

**Rural tourism in Northern Portugal:
Motivations and barriers**

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Abstract

Tourism in rural areas boosts economic dynamism, turning them more attractive, diversifying economic activities, creating jobs and wealth. With the importance that micro and small firms play on economic growth, particularly in rural areas, the objective of this article is to analyze the main motivations to start a business in rural tourism and the problems and barriers faced by these entrepreneurs in Northern Portugal. With the results of a survey an exploratory factor analysis was conducted to distinguish underlying motivational structures and the results suggested that the main motivations to create the business were related to family and success. Using cluster analysis owners were grouped into three segments. They encountered some restrictions in the start-up process as bureaucracy, lack of financial support and information.

Keywords: Rural tourism. Entrepreneurship. Cluster Analysis. North of Portugal.

1 INTRODUCTION

Rural tourism, more characteristic of the North and Centre regions of Portugal, has survived mainly due to the natural heritage and some cultural traditions. Initiated experimentally in the 70's (in Ponte de Lima, Vila Viçosa, Castelo de Vide and Vouzela – Northern regions), and legally classified in the 80's, in 2018 rural tourism represented 21.4% of total accommodation in Portugal, and Northern Portugal had the highest number of establishments (37.8% of total establishments of rural tourism), the highest number of guests (33.4%) and overnights (30.1%) (INE, 2019). Northern Portugal has a rich cultural, historical, architectural and landscape heritage, with four World Heritage Sites recognized by UNESCO: the Alto Douro Vineyards, the prehistoric rock art sites in the

Côa Valley and Siega Verde, the historical centers of Porto and Guimarães (birthplace of the Portuguese nationality) and more recently (2019) the Sanctuary of Bom Jesus do Monte in Braga. Rural tourism has a long history in Portugal. This type of tourism was characteristic of families from high social-economic classes on holidays, but lost its importance with the fashion of the beaches, diverting tourism to the coast (Alexandre, 2001). With the widespread increase in leisure time, the democratization of tourism (Fernandes, 2002; Fortuna & Ferreira, 1996) and subsequent technological development of transports and communications, which introduced greater mobility, gave rise to new flows toward the countryside (DGADR, 2017). This trend was accelerated with the strengthening of accessibility at national level and of environmental concerns (Gomes & Renda, 2016; Villanueva-Álvaro, Mondéjar-Jiménez & Sáez-Martínez, 2017).

Rural tourism, characterized by family hospitality, located in rural regions, natural and/or protected spaces, allows a more direct contact with nature, people, their culture, monuments, traditions, and is a way to diversify the national tourism and to promote local development (Carson & Carson, 2018; Dinis, Simões, Cruz & Teodoro, 2019; Dubois, Cawley & Schmitz, 2017). For Cadima, Freitas and Mendes (2001, p. 16), rural tourism in Portugal “can be a useful instrument to generate alternatives for local/regional economies, when it valorizes endogenous resources and boost the recovering of multi-functionalities of these territories”. Rural tourism can alleviate some economic and social problems associated with the lack of economic opportunities and population decline that has accompanied the decline of agricultural activity (Doh, Park & Kim, 2017; Eusébio, Carneiro, Kastenholz, Figueiredo & Silva, 2017; van der Ploeg, 2018), and be an alternative to increase income for family farms (Riva & Bertolini, 2017; Villanueva-Álvaro et al., 2017).

The economic literature has emphasized the phenomenon of business start-up and entrepreneurship, by the positive impact on the creation of wealth and employment (Acs, Arenius, Hay & Minniti, 2005), mainly of small enterprises. Tourism in rural areas is important for the revitalization and development of these areas (Ateljevic, Milne, Doorne & Ateljevic, 1999; Carson, Carson & Eimermann, 2017; Dana, Gurau & Lasch, 2014; Gomes & Renda, 2016; Lai, Morrison-Saunders & Grimstad, 2017; Lane & Kastenholz, 2015; Pato, 2016; Thomas, Shaw & Page, 2011).

Although small enterprises typify the tourism sector and the importance of these firms to diversify regional and local economies, the research related to small enterprises in rural tourism is still incipient in Portugal and it remains unclear which factors explain their entrepreneurial behavior.

The aim of this article is to study the main motivations for starting a business in rural tourism in the North of Portugal, cluster the entrepreneurs according to their motivations and analyze the main barriers to entrepreneurship.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurship occupies a decisive role for the regeneration and development of rural areas (Calza, Go, Parmentola & Trunfio, 2018), through the job creation, healthy competition, and economic growth (Block, Fisch & van Praage, 2017).

Schumpeter (1934) described the entrepreneur as the person who destroys the economic order by introducing new products, new production methods, new forms of organization or new strategies. In the Schumpeterian version, the entrepreneur is a “creative destroyer”, an innovator. Entrepreneurs seek to generate value through the creation or expansion of economic activity, by means of exploiting new products,

processes or markets. According to the European Network for Rural Development Innovation (2009: 19), in the case of rural tourism, innovation also “implies the combination of local know-how, old ways of doing things, like in typical products or artisan crafts, with more formal and codified knowledge, adapted to modern consumers and markets. Doing this without losing the individuality of the product or process requires cooperation, experimentation, codification of practices, transfer of knowledge and training”.

Rural tourism entrepreneurship can contribute not only to the preservation but also to the diversification of marginalized rural by providing supplementary sources of income, reinforce the economic fabric of the region through diversification (complementing other activities such as agriculture, livestock and other primary industries) and, by the multiplier effect, the development of other activities creating synergies, innovating, and preserving cultural and natural resources (Calza et al., 2018; Doh et al., 2017; Villanueva-Álvaro et al., 2017).

The background about rural tourism entrepreneurship comprehends some main features, namely the demographic profile of entrepreneurs, the business managing characteristics and motivational factors. Several studies highlight that socio-demographic characteristics of the entrepreneur determine management behavior mainly in small-scale businesses, such as gender, age, education, and previous work experience (Ateljevic et al., 1999; Dinis et al., 2019; Jaafar, Rasoolimanesh & Lonik, 2015; Santos, Roorni & Linân, 2014; Teodoro, Dinis & Simões, 2017). In general female entrepreneurial rate is lower than for men (Jaafar, Abdul-Aziz, Maideen & Mohd, 2011; Bosma & Kelley, 2018), although small-scale tourism represents an opportunity for women self-employment (Getz & Carlsen, 2000). Ckic, Jovanovic and Nedeljkovic (2018) found gender parity in owners of rural tourism in Vojvodina (Serbia) and that female entrepreneurs are young, educated and run businesses that do not require large investments and risks. In the research of Jaafar et al. (2015) for rural areas highlands in Kinabalu National Park, small tourism businesses were predominantly managed by women.

Previous studies indicate that young people and men are more likely to have an entrepreneurial attitude than the elderly (Muresan et al., 2016; Bosma & Kelley, 2018). Nevertheless, findings do not show a clear tendency towards the average age of entrepreneurs in rural tourism. Also, more educated people have more knowledge and skills to face eventual adversities in entrepreneurship (Dinis et al., 2019; Kallmuenzer, Kraus, Peters, Steiner & Cheng, 2019; Muresan et al., 2016; Yuan, Liu, Ju & Li, 2017). Zhao and Getz (2008) and Chen and Elston (2013) also highlight that the decision to become an entrepreneur can be hampered by previous experience in the sector. Additionally, innovative entrepreneurship is more likely to happen if entrepreneurs own some socio-economic characteristics such as academic education and technical background (Block et al., 2017). According to Doh et al. (2017) that the capacity of a business also depends on experience, and that older businesses are expected to have the knowledge to survive, they also have the tendency to show more conservative trends, less prone to strong innovations, and greater risk aversion.

Entrepreneurs have different motivations for starting a business. Environmental conditions, such as job insecurity or unemployment, the need to increase income or dissatisfaction in their work can motivate individuals to become entrepreneurs – the *push factors* or extrinsic motivations (Carson et al., 2017). However, the business can be started by intrinsic motivations or *pull factors*, such as the desire for success, power, to be his own boss, business opportunity or even by retirement, and people are pulled into

entrepreneurship because they recognize an opportunity that can increase their income or their independence (Amit & Muller, 1995; Dinis & Ussman, 2006; Peters & Kallmuenzer, 2018; Riva & Bertolini, 2017; Russell & Faulkner, 1999; Set, Yaakop, Hussin, Mohd & Ghani, 2015).

More recently, and in particular in the tourism sector, lifestyle has emerged as an important motivation for entrepreneurship, and it is also a pull factor. In many cases, businesses are created to provide a more adequate lifestyle, in which family needs, income, and the way of life itself are weighted (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000; Baumgartner, Pütz & Seidl, 2013; Carson et al., 2017; Dawson, Fountain & Cohen, 2011; Lai et al., 2017; Marques & Cunha, 2013; Stefanović, Ranković & Prokić, 2011; Sun & Xu, 2017; Yachin, 2019). Rural tourism results, in many cases, from the reconstruction and valorization of existing properties and heritage reconverted in accommodation units, underused land or labour resources, enabling to maintain links to the property and land (Dubois et al., 2017; Lane & Kastenholz, 2015; Silva, 2006). Some of these businesses do not require large capital investments (and some were initially provided by the public sector) and have a small scale (Lane & Kastenholz, 2015). In small rural tourism businesses, it has been recognized (many with their genesis in agriculture) that the motivations behind the start-up are related to job creation not only for the owner but for family, lifestyle, and personal fulfillment (Getz & Carlson, 2000). In addition, the importance of interaction with others (tourists and the local population), their recognition of the work done, and the preservation of properties that otherwise could not be maintained (Cavaco, 2000; Dinis et al., 2019). These small firms usually don't have a growth orientation and other motivations outweigh the economic benefits. They may pursue the activity even with low profits since they can be motivated by a certain lifestyle and the preservation of the family heritage. In the enterprises that are life-style oriented the decision-making processes are greatly affected by family interest, with an emphasis on family needs and choices more than growth or profit maximization (Getz & Carlsen, 2005; Peters & Kallmuenzer, 2018; Wang, Hung & Huang, 2019).

Great effort has been devoted to the motivational structures of small businesses, but research for rural tourism enterprises is not so extent.

Getz and Carlsen (2000) for family and owner-operated businesses in rural tourism and hospitality sector in rural Western Australia concluded that they started the business mainly for living in the right environment and enjoying a good lifestyle. Moreover, Getz and Petersen (2005), in two resort areas (Canmore in Canada and Bornholm in Denmark) determined that the main motivations were, in Canmore, to be challenged, financially independent, to live in the right environment, to be their own boss, and to enjoy a good lifestyle; in Bornholm are to enjoy a good lifestyle, to be their own boss, to live in the right environment, to become financially independent and to meet interesting people. Carson et al. (2017) found that the desire for a change in their lifestyle with a better work-life balance, a quiet environment, escape from the increasingly urban environment were the main motivations for international migrants in northern Sweden to run rural tourism firms. About the motivation for agri-tourism entrepreneurship, the desire for independence has been referred in several studies (Busby & Rendle, 2000; McGehee & Kim, 2004; McGehee, Kim & Jennings, 2007), the contribution to the community (Getz & Carlsen, 2000; McGehee, Kim & Jennings, 2007) and a way to diversify the farm activity (Lobo et al., 1999; McGehee & Kim, 2004; McGehee, Kim & Jennings, 2007), additional income and fully utilize the resources available (McGehee & Kim, 2004). Castrillón, Canto, Cerradelo & Cantorn (2011) for rural tourism in Galicia, Spain, highlight the economic motivations, particularly for women. In developing

countries, Banki and Ismail (2015), for the owners of family tourism microenterprises in Obudu Mountain, Nigeria, the motivations for starting the business were mainly financial: to take advantage of tourism development and to get a profit. Jaafar et al. (2011) in small and medium hotels in Malaysia found that the most important goals for starting the business were keeping the property in the family and to allow to become financially independent, followed by to be challenged, to make a lot of money, to gain prestige, to enjoy a good lifestyle and to live in the right environment.

For rural tourism in Douro, a region of Northern Portugal, Pato (2016) concluded that the primary motivation to start the business was the recovery and preservation of the built heritage. For this author, this fact allied with the short time that the majority spent in managing their businesses explain the scarce tourist entertainment activities based on local culture and tradition. Although the motives presented in several studies are not the same, and consequently not comparable, for the Central Region of Portugal, Gomes and Renda (2016) concluded that the most pointed motivational factors were the promotion of the natural beauty, the contribution to its development, and the recovery and preservation of the heritage. For the same region, Dinis et al. (2019) suggested the dominant motivations for entrepreneurship in rural tourism were income generation from unused buildings, promote local development, interact with people from other cultures, and earn additional income. In this study, the authors also conclude that if one of the motivation is the promotion of local development, other factors such as lodging location, business success, manager's residence, level of education, and past experience or training in the field of tourism or management are important to explain the influence of rural tourism enterprises in local development.

Due to the importance given to entrepreneurship to regional development, for the promotion of entrepreneurship is fundamental to know the barriers entrepreneurs face in order to promote appropriate policies for encouraging the creation of rural tourism enterprises. These barriers can be related to institutions as regulatory, economic and financial barriers, but also related to the lack of experience, knowledge, or lack of networks, among others (Martins et al., 2004). Campón-Cerro (2015) for rural tourism in Spain found that competences in marketing are crucial to establish relationships with customers and their loyalty. Also Teodoro et al. (2017) for small rural tourism firms in Serra da Estrela, in the Central region of Portugal, suggest that entrepreneurs need to have knowledge in marketing and advertising strategies since one of the main determinants of success was the presence in a website. Furthermore, Pato and Kastenholz (2017) in rural tourism in Dão-Lafões, also in the Central region of Portugal, highlight not only the lack of competencies in marketing but also in the implementation of marketing strategies. Jaafar et al. (2015) identify several constraints in managing small tourism-related businesses in Kinabalu, a rural area in Malaysia, such as the lack of tourism marketing skills, trends and tourism opportunities, and how to start a business. Cikić et al. (2018) point some obstacles in rural tourism, such as low demand, lack of financial capital to invest and poor cooperation with local institutions.

Entrepreneurship in rural areas can be very challenging since these areas have structural problems due to migration of population to urban areas, old age profiles, limited level of human capital, and limited access to financial capital (Deller, Kures & Conroy, 2019).

To the author's best knowledge very few publications are available in the literature that discusses the formation of clusters based on motivations to start a rural tourism venture. Getz and Carlsen (2000) clustered the entrepreneurs in two groups labeled "family-first" and "business-first". Getz and Petersen (2005) defined different groups: in

Bornholm, those who started-up the business for lifestyle, challenge, money, and family, and in Canmore also for prestige. For small restaurants in China, Chen and Elston (2013) define three segments based on motivation: autonomy seekers, family protectors, and financial reward seekers.

3 METHODOLOGY

A quantitative study was chosen through a survey to analyse the motivations for new ventures in rural tourism and barriers faced by entrepreneurs. It was included country house tourism accommodation and tourism enterprises in rural areas according to Decree-Law n° 39/2008 of March 7, changed by the Decree-Laws numbers 228/2009 of September 14 and 15/2014 of January 23 of the Portuguese Law. According to these Decree-Laws country tourism accommodation are “Family-run establishments located in old, private buildings that for their architectural, historic or artistic value represent a certain era, notably palaces and manor houses, located in [...] rural areas...” (article 17). Tourism enterprises in rural areas are “Establishments intended to provide accommodation services to tourists in rural areas that have for their operation an appropriate set of facilities, structures, equipment, and complementary services, with a view to providing a complete, diverse tourism product in rural areas ...” (Article 18) and includes country homes, agri-tourism, and rural hotels.

The data was collected through a survey sent by e-mail in 2015 to 241 rural tourism establishments in the Northern Region that were included in the *Maisturismo* - Hotel Guide Portugal (www.maisturismo.pt) with electronic address. *Maisturismo.pt* was a platform that contained detailed information of accommodation units, classified by type of establishment under the existing legislation, and by region. Several surveys did not reach the address and despite the efforts made through telephone calls to obtain an up-to-date email address and/or to appeal to respond, the successful number of responses to the survey was 60. Northern Region includes eight sub-regions (Figure 1), where Douro includes the Alto Douro Wine Region, a living and evolving landscape, recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage.

Figure 1 – Sub-Regions of Northern Portugal



The questionnaire, designed to attain the objectives, included sections with closed questions to: a) characterize the socio-demographic profile of the owner/manager (gender, age, marital status, nationality, education and study area, work experience and

activities developed before starting the business); b) to characterize the business (type, sub-region, legal form, number of employees and accommodation units, and seniority); c) to describe the start-up process and management (number of previous companies, how was involved in the business, sources of capital, year of managing the business, hours dedicated, family involvement and other activities engaged). In another section, entrepreneurs were asked about the relevance of several motives for starting the business (based on Jaafar et al., 2011; Chen & Elston, 2013; Getz & Petersen, 2005) in a four-point scale from 1 -“Not relevant” to 4 -“Very relevant”. To analyse greatest fears when starting a business, and the problems encountered related to government policy it was followed the European Commission (2012), the perceived barriers in running the business (Jaafar et al., 2011) and the measurement of opinions about barriers were assessed using a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1-“Strongly disagree” to 5 -“Strongly agree”.

Several statistical approaches were used to attain the objectives. Univariate descriptive analyses were prosecuted to describe the sample in its various aspects, the motivations, and barriers to entrepreneurship. In order to see how the motivations of entrepreneurs are grouping, it was applied an exploratory factor analysis with the method of principal component analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation. A cluster analysis was prosecuted to group entrepreneurs according to their motivations to start-up the rural tourism business and through cross-tabulations were analysed some demographic characteristics of entrepreneurs and characteristics of the firms of each cluster.

Non-parametric tests were applied to analyse if there were significant differences in the opinion about entrepreneurship barriers according to the socio-demographic characteristics of entrepreneurs, followed by pairwise comparisons to see where these differences occur.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 24.0, was used to carry out the statistical analysis of the collected data. A probability of type I error of 0.05 was considered for all inferential analyses.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Profile of the respondents and family story

Table 1 summarizes the respondent's demographic profile. The majority of respondents are owners (80%). This sample has 65% of males and most of the respondents are married (75%). 60% is more than 55 years old, although there is a significant number of young owners/managers in the age range of 25-44 years (30%). Despite the fact that almost all of the respondents have Portuguese nationality, 6.7% are foreigners. The present survey shows that most of the respondents have high academic education: bachelor degree (58.3%) or master (10%), and only 31.6% have lower formal educational levels. This result is consistent with the findings of Doh et al. (2017), denoting that managers with high levels of education “are more likely to perceive entrepreneurship as tied to searching for information and knowledge” (p. 516). The main areas of specialization are management/administration and hospitality/tourism (20% and 18.3%, respectively), finances/accounting and agriculture (8.3% each).

Zhao and Getz (2008), Chen and Elston (2013) and Yachin (2019) support that the decision to become a business owner can be hampered by previous experience in the sector. Professional experience is predominantly in management/administration areas (56.7%), hotel management (18.3%), restaurant management and agriculture (5% each) and others. These professional activities were developed as liberal professionals (28.3%),

civil servants (23.3%), entrepreneurs in services or industry (15%), workers in hotels or restaurants (8.3%), banking or agricultural entrepreneur (3.3%), among others. Both in terms of academic qualifications and professional experience, it should be noted the diversity between rural tourism promoters and although the relatively low connection with the hospitality/tourism industry and agriculture, the majority has a background in management/administration.

Table 1 - Demographic characteristics

Profile Variables	Categories	Freq.	Profile Variables	Categories	Freq.	
Position of the respondent	Owner	80.0%	Area of specialization*	Management/Administration	20.0%	
	Manager	15.0%		Finance/Accounting	8.3%	
	Assistant manager	1.7%		Hospitality/Tourism	18.3%	
	Other	3.3%		Agriculture	8.3%	
Gender	Male	65.0%		Other	26.7%	
	Female	35.0%		None	5.0%	
Age	Working experience*	Under 25		0.0%	Management/Administration	56.7%
		25-34		10.0%	Hotel management	18.3%
		35-44		20.0%	Marketing	3.3%
		45-54		10.0%	Restaurant management	5.0%
		55-64		33.3%	Agriculture	5.0%
		65 and more	26.7%	None	8.3%	
Marital status		Single	10.0%	Activities before starting the business *	Liberal profession	28.3%
		Married	75.0%		Entrepreneur (trade or industry)	15.0%
		Other	15.0%		Entrepreneur (agriculture)	3.3%
Nationality		Portuguese	93.3%		Worker in a hotel or restaurant	8.3%
		Other	6.7%		Civil servant	23.3%
Level of education	Bank employee	Ph.D	0.0%		Bank employee	3.3%
		Master degree	10.0%		Other	16.7%
		Bachelor degree	58.3%			
		Further Education	23.3%			
		Secondary Education	3.3%			
		Primary Education	3.3%			
Other		1.7%				

Note: ^a Multiple answers permitted; Freq. – Frequency

4.2 Characteristics of the business, start-up, management and family background

At this point we characterize the business, evaluate the main reasons for starting up, analyze the business management and family history.

Table 2 summarizes the characteristics of the business. Most of the businesses in question have already been created for 11 years or more (60%), and 21.7% for more than 20 years. Only 15% have five or fewer years of existence. The country houses are the main types of tourism accommodation (40%), followed by country homes (35%), agri-tourism (20%) and rural hotels (6.7%). The establishments are located mainly in the Douro region (38.3%), followed by *Minho-Lima* (25%), *Cávado* (11.7%), *Tamega* and *Alto Trás-os-Montes* (8.3%, each), *Ave* (6.7%) and *Grande Porto* (1.7%). It is not surprising that there is a greater development of tourism enterprises the Douro since it is an emblematic region of Northern Portugal, the oldest demarcated region in the world. The river – Douro – carved deep valleys and terraces are full of vineyards where wines with high quality are produced, in particular, the internationally known Porto Wine, providing a cultural and distinctive landscape classified in 2001 as “Living Cultural Evolutionary Landscape, World Heritage of Humanity”.

Sole traders and society by shares are the predominant legal form (46.7% each), but there are 6.7% of anonymous societies. All of them have a micro employer dimension centered in one to two paid workers (56.7%) although 26.7% have three to five workers. Only 5% have between six to 10 paid workers and there is no establishment with more than 11 employees. 60% of the establishments have between five to nine accommodation units, 20% between 10 and 15 and 16.7% less than five. In the North of Portugal, as in other European peripheral regions, predominate small rural tourism enterprises (Dinis et al., 2019).

Table 2 - Characteristics of the business

Description	Frequency	Description	Frequency
Type ^a		Number of employees	
Country house	40.0%	0	11.7%
Agri-tourism	20.0%	1-2	56.7%
Country home	35.0%	3-5	26.7%
Rural hotel	6.7%	6-10	5.0%
Other	3.3%	11-20	0.0%
		Over 20	0.0%
Sub-region		Number of accommodation units	
<i>Alto Trás-os-Montes</i>	8.3%	Less than 5	16.7%
<i>Ave</i>	6.7%	5-9	60.0%
<i>Cávado</i>	11.7%	10-15	20.0%
<i>Douro</i>	38.3%	More than 15	3.3%
<i>Entre Douro e Vouga</i>	0.0%	Years of operation	
<i>Grande Porto</i>	1.7%	Less than a year	1.7%
<i>Minho-Lima</i>	25.0%	1-5	13.3%
<i>Tâmega</i>	8.3%	6-10	25.0%
Legal form		11-20	38.3%
Sole trader	46.7%	More than 20 years	21.7%
Society by shares	46.7%		
Anonymous society	6.7%		
Other	0.0%		

Note: ^a Multiple answers permitted

For most of the respondents (70%) this business was the first entrepreneurial experience, while 18.3% had one past experience and 10% two to five (Table 3). It was found that 73.3% of the respondents created the business and 18.3% inherited it. Only in 25% of the establishments the owner/manager is the only member of the family involved in managing the business, but the percentage of family involvement is significant: 48.3% of them manage the business with the spouse/husband and 25% with other family members. In accordance with the number of years in the operation of the company, a significant percentage of owners/managers (71.7%) are managing the business for more than six years.

The access to star-up capital is crucial mainly in rural areas (Banki & Ismail, 2015). In terms of the initial investment funding sources there is a tendency for the use of personal funds (option mentioned by 80% of respondents), followed by public funding (53.3%) and bank loans (43.3%), and, to a lesser extent, loans from family and friends (13.3%). 21% provided all the start-up capital, while 26.7% used this source and government funding support, and 13.3% used their own capital and bank finance.

Despite the fact that 50% of respondents spend more than 30 hours per week to this business, 26.7% spend between 15-30 hours and 23.3% less than fifteen hours, which is consistent with the fact that the majority of the respondents are engaged in another activity as self-employed and 16% in other activities not discriminated. The management bodies develop other activities, where agriculture has predominance (53.3% of the respondent entities), 16.7% liberal professions, 15% restaurants, and 8.3% recreation. Although in rural areas, many entrepreneurs see tourism as a way to increase their income, as Dinis et al. (2019) pointed out, tourism is vulnerable, with low rates of return and very subject to changing preferences by consumers, so it is not surprising that they maintain

other professional activities, even unrelated. Also Dubois et al. (2017) for small family hospitality tourism enterprises and van der Ploeg (2018) for farms, entrepreneurs have other sources of income.

Table 3 - Start-up and management of the business

Description	Frequency	Description	Frequency		
Number of previous companies	0	70.0%	Hours per week dedicated to the business	Less than 15	23.3%
	1	18.3%	15 to 30	26.7%	
	2 to 5	10.0%	More than 30	50.0%	
	More than 5	1.7%			
How he gets involved in business	Started myself	73.3%	Family involvement	Only me	25.0%
	Purchased	0.0%		With spouse/husband	48.3%
	Inherited	18.3%		With other members of the family	25.0%
	Others	8.3%		Without family involvement	1.7%
Capital to start the Business ^a	Own savings	80.0%	Other activities that the management body exercises ^a	Agriculture	53.3%
	Loans from family and friends	13.3%		Trade	6.7%
	Business Angels	0.0%		Business restaurant	15.0%
	Business partners	0.0%		Recreation	8.3%
	Venture capital	0.0%		Liberal profession	16.7%
	Public funding	53.3%		Other	11.7%
	Bank finance	43.3%		None	8.3%
Years of managing the business	Less than a year	1.7%			
	1 to 2	8.3%			
	3 to 5	18.3%			
	6 to 10	25.0%			
	11 to 20	30.0%			
	More than 20	16.7%			

Note: ^a Multiple answers permitted

Most of the owners/managers (70%) are second-generation entrepreneurs, belonging therefore to a family where at least one parent was an entrepreneur (European Commission, 2012). Moreover, 52% of the respondents have had help from family, relatives and/or friends with concrete recommendations and actions to start his first business.

4.3 Motivations for starting the business

4.3.1 Motivational factors

Table 4 reports the results for the degree of importance of different objectives for starting up the business. In Northern rural tourism the main motivations (very relevant and relevant) of the respondents to start the business focus on valuing family heritage, the need to maintain the property in the family, improving the financial situation, living in a suitable environment, the business opportunity, meeting interesting people and having success. These results suggest heterogeneous motivations in entrepreneurship. While in one hand there are lifestyle motivations, on the other there are some business-oriented motivations.

Table 4 - Motives for starting the business

	Not relevant	Slightly relevant	Relevant	Very relevant	Mean	SD
Valuing family heritage	3%	5%	28%	63%	3.52	0.097
To keep the property in the family	5%	8%	42%	45%	3.27	0.106
Improve financial situation	10%	17%	55%	18%	2.82	0.110
To live in the suitable environment	7%	23%	42%	28%	2.92	0.115
Business opportunity	13%	17%	50%	20%	2.77	0.120
To meet interesting people	7%	23%	57%	13%	2.77	0.099
Have success	20%	13%	40%	27%	2.73	0.138
To provide me with a challenge	22%	20%	37%	22%	2.58	0.137
To keep my family together	28%	17%	35%	20%	2.47	0.144
Keeping busy	15%	32%	35%	18%	2.57	0.124
Improve lifestyle	17%	30%	40%	13%	2.50	0.120
Continue the family business	47%	3%	28%	22%	2.25	0.162
Desire for independence	22%	37%	23%	18%	2.38	0.133
To be my own boss	42%	18%	28%	12%	2.10	0.140
To provide a retirement income	33%	37%	22%	8%	2.05	0.107
To gain prestige	38%	32%	17%	13%	2.05	0.135
Previous experience in business	43%	27%	30%	0%	1.87	0.110
Dissatisfaction with work	45%	32%	18%	5%	1.83	0.117
Retirement	48%	30%	20%	2%	1.75	0.108
To make lots of money	43%	40%	15%	2%	1.75	0.100
Being unemployed	83%	12%	5%	0%	1.22	0.068
Fear of losing the job	80%	17%	3%	0%	1.23	0.065

SD – Standard Deviation

53.3% of the respondents considered that they started this new business to exploit a business opportunity (opportunity-driven entrepreneurs). Only 8.3% are necessity-driven and 38.3% are motivated both for necessity and opportunity.

4.3.2 Factor analysis

The relational structure of the motivations to start the business was evaluated by the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) of the correlation matrix, with the extraction of factors by the method of the principal components followed by a varimax rotation. The determinant coefficient of the correlation matrix was lower than 0.0001 denoting problems of multicollinearity. Following Marôco (2014), the variable “Fear to lose the job” was removed due to the high correlation with “Being unemployed”.

To assess the validity of the EFA it was used the Keiser-Meyer-Olkin criterion, having an observed value of 0.678, so the factorability correlation matrix is tolerable, and Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant at 0.000, concluding that the variables are significantly correlated, so the AEF was proceeded. Common factors retained were those who had eigenvalues greater than one and in accordance with the screen plot.

As reported in Table 5, the factor analysis led to seven factors that explain 72.74% of the variance. To the extracted factors, the percentage of the variance of each variable explained by the common factors extracted is higher than 50% to all the variables. Given the sample size, significant loadings are those equal or higher than 0.70 (Hair Jr., Black, Babin & Andersen, 1998). Factor 1, which explains 29.09% of variance, includes the motivations “To have success”, “To improve lifestyle”, “Desire for independence”, “Business opportunity” and “To gain prestige”. The second factor (explains 11.79% of variance) is linked with the family and heritage and includes the “Valuing family heritage”, “To keep my family together”, “To keep the property in the family”.

Table 5 - Principal component analysis of star-up motives

	Component Factor Loadings							Communalities
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Have success	0.814	-0.113	0.036	0.167	-0.219	0.051	0.004	0.755
Improve lifestyle	0.798	0.056	-0.190	-0.033	-0.182	0.081	-0.096	0.726
Desire for independence	0.777	-0.045	-0.143	-0.166	-0.189	0.234	-0.087	0.751
Business opportunity	0.729	-0.182	0.116	-0.025	0.004	-0.162	-0.330	0.713
To gain prestige	0.702	-0.265	0.071	0.517	-0.040	-0.036	0.003	0.838
To improve financial situation	0.671	0.197	-0.383	-0.035	-0.009	0.270	-0.328	0.818
To meet interesting people	0.645	-0.133	0.523	-0.113	-0.012	-0.194	-0.005	0.758
To live in the suitable environment	0.597	0.270	0.301	-0.407	0.250	0.018	-0.263	0.817
To make lots of money	0.589	0.192	-0.310	0.008	-0.269	-0.228	0.207	0.647
To provide a retirement income	0.560	0.261	-0.186	-0.024	-0.272	0.021	0.275	0.567
Previous experience in business	0.519	-0.378	-0.001	0.427	0.223	-0.138	0.059	0.667
To be my own boss	0.497	0.250	-0.264	-0.496	0.035	-0.351	0.044	0.752
To provide me with a challenge	0.460	-0.029	0.446	0.308	-0.070	-0.196	0.138	0.568
Valuing family heritage	-0.169	0.751	0.111	0.181	-0.037	0.172	-0.199	0.708
To keep my family together	0.161	0.709	0.206	-0.102	0.015	-0.312	0.353	0.804
To keep the property in the family	-0.023	0.709	0.237	0.318	-0.132	0.088	0.132	0.703
Continue the family business	0.117	0.493	-0.247	0.360	0.480	0.013	-0.243	0.738
Keeping busy	0.252	0.031	0.694	-0.216	0.187	0.213	-0.100	0.683
Being unemployed	0.311	0.106	-0.248	0.121	0.634	-0.341	0.027	0.704
Retirement	0.466	0.101	0.014	0.048	0.214	0.661	0.351	0.835
Dissatisfaction with work	0.352	-0.279	-0.092	-0.247	0.446	0.204	0.459	0.722
Percent of variance explained (%)	29.09	11.79	8.14	6.79	6.26	5.77	4.91	
Cumulative percentage (%)	29.09	40.87	49.01	55.80	62.07	67.83	72.74	

4.3.3 Cluster analysis

A cluster analysis was made in order to identify the profile of Northern entrepreneurs in rural tourism based on the eight significant factors. The cluster analysis was conducted applying a hierarchical technique using the Nearest Neighbour method with squared Euclidean distances. The number of clusters was determined by the analysis of the dendrogram and by the distances between the clusters. K-means method was applied in order to refine the number of clusters. The results showed a three cluster solution. Table 6 reports the mean score of each motive for starting the business.

Table 6 – Final cluster centers and ANOVA test

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	ANOVA	
				F Test	p-value
Valuing family heritage	3.74	2.79	3.74	11.97	0.000
To keep the property in the family	3.35	2.50	3.65	12.04	0.000
To keep my family together	2.61	1.29	3.04	17.39	0.000
To have success	1.74	3.07	3.52	37.83	0.000
Business opportunity	2.09	3.07	3.26	15.07	0.000

Improve lifestyle	1.83	2.43	3.22	22.24	0.000
Desire for independence	1.48	2.79	3.04	28.57	0.000
To gain prestige	1.30	2.29	2.65	14.54	0.000

In Cluster 1, the main motives for creating the business are related to the family and its heritage: valuing the family heritage, keep the property in the family and keep the family together and so it was labeled “family and legacy protectors”. In cluster 2 the main motivations are related to success and business opportunity that we denominated “success and opportunity seekers”. The third cluster, which was labeled “legacy protectors and success seekers”, combines motivations related to the property of the family and professional success. Most of the mean scores are higher in cluster 3 than in the others.

In order to validate the cluster analysis with the three groups of entrepreneurs, with different characteristics in relation to the motivations to start the business, it was conducted a discriminant analysis. The test of equality of group means shows that for all the variables considered there is at least one group where the means are different (Table 7).

Table 7 - Test of equality of group means

	Lambda de Wilks	Z	df1	df2	Sig.
To keep my family together	0.62	17.393	2	57	0.00
To keep the property in the family	0.70	12.037	2	57	0.00
Valuing family heritage	0.70	11.972	2	57	0.00
Business opportunity	0.65	15.065	2	57	0.00
To gain prestige	0.66	14.538	2	57	0.00
To have success	0.43	37.831	2	57	0.00
Improve lifestyle	0.56	22.24	2	57	0.00
Desire for independence	0.50	28.57	2	57	0.00

Source: Own elaboration

Function 1, with an eigenvalue of 2.22, explains 61.6% of the variance in terms of differences between groups and function 2 explains 38.4% (Table 8). The p-value is 0.00 which shows that the discriminant power of the two functions is statistically significant. 98.3% of original grouped cases were correctly classified.

Table 8 - Discriminant analysis for the three groups

Discriminant function	Eigenvalue	Percentage of variance	Canonical correlation	Wilks' Lambda	Chi-square	Sig.
1	2.22	61.6	0.83	0.13	109.058	0.00
2	1.38	38.4	0.76	0.42	46.458	0.00

Source: Own elaboration

A cross-tabulation was made to identify the main characteristics of each cluster.

Cluster 1 – “family and legacy protectors” – is integrated mainly by males (69.6%), Portuguese (95.7%), and is the largest group over 55 years old and with the highest rate of superior education (78.3%), mainly a bachelor degree. Although few have education specialization in management, their professional experience is mainly in this area. This cluster concentrate owners/managers of personal enterprises (60.9%), located in Douro (56.5%), mostly country homes (56.5%) and country houses (34.8%) and with one or two workers. For the majority, this was the first enterprise (65.2%) and 69.9% started it, although this is the group where the percentage of inherited businesses is higher

(21.7%). For starting the business, they were primarily financed by their own savings and public financing (52.2%).

Cluster 2, “success and opportunity seekers”, is the group with an equal percentage of men and women and with the highest rate of foreigners (14.3%). The predominant age groups are between 55-64 years old (42.9%) and 35-44 (21.4%). 57.1% have a superior education, and the principal areas are in management and agriculture. They also have professional experience in management and hospitality/tourism. In this group, a significant number manages the business alone (35.7%), the highest among the three clusters, or with the wife/husband, and have the highest number of employees and accommodation units. Most of the enterprises are society by shares, and they dedicate more time to this business than the other groups. The types of accommodations are country houses (50%) and agri-tourism (28.6%) and 57.1% of them also develop agriculture activities. The start capital essentially combines public resources, bank loans, and own savings and is the group where most owners/managers are driven-opportunity (71.4%).

Cluster 3, “legacy protectors and success seekers”, is equal to cluster 1 in terms of gender and nationality. 47.8% are between 25-44 years old and is the group with the highest rate of master degree. Predominate the country's homes (39.1%), country houses (30.4%) and agri-tourism (17.4%). Besides agriculture, 21.7% also have restaurants. It is the group that reported the highest percentage that they started the business both for necessity and opportunity (56.5%).

4.4 Risks, barriers to entrepreneurship and plans for the future

When asked about the greatest fears of starting a business today, 73.3% of the owners/managers indicate that the uncertainty of not having a regular income could prevent them from starting a business (Table 9), which may partially explain why they have other jobs.

Table 9 - Greatest fears when starting a business

Description ^a	Frequency
The possibility of going bankrupt	28.33%
The uncertainty of not having a regular income	73.33%
The risk of losing the property	26.67%
Job insecurity	10.00%
The possibility of suffering a personal failure	11.67%
The need to devote too much energy or time to it	26.67%
Other	3.33%

Note: ^a Multiple answers permitted

At the level of business management (Table 10), 58% strongly disagree or disagree that they lack knowledge on how to obtain funding, 45% disagree completely or disagree that they lack managerial skills and tourism knowledge, tourism market trends and opportunities and 42% agree or strongly agree that they lack expertise in marketing and communication.

Table 10 - Perceived barriers to running a business

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
Lack of management skills and knowledge in tourism	16,7%	28,3%	26,7%	26,7%	1,7%	2,68	1,097
Lack knowledge in tourism market trends and opportunities	6,7%	38,3%	18,3%	28,3%	8,3%	2,93	1,133
Lack of knowledge on how to apply for funding from financial institutions	16,7%	41,7%	20,0%	21,7%	0,0%	2,47	1,016
Lack of tourism marketing skills	6,7%	31,7%	20,0%	33,3%	8,3%	3,05	1,126

Note: SD – Standard Deviation

Using non-parametric tests it was investigated whether there were differences in the opinions about the problems encountered to start the business according to the socio-demographic characteristics of the owners/managers (age, gender, level of education, area of specialization, professional specialization, family background) and factors related to the way they started the business (sources capital, help from family and friends, previous business experience, the way they were involved in the business, necessity versus opportunity motivations), followed by pairwise comparisons to find where these differences occur.

There weren't found significant differences between the opinion about the barriers encountered by entrepreneurs in managing the business, with exception on the way they were involved in the business (*p*-value of Kruskal-Wallis (KW) test=0.019). Pairwise comparisons revealed that those who considered that they started by necessity agree more that they had a lack of knowledge in marketing skills.

They also encountered some restrictions (Table 11), the most being the bureaucracy, lack of financial support and lack of information.

Table 11 - Perceived barriers to entrepreneurship

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
Lack of available financial support from the government to small businesses	1.7%	10.0%	20.0%	46.7%	21.7%	3.77	0.963
The complexity of administrative procedures	1.7%	5.0%	11.7%	48.3%	33.3%	4.07	0.899
The difficulty to obtain enough information how to start a business	0.0%	16.7%	16.7%	43.3%	23.3%	3.73	1.006
One should not have started a business if there is a risk it might fail	0.0%	3.3%	26.7%	56.7%	13.3%	3.80	2.980
People who have started their own business and have failed should be given a second chance	0.0%	3.3%	26.7%	56.7%	13.3%	3.80	0.708

Note: SD – Standard Deviation

On what concerns the opinion about the lack of financial support from the government to small businesses there are differences between different owners/managers of different ages (*p*-value of Kruskal-Wallis (KW) test=0.01), but not among the other features analyzed. Pairwise comparisons revealed that there are significant differences between the segment ages 45-54 years and more than 65 years. The opinion about if it is difficult to start one's own business due to the complexities of the administrative process is different according to age (*p*-value of the KW test=0.039), and the help they had to start by his family, relatives or friends with concrete recommendations and actions (*p*-value of KW test=0.008). Consistently, those who consider administrative procedures very complex were also those who searched for more help from family and friends.

The difficulty in obtaining sufficient information on how to start a business differs according to gender (p -value of the Mann-Whitney test=0.016), and women felt more difficulty than men. There are also differences by the way they were involved in the business – purchased, inherited or started - (p -value of the KW=0.034) and those who started the business had more difficulty than those who inherited it. The sources of start-up capital used also differentiate what they think about the second chance that should give to people who started their own business and failed (p -value of the KW=0.027). Entrepreneurs who financed through their own savings, loans from family or friends, and bank loans agree more that a second chance should be given. For the other characteristics, there isn't statistical evidence that the opinion about the problems found is different among entrepreneurs.

In the future, almost all the respondents (96.7%) want to keep the business and only 3.3% forecast ending it (Table 12). 45% have the intention to expand the business, and 33.3% have not yet decided. For the next two years, 55% plan to invest, especially in the areas of rehabilitation and increased supply, promotion and marketing, rational use of energy and, to a lesser extent, tourist animation and staff training.

Table 12 - Plans for the future

Description	Criteria	Frequency
Intention to keep the business	Yes	96.70%
	No	3.30%
Intention to enlarge the business	Yes	45%
	No	21.70%
	Perhaps	33.30%
Intention to invest in the next two years	Yes	55%
	No	16.70%
	Perhaps	28.30%
Investment intentions, according to the nature of the investment ^a	Promotion, marketing	41.67%
	Increase in supply	43.33%
	Tourist animation	23.33%
	Requalification of supply	53.33%
	Staff training	15.00%
	Rationalization in the use of energy	40.00%
	Other	1.67%

Note: ^a Multiple answers permitted

5 DISCUSSION

This article, based on a survey, provides a characterization of rural tourism entrepreneurs in the North of Portugal, the main motivations for starting the business and barriers to entrepreneurship.

The sample consists mostly of male and married owners, with Portuguese nationality and with more than 55 years old. This is similar to the study of Pato (2016) for rural tourism in the Douro, and Gomes and Renda (2016) for the Centro Region of Portugal, although here the businesses are mostly owned by women as in Jaafar et al. (2015). According to Bosma and Kelley (2018) in the majority of economies, the most dominant age group for starting the business is either 25-34 or 35-44 years, when people have already achieved a certain level of education and work experience but still have many years ahead to follow other work experiences if it fails. Considering the number of years the business was created and the current age of the owners, the results suggest that in Portuguese Northern rural tourism, entrepreneurs started their business in the most

prevalent age groups of 35-44 and 45-54 years. This may be the result of the fact that although rural tourism in Portugal begins earlier, it was at the beginning of the 21st century that rural tourism became more fashionable from the point of view of supply and demand (Pereiro, 2018).

The majority of owners/managers who run the business have higher education. These findings are in accordance with Gomes and Renda (2016), Getz and Petersen (2005) and Pato (2016) but in contrast with Jaafar et al. (2011, 2015). Rural tourism is an activity with owners coming from medium and medium/high social classes (Getz & Carlsen, 2000; Gomes & Renda, 2016; Pato, 2016), suggested by the level of education and the percentage of entrepreneurs that inherited the business. Although the high educational level, the academic and professional experience is mainly in management/administration rather than tourism/hospitality. This is not surprising since high education in tourism/hospitality is recent in Portugal. According to Dinis et al. (2019) entrepreneurs with this kind of education and experience (management, administration, tourism and hospitality) are more engaged with local economic activity, since they are more likely to sell traditional products and provide complementary activities to their guests, driven local development. Mesquita (2009) found a similar profile to our sample: men with more than 50 years, with superior education, who work also in other service sector, with few previous experience in tourism, with knowledge and skills in management but contrary to our study they had skills in marketing.

They are predominantly second-generation entrepreneurs. Several studies have analyzed the impact of family entrepreneurial background on business success (Duchesneau & Gartner, 1990; European Commission, 2010) and although it is not consensual, these last studies conclude that it is more likely to succeed when there is a family history, while Lerner and Haber (2001) shows that, in small businesses in the tourism sector, the experience of the family contributes significantly to the variance of income, but not for profit.

Despite the importance of tourism for rural areas, the level of employment generated (apart from self-employment) is not very high: 57% have only one to two paid workers. It is noteworthy that the majority of respondents exercise other professional activities as an employee, not devoting full time to this business. It seems that rural tourism is a complementary activity rather than the main one, but as in Mesquita (2009) seems a family pluriactive strategy. Besides tourism, more than 50% also develop agriculture activities. Pato (2016) points out as one of the weaknesses of rural tourism the small percentage dedicated to the business, which justifies the weak development of tourist animation activities and the weak rooting at the local level. However, in the North of Portugal, the hours dedicated to the business are high, and tourist animation is one of the investment that entrepreneurs plan to do.

Motivational factors play an important role in the decision to create a rural tourism business. In this study, the respondents are mainly opportunity-driven entrepreneurs and, according to the European Commission (2012), the opportunity motivated enterprises have a higher economic contribution than necessity driven. It appears, therefore, that entry is mainly due to positive motivations (pull factors), much more than the necessity of going out or avoid an unwanted situation. The relational structure of motivations, through the exploratory analysis, highlights the desire for success, improving lifestyle, independence, business opportunity and prestige (factor1) as Getz and Petersen (2005). As Chen and Elston (2013), Jaafar et al. (2011), Getz and Carlsen (2000), Neves (2008), and Pato (2016) the family heritage is an important motivation to start the business and keep the family together (factor 2).

Our findings also suggest that there are different groups of entrepreneurs with differentiated socio-demographic profiles and business characteristics. One group (Cluster 1) is mainly composed of many older age couple families who saw in tourism as an appealing activity to become entrepreneurs but invest for family reasons and preserve heritage. Those businesses are predominantly small-scale family businesses. On the contrary, another group of entrepreneurs (Cluster 2) seems more motivated by profit-making goals, dedicating more time to a business that has a larger scale than the other groups. The third group (Cluster 3) that combines some of the motivations mentioned before. Most of the previous studies on rural tourism entrepreneurship do not develop a cluster analysis based on motivations. The segments defined in this research are closer to the study of Getz and Peterson (2005) than Chen and Elston (2013).

The owners/managers encounter some barriers to start the venture as bureaucracy, lack of financial support and lack of information. However, these difficulties are felt differently according to some characteristics of the entrepreneurs. The opinions about the lack of available financial support and the complexity of the administrative procedures are different according to age groups and the lack of information between gender and the way they were involved in the business. Compared to the overall results for Portugal, rural tourism entrepreneurs in the North of Portugal found more difficulties due to the complexity of administrative procedures (European Commission, 2012).

The sample survey results reveal some interesting issues about the relationships between the perception of barriers to entrepreneurship and the socio-demographic profile of entrepreneurs. First, gender is one of the factors that influence the perceptions of the problems in obtaining information on how to start a business. Men are more informed than women, which can be explained by the fact that, in this sample, although the percentage of men with superior education is slightly inferior to women, they have mainly a degree in areas of management and administration, finances and accounting, and hospitality and tourism and much more work experience in these areas than women. Second, the perceived lack of available financial support from the government to small businesses and the burdensome administrative procedures are mainly felt amongst the elderly and the youngest entrepreneurs. It is not strange that the youngest were those who have made use of recommendations from family and friends to start the business. It is also interesting to observe that entrepreneurs who invested through their own savings, loans from family or friends, and bank loans agree more that a second chance should be given. Respondents seem to have a positive image toward entrepreneurship and are risk-taking (Dinis et al., 2019) since they accept failure. Failure is part of the process of entrepreneurship and if entrepreneurs have the feeling they will never experience failure, they will not be innovative enough (Global Entrepreneurship Research Association, 2017).

6 CONCLUSIONS

This paper contributes to an understanding of rural tourism entrepreneurship in the Northern region of Portugal, the main motivations for entrepreneurial activity in rural tourism and the barriers faced by entrepreneurs. The analysis of motivations to undertake rural tourism activities suggest heterogeneity of factors that influence the entrepreneurial decision. Although motivations related to lifestyle and family they entered in the business to exploit the opportunity they found in the market, to be independent and to succeed in this new venture. Valuing family heritage was also an important motivational factor and, in fact, one of the valences of rural tourism is the recovery of properties (palatial, manor

and rustic houses), some of them with centuries of existence. The understanding of business goals and the characteristics of entrepreneurs according to their motivations is crucial to appeal and sustain investments in rural tourism.

The main limitation of the study is the dimension of the sample and so further evidence is required before reaching conclusions. It would be important to survey other rural entrepreneurs and subsequent studies should be done in other Portuguese regions. The characterization of entrepreneurs in the cluster analysis was based on the variables available in the survey and other factors may be relevant to differentiate entrepreneurs such as if they lived there or were attracted to the region, if rural tourism is the main source of income, and indicators of success.

Rural tourism presents several challenges. Promoting rural tourism entrepreneurial activities requires eliminating barriers as the level of bureaucracy, lack of financial support and of information felt by these entrepreneurs.

To promote entrepreneurship, policies should focus not only on boosting start-ups rates but also on their quality, evaluated in particular with regard to innovation and contribution to local development. These policies should also focus on entrepreneurial education in order to develop competences in identify opportunities and to plan and manage innovative processes. And in reducing the burden of administrative processes.

Tourism activity is crucial for the promotion of sustained and integrated local development of rural regions, which involves the articulation between different entrepreneurs and between them and local agents. The development of rural tourism should be considered in the broader context of the tourism system to make “Portugal the most agile and dynamic tourist destination within Europe” as defined by the Portuguese government. Rural tourism as diversification of the local economy can help preventing migration to urban areas or even attract new residents. However, there must be some caution in evaluating the impact of rural tourism in solving the structural problems in rural areas. In Northern of Portugal, the results of the survey don’t sign the impact on local development, through job creation, as pointed out in the literature. Nevertheless, this impact should also be analysed through the evaluation of patrimonial rehabilitation and economic diversification which should be considered in future investigations. In what concerns attracting new residents, this study has limited information on this matter, which attention should be given in future research, mainly in policies that should be implemented to attract younger entrepreneurs.

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