RESEARCH NOTE

DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF THE TOURISM E-MICROENTREPRENEURIAL SELF-EFFICACY SCALE

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With the emergence of tourism sharing economy platforms like People-First Tourism, Vayable, Airbnb, and Uber, there are now a much greater number of microentrepreneurs engaged in selling products and services directly to tourists. The limited existing literature examining these individuals suggests that they are often inspired by noneconomic motives such as freedom, passion, or lifestyle, rather than the desire to rapidly grow a venture and maximize revenue. Accordingly, given that tourism microentrepreneurs have different goals and business models relative to typical entrepreneurs, this study adapted extant entrepreneurial self-efficacy measures to the context of tourism e-microentrepreneurship to develop the tourism e-microentrepreneurial self-efficacy (TeMSE) scale. Our new 13-item scale provides insights into a unique and burgeoning group of tourism actors, namely measuring their beliefs in their ability to successfully perform the various roles and tasks of microentrepreneurship in the tourism sharing economy.

Key words: Tourism; Entrepreneurship; Microentrepreneurship; e-Microentrepreneurship; Self-efficacy

Introduction

Tourism is a major economic force in both developed and developing nations (Garcia-Ramon, Canoves, & Valdovinos, 1995; Gmelch, 2012; Ha & Grunwell, 2011; Hall, Harrison, Weaver, & Wall, 2013; Murphy, 2013; Turner & Ash, 1975). Tourism generates employment, public tax, and foreign exchange (United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2015), and not surprisingly,
Tourism Microentrepreneurship and Self-Efficacy

Carland and Carland (1997) distinguished between macroentrepreneurship, or the creation of businesses that stimulate new industries and often grow into dominant giants; microentrepreneurship, or the creation of “businesses which never grow, which become fixed as landmarks in our towns, cities, and communities” (p. 36); and entrepreneurship, which lies somewhere between the two poles of the entrepreneurship continuum. We know a great deal about macroentrepreneurship as well as entrepreneurship. Although tourism microentrepreneurship is very prevalent worldwide—with notable examples including community-based ecotourism (Garrod, 2003), community-based natural resource management (Dressler et al., 2010), and propoor tourism (Ashley, Roe, & Goodwin, 2001)—little is known about its main characters: the microentrepreneurs themselves.

Tourism Microentrepreneurship

Ateljevic and Doorne (2000) contended that tourism microentrepreneurs are people driven by noneconomic motives, who prefer “staying within the fence” (p. 378) rather than pursuing unbridled growth. Similarly, Peters and Schuckert (2014) found that they tend to prioritize quality of life in lieu of enterprise growth. These individuals may simply intend to strive for some extra income to enhance, and sometimes secure, their livelihoods— they typically avoid suffocating market environments in order to preserve their quality of life and, accordingly, rely mostly on niche markets (Morais, Wallace, Rodrigues, España, & Wang, 2014). Usually they are not affiliated with formal professional networks nor are their services available through the traditional distribution systems (KC, Morais, Peterson, Seekamp, & Smith, 2017). In some contexts, there is evidence that livelihood diversification afforded by tourism microentrepreneurship can help rural farmers be less dependent on farming and less susceptible to environmental and economic crises (Peroff, 2015). Furthermore, alternative livelihood opportunities enabled by cooperative tourism microentrepreneurship may contribute to increased levels of self-determination among women (LaPan,
Morais, Wallace, & Barbieri, 2016). Microenterprises typically employ five or fewer employees and tend to operate in underregulated business environments that allow low entry barriers (Ferreira, Morais, & Lorscheider, 2015).

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy, defined as one’s belief in one’s ability to succeed in a target behavior, is a dominant theoretical paradigm used to explain people’s motivation, effort, and perseverance in a task (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy theory holds that if people perceive themselves to be capable of accomplishing certain activities, they are more likely to undertake them in the future (Alkire, 2005). Moreover, self-efficacy will also influence an individual’s level of motivation, as reflected in how much effort one will exert in a task, and how long one will persevere in the face of obstacles (Bandura, 1980). Concerning entrepreneurship, Boyd and Vozikis (1994) paved the way for the development and validation of self-efficacy in the entrepreneurial setting (Moberg, 2013). Findings indicate that ESE is a multidimensional construct (De Noble et al., 1999; McGee et al., 2009). ESE has been defined as one’s belief in one’s ability to perform entrepreneurial related tasks (Chen, Greene, & Crick, 1998; De Noble, Jung, & Ehrlich, 1999; McGee, Peterson, Mueller, & Sequeira, 2009; Moberg, 2013).

Scale Development Methodology

Construct operationalization and development of the TeMSE scale followed the eight-step process proposed by DeVellis (1991). And, consistent with best practices, this scale-development process was grounded in a deep emic understanding of the subject matter (Vogt, King, & King, 2004), reached through the authors’ long-term involvement in action-research projects enabling tourism e-microentrepreneurship in the US and abroad (Morais, Ferreira, Nazariadli, & Ghahramani, 2017).

Item Pool Generation and Pilot Study

A large item pool was generated by including all items contained in four ESE scales: Chen et al. (1998), De Noble et al. (1999), McGee et al. (2009), and Moberg (2013). Redundant items as well as items that did not apply to the specific entrepreneurial context were removed. Then items were reworded, as needed, to fit the particular context—typically items were rewrote using the terms “tourism business” and “tourism experience” in substitution of the more generic terms like “business” and “service.” In addition, Wymer and Regan’s (2005) questionnaire about factors influencing e-commerce adoption and use by small and medium businesses to create items specific to tourism e-microentrepreneurship was used. The final provisional count was 34 items.

A face validity test was conducted face to face with a panel comprised of expert tourism scholars as well as select graduate students in tourism and anthropology who all had international experience in tourism microentrepreneurship. A content validity test was conducted online with a panel that included faculty and graduate students involved in tourism microentrepreneurship research, professors of entrepreneurship at a college of business administration, directors of nonprofits, and select staff at entrepreneurship centers. This process was essential to determining if there were any discrepancies between what the items intended to measure and what they appeared to be measuring according to the feedback from subject-matter experts (Morais & Ogden, 2011). This process further reduced the item pool to 33 items.

This pool of 33 items was then administered in person to a convenience sample of 116 undergraduates and graduate students enrolled in tourism management, business, and entrepreneurship programs, yielding 109 valid completes. These students were familiar, and many had hands-on experience, with entrepreneurship. No issues with the items or interpretations of the items were found in this process.

Participants and Procedures

For the primary sample, a contract with Qualtrics (https://www.qualtrics.com/) was used to recruit participants (N = 300) who were e-microentrepreneurs in the southeast US to complete a short online survey. Multiple qualifying questions were asked of potential respondents including whether they sold...
services at any of multiple websites (e.g., Airbnb; Uber; Vayable; Lyft; VRBO; Feastly; Toursbylocals; RentAFriend; People-First Tourism; Shiroube; Hipcamp; Eatwith; Free Walking Tours by Locals; TripFeverr; With Locals). Individuals who did not sell at these (or similar) websites, and/or who had more than five full-time employees were excluded. Most participants held a Bachelor’s degree or higher (46.3%) or had at least some college or university experience (43.3%). There were slightly more females (56.3% female), and the majority (M = 34.61, SD = 11.03%) were aged between 30 and 39 years old. Caucasian/White was the most prevalent ethnicity represented (65.7%). The largest category of respondents (15.3%) had a household income between $50,000 and $59,999, and the majority (27.3%) secured between 30% and 39% of their livelihood through tourism e-commerce.

**Exploratory and Confirmatory Scale Testing and Development**

The dimensional structure of the scale was examined using three consecutive principal component exploratory factor analyses (PCA). Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization was used to clarify the factor structure obtained from the PCA. Throughout the process, items cross-loading on two or more factors were pruned, as well as those which, after review, showed weak theoretical alignment with the other items within the factors. The final PCA (Table 1) illustrates five distinct factors with total variance explained at 70.79%. Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant and KMO = 0.888 (meritorious), which indicates adequate sampling.

Results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) conducted on the 15-item model revealed problems with indices CMIN/DF = 2.625 and RMSEA = 0.074 not making the cut. To address this issue, it was appropriate to prune items AE2 and EN1 given that both residual covariances in the standardized matrix exceeded the cut point of 2.58 (Byrne, 2016). The final iteration revealed that a five-factor structure (Pursuing innovation, Marshaling resources, Adapting to externalities, Aligning core purpose with self, and e-Marketing) had an acceptable fit with the data (CMIN/DF =

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Third EFA Conducted on the Sample of e-Microentrepreneurs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dimension</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pursuing innovation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI.2</td>
<td>0.824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI.4</td>
<td>0.804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE.2</td>
<td>0.629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marshaling resources</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR.3</td>
<td>0.126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR.5</td>
<td>0.527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR.6</td>
<td>-0.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adapting to externalities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR.8</td>
<td>0.188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE.3</td>
<td>0.344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE.6</td>
<td>0.086</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aligning core purpose with self</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP.7</td>
<td>0.512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS.2</td>
<td>0.423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS.6</td>
<td>0.118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>e-Marketing</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EN.1</td>
<td>0.274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EN.2</td>
<td>0.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EN.3</td>
<td>0.147</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Extraction method: principal component analysis; Rotation method: varimax with Kaiser normalization (rotation converged in 7 iterations).
As expected, agency is a strong and significant predictor of TeMSE. On the other hand, the effect size of self-esteem ($\beta = 0.093$) on TeMSE is almost four times smaller than that of agency ($\beta = 0.346$). In conclusion, through the analysis of regression coefficients of self-esteem and human agency against TeMSE, support for appropriate discriminant and convergent validity was found.

### Discussion

The new TeMSE scale consists of 13 items and five factors (see Table 2). The first factor is *Pursuing innovation*, which refers to a microentrepreneur striving for better ideas or methods, or integrating a...
new approach that addresses ever changing market demands, materialized in competitive advantage by meaningful differentiation from mainstream competition in the tourism sector. The second factor is **Marshaling resources**, and the dimension involves assembling resources of different kinds (e.g., communal labor, partnerships with other businesses, or institutional support from local agencies) to bring the venture into existence. The third factor is **Adapting to externalities**; this dimension encompasses ways in which microentrepreneurs are able to either capitalize on or mitigate nuances in the legal landscape affecting the tourism sector that are out of their control. The fourth dimension is **Aligning core purpose with self**, and it refers to the extent to which the microentrepreneur is able to articulate to stakeholders a core purpose of the business in line with personal idiosyncrasies and in support of a desired lifestyle. The fifth factor is **e-Marketing**, and denotes the competence and savviness of microentrepreneurs in regards to the effective use of social media to market their tourism businesses and engage with visitors and peers.

Hallak et al. (2011) argued that tourism entrepreneurs are different from other types of entrepreneurs, and Bandura (2006) postulated that the predictive power of self-efficacy is stronger the more specific it is; therefore, this study makes a critical contribution to the tourism literature because it reports the development and initial validation of a much-needed measurement scale. For example, Chen, Greene, and Crick (1998) found that ESE significantly differentiates entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs, then TeMSE could be used to measure differences between tourism microentrepreneurs and tourism wage workers; contrasting for example Uber drivers with taxi drivers, or Airbnb hosts with hotel maids. Moreover, research suggests that an individual’s ESE may be elevated through training and education (Zhao, Seibert, & Hills, 2005). Accordingly, TeMSE scale could henceforth be used to compare between novice and seasoned tourism microentrepreneurs.

Although self-efficacy is usually conceptualized as a task-specific belief, experiences of personal mastery may contribute to efficacy expectancies that generalize to actions beyond the target behavior (Sherer et al., 1982). Hence, this conceptual framework could be used to examine whether small successes in (low barriers to entry) tourism microentrepreneurship may elevate underresourced individuals’ intentions to pursue other livelihood opportunities, thus strengthening the position of tourism as driver of endogenous economic development.

**Conclusion**

Tourism microentrepreneurship is a growing Zsubject of inquiry in tourism studies because of the sociocultural and economic significance of
the burgeoning tourism sharing economy (Morais et al., 2012). Tourism microentrepreneurs have different goals as well as business models relative to typical entrepreneurs—accordingly, our work adapted extant entrepreneurial self-efficacy literature to the context of tourism e-microentrepreneurship. This work provides insights into the unique context of tourism entrepreneurship identified by Hallak et al. (2011) and affords future research the means through which self-efficacy in entrepreneurs engaged in growing segments of economies around the globe can be examined rigorously.

References


Moberg, K. S. (2013). An entrepreneurial self-efficacy scale with a neutral wording. In A. Fayolle, P. Kyrö,


