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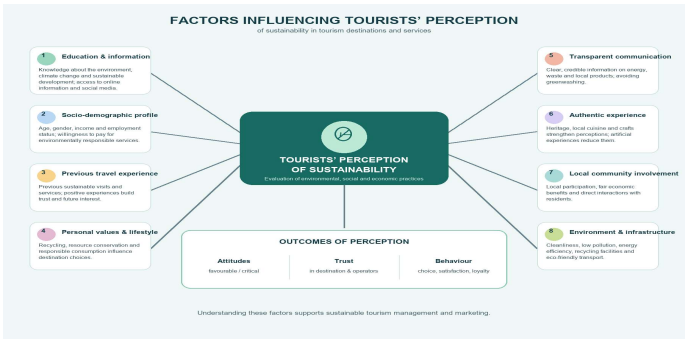
TOURISTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE SUSTAINABILITY OF RURAL TOURISM SERVICES

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Abstract: *In this study, we aimed to analyze tourists' perceptions of sustainability in rural tourism, highlighting the importance of environmental protection, the preservation of local traditions and the involvement of communities in the development of tourism services. Among the aspects of sustainability appreciated by tourists, the preservation of local traditions and culture, the use of traditional products and the protection of the natural environment stand out. The quality of rural tourism services is positively assessed by most respondents, rural tourism contributing significantly to the development of local communities. The main areas of improvement identified aim at promoting local products, developing green infrastructure, ecological education and involving local authorities. The importance of integrating sustainability principles in the development of rural tourism is highlighted, by harmonizing environmental protection with the valorization of cultural heritage and supporting the local economy. The study provides relevant information for the substantiation of sustainable development strategies and for increasing the competitiveness of rural tourist destinations.*

Introduction

The concept of sustainable development applied to rural tourism involves achieving a balance between economic, social and ecological objectives. From an economic perspective, rural tourism generates additional income for the local population, contributes to job creation and stimulates the development of entrepreneurship. Numerous households and small businesses supplement their income by providing tourism services, which reduces dependence on agricultural activities and contributes to the economic stability of rural areas.



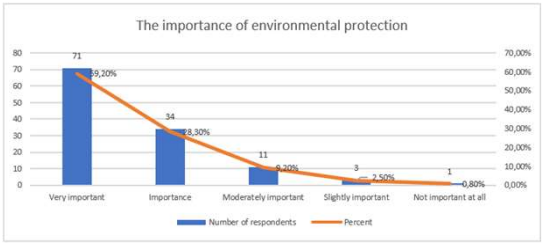
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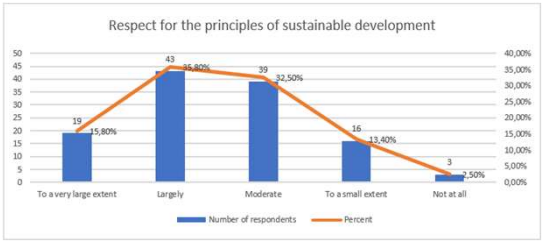
Tourists' perception of sustainability

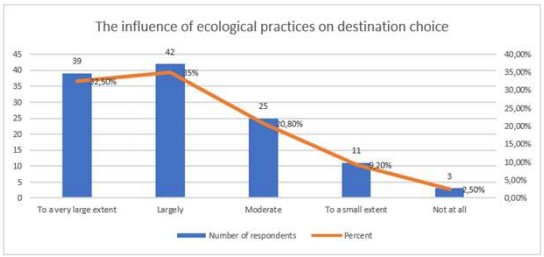
Material and method

The research aimed to analyze tourists' perceptions of sustainability in rural tourism, with a focus on environmental protection, service quality, local community involvement and tourists' willingness to financially support sustainable tourism services.
The questionnaire, consisting of 18 closed questions with pre-determined answer options, multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions, was used as a data collection tool. The questionnaire was structured in four sections: general data of the respondents; perception of sustainability in rural tourism; quality of services and local community involvement; opinions and recommendations regarding the sustainable development of rural tourism.

Results and discussions







Conclusions

The analysis of tourists' perception of sustainability in rural tourism services highlights the fact that the principles of sustainable development occupy an important place in the process of choosing and evaluating rural destinations. The research results show that the majority of respondents consider environmental protection an essential element of tourism activities, demonstrating a high level of awareness regarding the need to conserve natural and cultural resources.