entrepreneurial initiatives in the UK market. The UK market is very competitive and saturated as there are more than 200,000 businesses already registered in the tourism sector. The fierce competition among tourism firms leads to higher turnover and low labour productivity in the UK's labour-intensive tourism market (Kim et al., 2021). UK is a very mature market where bigger firms have a strong hold on the major tourism and

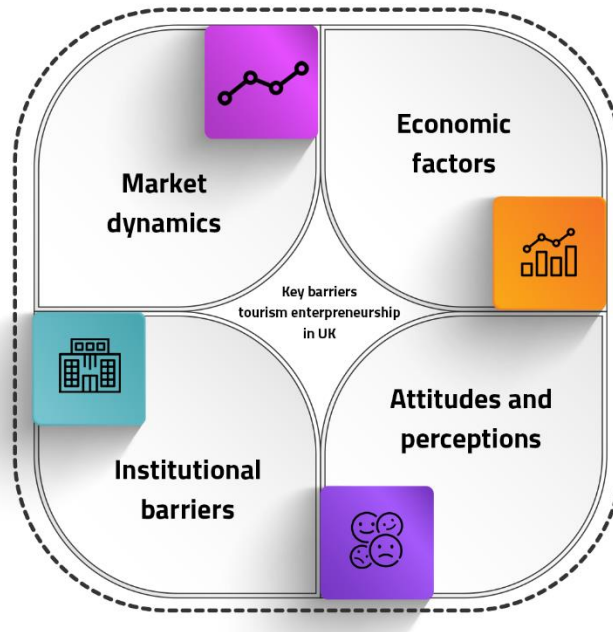
hospitality services and these firms are offering a range of integrated services combined in tourism packages. Therefore, new small and medium size entrepreneurial initiatives struggle to capture market share given their limited resources.

The economic factors are becoming more important now as the UK economy is facing higher uncertainty, increasing inflation and cost of sourcing service supplies, and lower purchasing power as the repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic, Brexit, and Russia-Ukraine conflict (Bloom et al., 2019; Brown et al., 2020; Sohns & Wójcik, 2020). All these major happenings have created energy crises, political instability, and economic turmoil in the UK economy which are posing greater challenges for new entrepreneurial initiatives.

Institutional barriers are also undermining entrepreneurial initiatives in the UK tourism sector. Particularly, the higher tax rates and overly complex tax filing systems are the key barriers for new entrepreneurs. UK's tax authority (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs HMRC) does not offer convenient filling services for entrepreneurs who lack accounting and taxation knowledge. Therefore, small business owners must avail professional services which further enhances their costs. UK's tax system emerged from a variety of intermittently passed laws and regulations which is quite difficult to comprehend for ordinary people. Similarly, the UK's laws pertaining to employee protection, minimum wages, holidays, and sick leave policies have significantly enhanced the cost of doing business in the UK market.

Attitudes and perceptions of the UK's current and potential tourism entrepreneurs are also very important to understanding the prevalent challenges in the sector. In this regard, Williams et al. (2021) conducted a study on Spain and the UK's tourism entrepreneurs and documented that the tourism entrepreneurs are afraid of multiple risks such as the risk of losing the investment (both in time and money), risk of losing reputation, leaving job, uncertainty, market risks, and lack of knowledge of the tourism industry as well as fear of high competition in the market. More than 50 per cent of adults in the UK are discouraged from starting a new business due to the fear of failure (GEM, 2023). The GEM report further indicates that 45 per cent of UK adults think it is difficult to start a new business. UK is also a culturally diverse market which makes it difficult for new entrepreneurs to properly understand the target customers and offer them desired services.

Figure 12. Key barriers for tourism entrepreneurship in UK



7.8.5 Success factors of tourism entrepreneurship

There are multiple factors that make the UK an attractive and lucrative market for tourism-related entrepreneurial venturing. For instance, the UK is the sixth most visited destination in the world and ranked second in terms of tourism receipts. The average tourist spending in the UK is twice the global average, which means that the UK receives more value tourists as compared to other destinations. As a result, tourism entrepreneurs in the UK have good chances of success and profit maximization. In addition, the UK market is very stable and consistent in traveller influx and tourist receipts, which offers sustainable business opportunities. The demand in the UK tourism sector always remains high due to the richness of tourism attractions and services available in the market. As discussed earlier, the UK is one of the most famous tourist destinations in the world that offers a range of travel and tourism options including picturesque landscapes, rich history, sports, business, family and friends, holidays, and adventure tourism. The novice tourism entrepreneurs may

choose to focus on a specific niche to capitalize on the market potential while utilizing limited resources.

Besides the huge market potential, the ever-increasing government support for developing the tourism sector may also play a critical role in tourism entrepreneurs' business success. The UK government is offering a range of financial and non-financial incentives to tourism entrepreneurs. The tourism sector deal enables tourism entrepreneurs to overcome their resource constraints by applying for different funding sources and loans. In addition, the tourism sector deal aims to enhance the connectivity among different tourist attractions and develop new tourism zones that will ultimately benefit the tourism sector. The deal also proposes to develop the knowledge, skills, and expertise of tourism sector employees and business owners through internships, apprenticeships, and training. This plan will directly enhance the productivity of the sector while boosting profit margins for tourism businesses. VisitBritain's marketing campaigns across the world will further improve the tourist inflow and the tourism entrepreneurs are leveraging on these multi-million campaigns by using VisitBritain's suggested hashtags in their social media and digital campaigns. More importantly, the ease of doing and registering a business in the UK is the hallmark of business success for tourism entrepreneurs.

Tourism entrepreneurs in the UK have an advantage over many other destinations when it comes to finding capable human resources for their businesses. The education system in the UK is one of the oldest and finest systems that produces skilled and competent graduates who can effectively contribute to entrepreneurs' business success. In addition, the universities in the UK are inculcating entrepreneurial culture and competencies in their graduates which qualifies them to start a new business. As a result, more than 50 per cent of the adult population has the required knowledge, skills, and experience to be part of a business (GEM, 2023). The GEM report further illustrates that around 60 per cent of UK adults think that the pandemic has created new business opportunities. In addition, the flow of tourists has dramatically increased after the pandemic. Therefore, the successful exploitation of post-pandemic opportunities may increase the success of tourism entrepreneurs.

7.8.6 Policy Recommendations for the UK

- Lower labour productivity and higher turnover are crucial issues in the UK's tourism sector. To overcome these issues, the government may work to make tourism clusters around famous tourist destinations. When tourism businesses focus on these clusters, this in turn will enhance labour pooling and knowledge and will reduce turnover. Efficient clustering will enhance innovation, learning, and collaboration among tourism entrepreneurs.
- The UK tourism sector is facing a huge gender gap when it comes to tourism entrepreneurship. Global Entrepreneurship Monitor shows that females' established business ownership in the UK is still 50 per cent lower than their male counterparts (GEM, 2023). In addition, female tourism entrepreneurship is one of the key requirements of UN sustainable development goals (Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2022). Therefore, the government should formulate policies to encourage female entrepreneurship in the tourism sector. Policies may be devised to enhance female's entrepreneurial orientation, arrange awareness seminars, organize training, and initiate educational programs to develop knowledge, skills, and expertise among females.
- Farm and agriculture tourism is a relatively neglected sector that can effectively contribute to economic and community development (Phelan & Sharpley, 2011). Therefore, the government may take policy initiatives to develop farm and agriculture tourism and provide relevant skills and knowledge to prospective entrepreneurs in this sector.
- The UK is the home of several ethnic communities that make up a significant portion of the UK population. The government may initiate programs to encourage ethnic communities to start entrepreneurial ventures in the tourism sector. The ethnic communities may tap into the niche segments of their relevant communities because they better understand the needs, motives, and drivers of those ethnic communities. They also have better connections in their home countries which may enhance their ability to attract more tourists from those countries to the UK.
- The government may also encourage community involvement in tourism planning and destination development. The community may be involved in planning events and festivals that better fit with their local community and enhance their sense of

pride. Organizing events and festivals without the local community's consent may not yield positive outcomes. In this regard, a recent study suggests that happiness and quality of life matter more for the UK's local community as compared to economic effects when it comes to tourism initiatives (Seraphin et al., 2019)

- Nowadays tourists watch digital content before they decide to visit a particular destination. The content on social media platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram as well as websites plays a significant role in attracting tourists. The use of social media, websites, travel bloggers and vloggers, user-generated content, and influencer marketing may yield fruitful results for tourism entrepreneurs. Therefore, the government may train tourism entrepreneurs to develop digital content about tourism attractions in the UK and help them effectively use digital platforms to market their services to potential tourists. These initiatives will effectively contribute to enhancing tourist inflow to the UK.
- The government may also consider making tax filing and paying less tedious and reducing tax rates for small and new entrepreneurs in the tourism sector.

7. 9. Case Country- Australia

7.9.1 General Outlook

Prior to the pandemic, Australia's tourism industry generated AUD 45.2 billion (9.5 million visitor arrivals), or 3.2% of the country's GDP, with organizations employing 200 people or more accounting for less than 5% of all tourism businesses (Tourism Research Australia, 2023a). Unluckily, the pandemic cost international tourists \$72.8 billion from March 2020 to December 2021. The accommodation sector, international airlines, travel brokers, and tour companies were notably affected by the travel ban. Since then, Australia's tourism industry has expanded rapidly, to the point that the country has widely regarded as an influential player in the worldwide industry of tourism. Against all odds, tourism in Australia seems to have shown remarkable resilience in the aftermath of the pandemic and has made a considerable contribution to the country's economic growth.

One-seventh of Australia's enterprises are now actively engaged in the tourism industry, totalling 358,300 establishments (Tourism Research Australia, 2023a). These companies provide jobs to Australians in every region. Compared to 2019–20, 2020–21 saw 2.9%

growth, which translates to an additional 9,400 tourism-related enterprises. This rise in company numbers happened even though COVID-19 had a detrimental effect on the number of tourists (Tourism Research Australia, 2023a). After two years of reduced mobility due to the pandemic, tourism supply appears to be fulfilling demand, and tourism entrepreneurship has become crucial to the long-term success of tourism destinations. These barometers display how vital tourism businesses are to the success of the Australian tourism industry as a whole.

As will be thoroughly detailed, Australia's natural beauty, diverse landscapes, and rich cultural heritage make it a sought-after destination for tourists worldwide, contributing to its reputation as a natural wonder and cultural treasure. Amidst this flourishing tourism industry, entrepreneurship has emerged as a vital catalyst for innovation and sustainable growth. Australia's tourism industry has experienced steady growth over the years, attracting millions of visitors annually. According to the World Tourism Organization, Australia is the 40th most visited country (UNWTO, 2020) and seventh in terms of being one of the top ten tourism earners (AtlasBig, 2023).

This growth has created a conducive environment for tourism entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs in this domain capitalize on unique experiences, eco-tourism, adventure tourism, indigenous tourism, and niche markets to offer innovative products and services that appeal to both domestic and international tourists. According to Fu et al. (2019), entrepreneurial activities tied to tourism have emerged as significant drivers of innovation and economic diversity. This spirit of entrepreneurship might be seen in creating one-of-a-kind and immersive tourism experiences, such as ecotourism projects, adventure tourism businesses, and indigenous cultural tourism efforts.

Entrepreneurship in the tourism industry, in particular, has the ability to reduce the detrimental impacts of tourism on a small scale, such as social and cultural effects, environmental damage, and economic inequality (Kensbock & Jennings, 2011). Entrepreneurial endeavours in the tourism industry are well acknowledged as crucial triggers of commercial activity and significant shapers of nodal progress. According to Dredge (2017), governments can help develop a suitable environment to tourism entrepreneurship by creating the necessary institutional framework to legitimize social

entrepreneurship and promote synergy. For instance, the Australian government leads some education programs through Australian Tourism Industry Council and develops comprehensive strategies (e.g., Australian tourism's THRIVE 2030 Strategy) to promote social enterprises as part of an inclusive and sustainable tourism system and create institutional conditions that legitimize and synergize social entrepreneurship.

The tourism industry is strongly reliant on governmental leadership; nevertheless, the relevance of entrepreneurship is frequently overlooked in the literature on strategic tourism management (Phillips & Moutinho, 2014). In this sense, a resilient entrepreneurial environment is essential to lower company failure rates and improve the long-term viability of existing companies. When times are tough, it is especially important for government agencies to step in and promote the tourism industry (COMCEC, 2021). Therefore, Australian tourism's THRIVE 2030 Strategy has been established in collaboration to aid the tourism industry through the recovery and provide recommendations on how to "build back better." The objective of the strategy is to restore the industry back to pre-pandemic levels by 2024, with further expansion of up to \$230 billion in tourist spending by 2030 (Tourism Research Australia, 2023b). This plan implies that additional effort is required to sustain and maintain the current position and achieve sustainability and further success by encouraging tourism entrepreneurship as a path for strengthening competitiveness as a tourist destination.

One critical advantage and distinguishing characteristic contributing to Australia's entrepreneurial potential is its high adult population rate. Australia's high adult population rate is a critical advantage and distinguishing characteristic contributing to its entrepreneurial potential. According to the most recent Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2023), Australia ranks seventh out of twenty-four developed economies for entrepreneurial employee activity (EEA) in established firms, with an estimated 12.2% of the adult population actively engaged in launching and operating new businesses.

Indeed, Australian entrepreneurs in the tourism industry and international investors alike stand to benefit significantly from the country's growing popularity as a travel destination. Entrepreneurship in the tourism industry has been crucial to Australia's prosperity, creating new jobs and expanding environmentally responsible vacationing. Hence,

encouraging tourism-related businesses in Australia by creating a welcoming atmosphere will probably increase Australia's global standing. This goal cannot be achieved without identifying key barriers and challenges hindering the entrepreneurial ecosystem, addressing these roadblocks and obstructions, and encouraging focusing on elements of success through acquiring efficient strategies to increase the significance and impact of tourism business ownership in boosting the competitiveness of Australian destinations.

7.9.2 Tourism entrepreneurship, its development and characteristics

Briefly tracing the background of tourism in Australia is the first step in comprehending the transformation and growth of Australian tourism entrepreneurship. This is essential since entrepreneurship has historically served as either a vital variable in or the primary subject of expanding the tourism industry.

Australia's tourism industry has been booming since it was recognized as an avenue of revenue alongside its core agricultural and resource-driven organizations. As Prosser et al. (2000) point out, in 1996/97, international and domestic tourism contributed in some way to roughly 10% of Australia's GDP and created a greater number of jobs than the construction, agricultural, forest, fishing, mining, and communication industries combined. Since then, Australia's tourism industry has mushroomed to the point that the country is widely regarded as a major participant in the worldwide market for tourism.

Countless different types of small or micro companies with both direct and indirect ties to tourism constitute rural Australia's diversified, fragmented, and geographically scattered tourism economy. This has bolstered the reputation of the area as a tourist attraction and attracted an enormous variety of visitors, all while encouraging environmentally responsible travel. It is also worth noting that indigenous food and beverage establishments have witnessed heavy growth over the past century due to a rise in demand from a particular group of travellers (Atsız et al., 2022). Australian cuisine and culinary traditions include various indigenous and regional recipes. Since gastronomy tourism has become a large focus for economic development in rural and regional areas (Star et al., 2020), Australia's cuisines and culinary cultures can be a significant tourism appeal for supporting tourism development in its rural areas.

Furthermore, Australia seems characterized mainly by the prevalence of small businesses that run lodging establishments like bed and breakfasts (B&Bs) in Australia's outlying areas. These characteristics increase the difficulty for local communities to exploit tourism as a means of economic development. Collaboration, the creation of "firm" connections, and substantial social capital in communities are vital for tourism innovation and success in an industry where it is increasingly dependent on the delivery of experiences rather than goods (Summers et al., 2019). These characteristics of the Australian tourism industry can be considered obstacles for local communities that are hoping to use the initiative to foster economic and cultural development. Clearly, the local tourism industry is fragmented, making it difficult to foster the partnerships, alliances, and collaboration essential to the sector's expansion.

According to the latest data, the tourism industry in Australia is worth an estimated \$152 billion annually, helps sustain over 300,000 enterprises, and provides jobs for over 660,000 people (Australian Trade and Investment Commission, 2023). Therefore, entrepreneurship in the tourism industry is promising in Australia. Entrepreneurial developments in the Australian tourism industry significantly contribute to a critical mass of tourism facilities, breathing new vigour into Australia's most popular coastal tourist destinations. Numerous factors, including favourable government policies, access to capital, technological advancements, and rising consumer demand for authentic and immersive experiences, have fueled Australia's tourism entrepreneurship growth. Entrepreneurship is acknowledged as a tool to move individuals from poverty to economic self-sufficiency (Fong et al., 2007). The development levels of the countries where entrepreneurship activities are carried out so successfully are also high in the development of destinations (Audretsch, 2012). Table 21 supports our recommendation for Australia.

Table 21. Australia's prosperity ranking

Australia	Ranking 2023	Inclusive Societies				Open Economies				Empowered People			
		Safety and Security	Personal freedom	Governance	Social capital	Investment environment	Enterprise conditions	Infrastructure and market access	Economic quality	Living conditions	Health	Education	Natural environment
	15	20	20	11	6	22	24	28	23	15	21	7	9

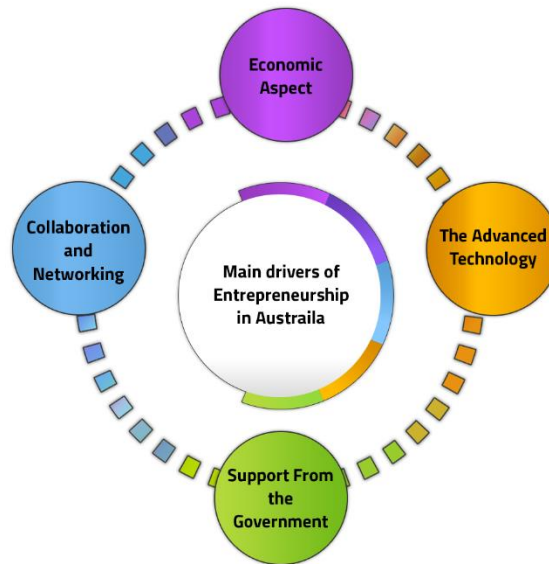
Source: The 2023 Legatum Prosperity Index

7.9.3 Drivers of tourism entrepreneurship

A voluminous body of research from the tourism and hospitality disciplines highlights the main driver for entrepreneurship motivations, credited with expanding entrepreneurial activities (Kahraman et al., 2023). Overall, entrepreneurial behaviours are shaped by the consequences of being opportunity- and necessity-driven (Zwan et al., 2016). Opportunity-driven motives are linked to discrimination in the job market, which pulls individuals into entrepreneurship. At the same time, necessity-driven factors are associated with a well-developed family plan (Bird & Wennberg, 2016), increased autonomy (Chrysostome, 2010), social and human capital (especially education) (Redstone-Akresh, 2006), and the retention of the fruits of one's labour (Dhaliwal, 2008).

In the specific case of Australia, engaging in tourism is arguably driven by several opportunity-driven factors, including the availability of favourable economic aspects, the advancement of technology, and the opportunity to benefit from collaborative and networking business environments created by the Australian Tourism Industry Council (see Figure 13). The four categories mentioned above are briefly detailed here.

Figure 13. Main Drivers of Tourism Entrepreneurship in Australia



Source: Authors' own creation

a. Economic aspects: According to the World Tourism Organization's report, Australia is among the top ten tourism earners for the year 2019, being 8th on the list of ten and receiving 45.7 billion USD (UNWTO, 2020). Dwyer and Kim (2003) highlight that two factors supporting the growth of tourist entrepreneurship are expanding consumer spending on experiences and increasing discretionary income. In this regard, high per capita tourist spending is a significant opportunity in Australian tourism, partially attributed to the abundance of tourism activities and high quality of services. Thus, encouraging tourism entrepreneurship and company development can be expected to boost visitor experience, duration of stay, and spending.

b. The advancement of technology: New digital technologies and online platforms provide business owners with the opportunity to expand their client base, increase the level of connection they have with their customers, and acquire a competitive advantage (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Entrepreneurship in the tourism industry in Australia has also developed with the preferences of tourists and advances in technological capability. According to Cifci and Cetin (2023), successful entrepreneurs in the tourism industry exhibit crucial traits,

including flexibility, inventiveness, market expertise, customer-centricity, and an orientation toward sustainability. The businesspeople use Australia's enormous natural and cultural resources to design unique and unforgettable excursions for visitors to the country.

c. Support from the government: According to Pike, Bianchi, and Kerr (2010), government policies, financial initiatives, and infrastructure development activities that are proactive support the growth of both entrepreneurship and tourism. To surmount this issue, the government of Australia has implemented many different methods to promote and encourage entrepreneurial endeavours throughout the whole of the country's territory. To support entrepreneurship activities in Australia, the Australian Trade and Investment Commission offers a range of programs to help tourism businesses and organizations, including the Caravan Parks Grant Program, Export Market Development Grants, and Supporting Australian Tourism and Travel (Australian Trade and Investment Commission, 2023). Furthermore, the South Australian Government provides such funding opportunities to entrepreneurs and businesses to accelerate their progress (Government of South Australia, 2023).

d. Collaboration and networking: According to Hall and Williams (2019), partnerships and collaborative efforts with local communities, industry stakeholders, and other business owners in the same industry make it possible to create synergistic possibilities and share resources. One distinguishing feature of Australian tourism companies is their propensity for productive cooperation and networking. Hotels, restaurants, and tour operators work together to supply tourists with all-inclusive packages that use each company's unique strengths. Because of this concerted effort, Australia's tourism ecosystem is now more unified and interconnected than ever before. From this point, the Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) is the unified voice of Australia's individual state and territory tourism councils, and it strives to ensure that the benefits of tourism are felt throughout the entire country, from the most populous urban centres to the smallest rural hamlets. Its members span the nation from Broome to Bruny Island, Port Lincoln to Port Douglas, and everything in between, making it the greatest and most varied collection of tourist businesses in Australia (Australian Tourism Industry Council, 2023).

The motives outlined above make ideal sense for organizations that prioritize growth and expansion. Financial factors, such as gross profit margin, income, high net profit, and so on, motivate most of Australia's social entrepreneurs. Other than family businesses might also need to safeguard their members' social and emotional wealth (Berrone et al., 2012).

Barriers and challenges to tourism entrepreneurship

Only a few obstacles in Australia, in particular, are likely to hamper the contribution of entrepreneurship in general and tourism entrepreneurship. The most recent report from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor reveals that Australia has a low score in terms of encouraging its young individuals to launch new businesses (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2023). However, many studies (e.g., Wiśniewska & Czernyszewicz, 2022) note that millennials have a positive attitude towards sharing economy initiatives, and the share of opportunity-driven entrepreneurs is increasing among youth populations. The research into the role of sharing economy entrepreneurship in economic growth showcases that the informal economy is poised to transform — and, in many ways, is already transforming — how we look at tourism and hospitality businesses. Thus, given the importance of sharing economy platforms in the tourism and hospitality industries, young Australians can quickly run businesses in the informal economy through rapid technological progress without tackling formal procedures. The Australian government has adopted several strategies with tax regulation for sharing-economy initiatives to raise awareness for and support entrepreneurial activities in the sharing economy (Australian Taxation Office, 2023). With the legitimacy of this field, young people may become more motivated to start their businesses and create additional income in terms of capitalizing on their abilities, thereby supporting tourism entrepreneurship in Australia. As Altinay and Tahari (2019) noted, promoting entrepreneurs within the informal economy can also be essential for entrepreneurs in the formal economy to revise their current services.

Besides this, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2023) also indicates that of the 1.8 million Australians engaged in venturing into business, only 38%, or 690,000, were women. For this reason, the Australian government runs programs and provides funding exclusively for female citizens to boost female economic independence and leadership. Especially in partnership with the Women in STEM Ambassador, the Australian Resource Directory for

Women Entrepreneurs provides resources for women to take the entrepreneurial plunge. It offers information on initiatives, financing sources, networks, training courses, mentors, and tools to assist women in expanding their businesses at every stage (The Australian Resource Directory for Women Entrepreneurs, 2023). In Australia, 57.7% of men and 56.6% of women prefer owning their own company over working for someone else; however, the difference is lower than in other OECD nations, the UK, and the US.

7. 10. Success factors of tourism entrepreneurship

Characteristics of successful tourism entrepreneurs include adaptability, creativity, market knowledge, customer-centricity, and a focus on sustainability (Cifci & Cetin, 2023). Academic research supports the following success factors, which entrepreneurs should focus on if they want to succeed in the fiercely competitive tourism industry:

a. Creative thinking and distinguishing factors: As the Asian region's economic expansion generates chances for manufacturing and export, rural Australia is predicted to become increasingly essential to Australia's economic growth. According to Buhalis (2000), tourist business owners may distinguish themselves from their rivals by providing experiences, goods, or services that are distinctive and original. Thus, the Australian tourism industry's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) might offer the kind of economic diversification required to help rural areas weather downturns in the resource sector. More specifically, the creative efforts of certain SMEs in the tourism industry would boost these areas' worldwide competitiveness.

b. Excellence in the customer experience: Another meaningful change in mentality and thinking has to do with the work culture. According to Ladhari (2009), providing excellent customer experiences and cultivating customer involvement are two factors that lead to long-term success. Businesses' ability to evaluate new chances for tourism growth may rely heavily on their outlook, activity, and customer attention. This begs the issue of how well firms and their owners can anticipate and capitalize on new economic possibilities.

c. Environmental friendliness and ethical business policies: Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, and Adelaide are Australia's top destinations, attracting millions of visitors with their stunning architecture, majestic structures, and many recreational facilities. They

also have extensive beaches and a milder temperature than inland due to their west or south coast locations. However, national parks, mountains, rivers, and vistas distant from the shore are just as famous but less frequented. Backpackers love Australian outbacks (e.g., Ayers Rock, the GBR, etc.); hence, attracting travellers sensitive to the environment should be the primary target for Australian tourism authorities. According to Telfer and Sharpley (2015), attracting visitors who are environmentally concerned may be accomplished through incorporating sustainable practices, conserving local traditions, and resolving environmental issues.

d. Coordination and the formation of strategic alliances: Increasing market access can be accomplished by forming networks and partnerships and participating in destination marketing activities. Relationships between businesses and the local populace serve as the cornerstones of a community's social capital and are crucial for fostering high levels of tolerance, reciprocity, and trust (Sahin & Akova, 2019). Many tourism studies note that residents with unpleasant perceptions and attitudes regarding tourism in their hometowns will oppose tourism development in their region (Cifci et al., 2023). Thus, a measure of its members' participation level, as well as accumulated assets and relationships (both formal and informal), should all be included in the community or local social capital.

7.10.1 Policy Recommendations for Australia

To foster and support tourism entrepreneurship in Australia, policymakers can consider the following recommendations:

Simplify and Streamline Regulatory Frameworks and Licensing Procedures: The regulatory frameworks and licensing procedures for young and female tourism business owners should be simplified and streamlined. Lowering the number of bureaucratic impediments and developing a more efficient and open system will help businesses get started and flourish (Dwyer et al., 2000). Moreover, as a means of promoting regional recovery from global crises and as a means of encouraging entrepreneurship, there is a scope to focus on incubation programs for businesses in the tourism industry.

Foster Financial assistance and advantages: Provide various financial aid forms, such as grants, loans, and tax advantages, particularly for tourism business owners. One way to boost innovation and development in the tourism industry is to encourage investment in

tourism initiatives, particularly for start-ups and small firms (Hall et al., 2012). Compared to other industries, tourism and hospitality companies require less money and fewer skills to get started (Phizacklea & Ram, 1995). The success of Australia's tourism industry can be attributed to the country's continued investment in novel goods and locations, a diversified portfolio of markets, and bolstered corporate practices, sustainability, and worker competence.

Develop Entrepreneurial Education and Training Programs: Develop tourism-specific entrepreneurial training programs in tandem with academic institutions and professionals in the field. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor's most recent report accords Australia's good marks for its efforts to help new businesses recover from the pandemic and encourage female business owners (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2023). Since women are less likely to start their own businesses than men, they may feel pressured to diversify their income streams. In order to solve this problem, the government of Australia should implement several programs that encourage and promote female entrepreneurs. Despite many obsessive issues regarding female entrepreneurship included in all policy recommendations and elsewhere, there has been yet a real rationale for tourism growth or entrepreneurial success policy idea. However, considering that Australian small B&B businesses are family businesses, the co-preneurship role of women might be essential for tourism growth or entrepreneurial success. Therefore, as stated in the study of Bruin and Lewis (2004), some policies can be set to increase the role of women in the success of small businesses. On the other hand, entrepreneurship of disabled and retired individuals is among the important neglected issues. For example, developing an effective entrepreneurship education and training program can boost potential disabled and retired individual business owners' knowledge of sustainable practices, digital technology, and marketing, as well as their grasp of tourism management.

Promote Collaboration and Networking: According to Kaptaner (2021), social capital improves entrepreneurial success. Therefore, creating venues for tourist business owners, communities, industry stakeholders, and government agencies to work together and connect with one another. Fostering innovation and collaborative progress via information sharing, collaborations, and the exchange of best practices (Hall & Williams, 2019).

Strengthening cooperation with indigenous communities may benefit Australian tourism's solidity because fostering links with indigenous communities is a vital step toward recognizing and supporting indigenous tourism businesses. Therefore, destination authorities should create programs that assist indigenous business owners in promoting and protecting their cultural traditions while reaping financial rewards. Almost half of all tourist dollars in Australia are spent in remote regions. Additionally, 1 in 20 regional employment can be directly attributed to the tourism industry. In particular, tourism enables young people in the rural areas to find work. Tourism is a significant economic driver than mining, retail, healthcare, or the financial sector.

Enhance Destination Branding and Marketing: Given the latest data, it is obvious that Australia attracts high-spending visitors (AtlasBig, 2023). Visitors from China spent A\$12 billion (roughly \$US10 billion) in Australia in 2019, ahead of those from the United States (A\$4 billion), the United Kingdom (£3.3 billion), and New Zealand (A\$2.6 billion) (Global Australia, 2023). Therefore, attracting more tourists would allow Australia to rapidly increase tourism revenues. Australia's various cities, coastlines, deserts, and flora and wildlife make it appealing to a wide range of travellers. Therefore, promoting it as a dynamic and diversified tourism destination by spending money on brand building and advertising should be lucrative. Coordinated marketing efforts highlighting tourist entrepreneurs' distinct products and services may help draw in more visitors (Pike et al., 2010). As a result, local authorities should give tourism infrastructure, planning, and zoning significant consideration. Businesses catering to tourists must collaborate to create a destination.

Support Sustainable Practices and Responsible Tourism: Encouraging business owners to take steps to reduce their tourism's negative impact on the environment, the local community, and cultural artefacts should be an essential strategy for Australia. To encourage sustainable tourism, certification systems for green tourism applications should be established, and financial incentives should be offered (Telfer & Sharpley, 2015). The environmental policies put into place by tourism entrepreneurs and the extraordinary work done by businesses should be recognized and supported by governmental operations, which must care about the future of national tourism and the planet's health. To implement

this task, Tourism Australia, the Australian government agency responsible for Australian tourism, would be a good leader (Tourism Australia, 2023).

Encourage Research and Data Collection: Compared to most other international destinations, approximately forty percent of Australia's visitors are under thirty. Most of these tourists are long-term travellers exploring the country for several months. The Australian government capitalizes on this opportunity by granting travellers between 18 and 30 a "working holiday visa" that allows them to travel throughout the country for up to a year. Travellers are permitted to work for a limited period to generate money for their trip. The principal reason for entering the country must be tourism. Given the volatile future pattern of travellers, it should be logical to invest in studies and data gathering to learn more about future tourist patterns, customer tastes, and market needs. Applying this knowledge can help shape future policy and bolster evidence-based decision-making.

Monitor and Respond to External Factors: Implement systems to track the impact of environmental, epidemiological, and political crises on the travel and tourism industry. Building resilience and long-term viability in the face of adversity requires creating backup plans and helping tourism entrepreneurs (Hall et al., 2012).

8. Policy Recommendations for OIC Destinations and Conclusions

Drawing on three case study OIC member countries namely, Jordan, Türkiye and the Gambia and using a sequential qualitative-quantitative research design, the current report presents a nuanced understanding of entrepreneurship motives, challenges, success factors, as well as the role of government support in OIC member countries. This final section consolidates what has been discussed in the previous sections outlining key policy recommendations for OIC Destinations.

Overall, tourism entrepreneurs in OIC member countries seem to be driven by personal and contextual motives. Personal motives include desire to make a profit, desire to be own boss, seeking independence and self-reliance, desire to continue family legacy, exiting work experience in the field, family involvement in tourism, desire to live a fulfilling life, desire to contribute to the local economy, interest in the cultural benefits of tourism, and challenging social barriers. Contextual motives, however, include high tourism demand and growth of

the industry, support from the government, political and economic stability, encouraging business environment, lack of adequate service in the tourism industry, less entry barriers, and existing supportive laws. It should be noted that personal and contextual motives are intertwined in such that tourism entrepreneurs can be driven by several different factors, both personal and contextual, at the same time.

The report identifies several barriers/challenges that tourism entrepreneurs in OIC members countries are likely to face. These are classified as financial challenges (e.g., lack of initial capital, accessibility to loans), legislative barriers (e.g., restrictive laws, outdated existing laws, bureaucracy), infrastructure (e.g., unreliable water and electricity supply, poor accessibility), market issues (e.g., shortage of trained and qualified human resources, seasonality), and situational factors (e.g., crises, instability). Trajectories that help tourism entrepreneurs navigate the above-mentioned challenges were also investigated. In this vein, favourable entrepreneurial ecosystem (e.g., streamlined accessibility to finance, governmental support) and entrepreneurial mindset (e.g., creativity, networking).

The role of the government in supporting tourism entrepreneurship is also explored. It has become apparent that tourism entrepreneurs are aware of the government's role in encouraging and supporting tourism entrepreneurship. While tourism entrepreneurs benefit from a wide range of resources made available by the government including tax reduction, land allocation, and advisory support, some concerns are raised. Specifically, there seems to be agreement on the need to streamline licensing and business registration procedures, up-dating existing regulations, improving infrastructure, applying more encouraging tax exemptions on nascent business, and increasing destination marketing efforts. Other issues also emerge as essential such as training tourism and hospitality staff, encouraging niche tourism, improving the attractiveness of tourism jobs by involving them in social security systems, awarding well performing tourism businesses, encouraging low-cost flights to destinations, de-centralizing support to tourism businesses through empowering local authorities (e.g., municipalities), and improving accessibility to tourism sites.

The report also identifies several indicators of success of tourism and hospitality businesses both at organizational and personal levels. At the organizational level, sustained profit-

generating, achieving customer satisfaction and loyalty, excelling in service provision, organizational resilience, ability to survive crises, expansion, good reputation, adding value to tourism offerings through innovation, and creating jobs to the local community emerge as key indicators of success of tourism and hospitality businesses. At the personal level, past experience in the same line of business, creativity, personal financial assets (vs loans), patience, ability to cope with emerging challenges, being passionate about business, persistence and perseverance, working hard and diligence, adaptability, decisiveness, learning from own mistakes, ability to build networks, strong interpersonal skills, and good leadership appear to be key the success of tourism and hospitality businesses.

Finally, based on field case studies and qualitative and quantitative data collected from three OIC member countries, the report concludes with policy recommendations oriented towards promoting entrepreneurship in the OIC member countries. These are outlines as follows:

There seems to be a wanting need to create a friendly entrepreneurial ecosystem through streamlining existing regulatory frameworks and licensing procedures and reducing bureaucratic barriers. This is important to encourage and promote venturing in tourism. One way to achieve this can be through adapting more efficient digital transformation solutions providing detailed and streamlined information to entrepreneurs while also functioning as a path to apply for and track various licensing-related procedures.

In the aftermath of the pandemic, many OIC member countries suffer from increasing inflation rates and high interest rates. This has created burden on existing tourism and hospitality businesses and seems to be a prominent challenge in the face of nascent entrepreneurial activities in the industry. To mitigate the impact of these economic factors on entrepreneurship rate, governments in OIC member countries may introduce further incentives to both help existing business survive in times of crisis while also encouraging new enterprises enter the market. This may involve tax reduction and exemption, and facilitating access to funding and loans by exerting more efforts to incentivize lending to tourism entrepreneurs either through governmental funding programs or by securing loans made by the financial sector. The government financial support can also include offering subsidies on rent, utilities, energy and water that are incurred by the tourism and

hospitality businesses to minimize the operational costs and increase their ability to maintain a competitive advantage in the tourist markets on both regional and international levels. These incentives may also be in the form of capacity building by enhancing the resilience of these businesses and enabling them to have efficient crisis management plans.

Unfortunately, adequate infrastructure remains a challenge in some OIC member countries preventing the provision of quality tourism services while creating barriers to tourism entrepreneurship. Efforts to develop accessibility through modern roads and reliable water/electricity supplies are important to the success and sustainability of destinations and inherently entrepreneurship in tourism. Therefore, it is imperative to develop long-term and strategic plans to improve the infrastructure in OIC destinations. In the absence of financial resources in some OIC countries, one viable way to achieve this might be through introducing a win-win solution through partnership between public and tourism private sector to help improving infrastructure (e.g., access to beaches).

There seems to be need to more industry-oriented vocational and academic programs to meet the increasing demand of highly skilled people in tourism and hospitality labour market. Universities and higher education institutions' role in OIC should not be restricted to support the industry with skilled worker, rather, there is a scope for establishing incubation centers to stimulate entrepreneurship action and support businesses in their early stages.

OIC destinations needs to encouraging tourism entrepreneurs to differentiate tourism offerings through investing in niche tourism types. In this vein, governments need to introduce special incentives customized to encourage niche tourism including special interest tourism, medical tourism.

Viewing venturing as a path to development, there might be a scope to prioritize entrepreneurs venturing in less-developed regions through introducing customized incentives (e.g., tax emptions, land allocation).

Fostering attitudes and perceptions of prospective entrepreneurs through providing entrepreneurship trainings and capacity-building programs either in undergraduate and postgraduate programs or independently from the formal educational system. Extant

tourism and hospitality programs should design and offer modules focusing on entrepreneurship. These modules should be goal-oriented arming potential entrepreneurs with the necessary knowledge and skills to identify opportunities in the market and navigate various processes of business entry including paths to obtaining starting capital.

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