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# <a>TOURISM ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

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**<b>Abstract**

In recent decades, tourism has become an important sector with increasing socioeconomic, ecological, and geopolitical gains for countries' development and international businesses. However, there are limited studies on entrepreneurial behaviour within the tourism sector. This chapter explores tourism entrepreneurship leadership theoretical concepts and practices to explain the complex and interdisciplinary nature of tourism. Although most of the concepts related to tourism entrepreneurship are not new, this chapter provides a new approach to explaining the current and future generational (including cultural, economic, political, and technological) patterns of tourism development and innovation. Mainly, it expands the topic of tourism entrepreneurship by providing a critical analysis of current tourism entrepreneurship leadership, related theories, employee and customer profiles, and trends to generate a conceptual tourism entrepreneurship framework.

**Keywords: Tourism entrepreneurship; Leadership; Generational patterns; Sustainable development goals; Economic, Social and Environmental Sustainability; Leadership success**

## <b>Introduction

Tourism entrepreneurship is a recent phenomenon and becoming a burgeoning field in academic literature. It differs from the traditional forms of entrepreneurship and other

industrial sectors in terms of identification of entrepreneurship opportunities and the process of their conversion into consumable tourism products (Ateljevic & Page, 2009). While tourism entrepreneurship includes all sorts of activities involved in the creation and operation of a legal tourism enterprise, the activities are designed for the effective and profitable interaction of demand and supply of tourism products while assuring competitive professionalism and gainful socioeconomic status.

Current research illustrates how isolated and limited perceptions of leadership theories and styles negatively impact tourism entrepreneurship (Dias et. al, 2022; Palazzeschi et al 2018; Ratten, 2019; Stephan & Pathak, 2016; Walsh & Martin, 2021; Soomro and Shah, 2022). At the same time, the limited literature shows that there is little entrepreneurial behaviour within the tourism sector (Cem et al., 2019), even though the reality is otherwise (Ateljevic & Page, 2009). While leadership theories are important for tourism, reflecting upon their feasibility with regards to the elements, principles and impact on entrepreneurship success remains paramount. Many businesses remain old and obsolete and less viable because they stick to strategic leadership theories, such as being profit-orientated with perhaps not enough human connections as demanded by current entrepreneurship and customer trends. The need to be versatile and address current issues like sustainability, and risks and crises such as the current Covid impact, is no longer optional but essential (Ramkissoon, 2020). Currently, tourism entrepreneurship is still struggling to address issues from an integrated problem-solving perspective (Ramkissoon & Mavondo, 2023b). Many business enterprises are currently failing to deliver high quality customer service experiences, customer satisfaction and loyalty. This is based on their inability to implement strategic objectives and create expected operational standards because they are facing a wide range of problems. These leadership and managerial issues are linked to political, health and safety, economic, technological, and multicultural problems. Numerous enterprises are consequently experiencing abominable employee turnover and failing to attract the right talent and retain current employees. Consequently, several tourism entrepreneurs fail within the first few years of business inception. These issues demand a review and integrated application of leadership theories. The need for versatile and digital contextualization of entrepreneurship, for instance, is a key success factor. Leadership should reflect upon what decisions work in their circumstances. It is important to note that context matters (Ramkissoon, 2022a) and what works in one country might not necessarily work in another.

This chapter makes a critical analysis of the current tourism entrepreneurship leadership discourse, related theories, employee and customer profiles, and trends. This chapter addresses issues from exceptional entrepreneurship and leadership experiences, engagement with a wide range current research projects, and articulation of ideas based on academic and business expertise. Specifically, the current chapter explores the necessary leadership concepts and evaluates leadership theories to generate a conceptual tourism entrepreneurship framework.

**<b>Tourism Entrepreneurship Leadership Concepts, Patterns, and Practices**

The tourism entrepreneurship leadership concept is a broad and distinct field. Hence, it is important to synthesize the different concepts and patterns of the individual terms. Tourism concentrates on delivering products and services for people who travel for leisure, events, destinations, and unique cultural experiences (Ramkissoon, 2022c). Tourism experiences build on food production and consumption (Samkange et al., 2021), spa health and well-being (Karagoz & Ramkissoon, 2023; Majeed & Ramkissoon, 2020), and other hospitality experiences, including accommodation and retail outlets. It has become an important activity in every nation because of its impact on cultural, educational, social, and economic sectors as well as international relations. Delivering appropriate customer service experiences and products in tourism is complex. It requires packaging and coordinating an entire range of activities to ensure the customer journeys are mapped to meet their expectations. This implies that the tourism and hospitality sector is highly dependent on entrepreneurship and cannot survive in the long run if it is not sustainable and entrepreneurial (Crnogaj et al., 2014). This demands access to more resources, especially human resources, to keep up with the demands and strive for excellence.

Entrepreneurship is about developing a personalized business based on appropriate design, startup, and upscaling productivity to ensure strategic and operational stability. Personalized business focuses on individual entrepreneurship needs and interests while addressing issues from a contextual perspective. This implies that prescribing ideas without addressing the grassroots level of community, social, and personal human development, is likely to yield limited success. Thus, it involves purposeful and systematic innovation to explore opportunities (Ateljevic & Page, 2009) which play a crucial role in the analysis and solution of micro and macro problems (Baumol, 1986; Cem et al., 2019). Several studies (e.g., Ateljevic & Page, 2009; Cem et al., 2019) have shown that there are different approaches and directions in the functions of entrepreneurship. More notably, the seminal work of

Schumpeter in the 20th century highlighted that entrepreneurship requires innovation because entrepreneurs are responsible for new ways of doing things (Cem et al., 2019).

Previous studies have identified the various characteristics of entrepreneurs broadly associated with leadership, motivation, risk-taking, problem-solving, and achieving success (Cem et al., 2019; Chen & Elston, 2013; Parker, 2004). Since the spread of globalization in different fields, the relevance and revival of entrepreneurship has attracted significant attention. Like all other sectors, entrepreneurship has increasing importance in the tourism sector (Cem et al., 2019), since the latter's survival is highly dependent on entrepreneurship activities and sustainability (see Crnogaj et al., 2014 as cited by Cem et al., 2019; Skountridaki, 2015). Considering the competition in the tourism industry, effective entrepreneurship leaders can play significant roles to boost economies. Entrepreneurship leaders must ensure marketed service standards are delivered without yielding negative service quality gaps. Customer, employee, and stakeholder leadership perspectives play a critical role in ensuring the delivery of service quality experiences. The conceptual development of strategic plans, goals, and standard criteria hence need to be executed based on tourism entrepreneurship leadership. Leaders need to collaborate with employees to unpack strategic goals and implement those towards prominent levels of productivity. A thorough understanding of tourism entrepreneurship and its leadership is essential (Ramkissoon, 2021). This brings in opportunities for jobs while boosting levels of operational productivity and economic business growth (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2016).

Leadership coordinates with management; however, key differences exist. Leadership provides a clear business direction and vision while being inspirational for all the stakeholders, including employees and customers. Management controls people and related business performance. The concept of leadership involves the development of a business vision, mission statement, values, goals, and standards. Tourism entrepreneurship leaders are responsible for developing a versatile and robust business scope. Tourism leadership can include developing perceptions regarding strategic business plans, market penetration, resources, timelines, targets, human elements, products and service design, assessment, and evaluation criteria. Leadership encompasses guidance and direction for the effective execution of entrepreneurship projects. It therefore needs a coordinated approach with stakeholders (Nekmahmud et al., 2022a; 2022b), including the supply chain and logistical systems, employees and customers, using appropriate techniques and values and attitudes at

the right time. A wide range of researchers agrees this is fundamental for a business to flourish (Dias, et al 2022; Stephan & Pathak 2016; Soomro &Shah, 2022).

The key role of leadership in this respect includes growing the potential of intrinsic motivation while generating opportunities and providing extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic tourism entrepreneurship motivation constitutes an inner, personalized prominent level of interest and ingenuity to pursue an elevated level of employee outputs psychologically and physically. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, reflects tangible, exciting levels of morale and happiness designed to trigger excellent customer experiences, leading to prominent levels of productivity. Leaders generate motivational stances. They need to create the right tourism business mindset, guidance, support, and development for their employees as part of entrepreneurship leadership. Effective leadership impacts employees from a humanistic perspective. A positive humanistic approach toward employees encourages them to develop the right mindset while perceiving themselves as owners of the business enterprise. Finding ways and means to facilitate and maintain employee and customer physical and mental health well-being is therefore critical (Ramkissoon, 2021a; 2021b). Demonstrated during and beyond the Covid-19 pandemic era, health consciousness remains a critical leadership issue. Currently, several tourism entrepreneurs are struggling to attract and retain staff because they cannot safeguard health and well-being for their employees. Leadership intention empowers employees towards confidence handling of customer experiences in tourism.

Tourism entrepreneurship as a concept refers to the type of business that offers tourist products and services. It takes many forms including, but not limited to, travel agents, tour operators, accommodation/lodging and catering service providers, attractions, entertainment, information and guiding, and transport operators. In recent years, tremendous opportunities have been offered by the tourism industry for young entrepreneurs. However, there are several challenges, such as the lack of proper infrastructure, conservation of cultural and religious sites, security, publicity, tourism centres, and political unrest in many developing countries. These challenges further demand leadership in tourism entrepreneurship (Hristov & Ramkissoon, 2016). Inadequate methodological tools have also hindered the role of entrepreneurship as a critical factor in tourism development (see Sherar et al. 2007).

**<b>Current Tourism Entrepreneurship Leadership Trends**

Tourism entrepreneurship leadership can determine the success of the business. Therefore, a sustainable tourism sector requires a more holistic framework as a concept, with sustainable

entrepreneurship at its core (Crnogaj et al., 2014). Tourism demands attention to detail regarding not only the business itself but the nature of the customers, their needs, and interests. It is a customer-oriented service experience which requires market research to create an understanding of the customer's needs and interests. Research is also important to establish and analyse the environmental context under which service experiences are designed and delivered. Tourism entrepreneurship success depends on creating a valuable understanding of customer expectations and designing the right kind of products and services to meet those expectations. Executing the business designs and related customer journeys demand appropriate service qualities which will ensure that enterprises deliver more than customer expectations to remain vibrant and sustainable (Baird et al., 2022). Customer satisfaction and customer relationship management, therefore, play critical roles in ensuring higher levels of customer loyalty (see Figure 1).

**Insert Figure 1 here**

Managing these key aspects of entrepreneurship imply the possession of appropriate leaderships skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes. Even more critical is the ability to practically apply these personalized leadership orientation attributes to deliver targeted tourism products and experiences. Developing a strong customer relationship management system has become digital-orientated with personalized communication attributes. Tourism entrepreneurship leadership should therefore acquaint itself with current and future customer and business profiles. This justifies the inclusion of effective loyalty programmes, as part of enterprise business deliverables (Ramkissoon & Mavondo, 2016).

Customer loyalty acknowledges the customers' levels of satisfaction and engaging with them to ensure they will come back to experience even greater journeys and make the entrepreneurship reputation extremely high. This is what distinguishes successful tourism enterprises from other businesses in this industry. Addressing these issues and maintaining prominent levels of customer relations, satisfaction, and loyalty demands specialized leadership (see Figure 1).

Strategically, tourism entrepreneurship is conceptualized as a viable economic growth effort. Consensus prevails regarding the significance of tourism entrepreneurship in many countries. Establishing tourism entrepreneurship, and then strategically upscaling, stabilizing, and growing the business based on competitive advantage demands strong leadership. The entrepreneurship leadership is not only responsible for demonstrating proactive strategic

management perspectives, but guiding and directing the implementation and strategic decisions towards effective and efficient operational processes and procedures. The implementation guidance will ensure delivery of prominent levels of tourism customer experiences. It will also guarantee excellent customer satisfaction and loyalty. Customer satisfaction and loyalty are essential for the success of tourism.

There's ongoing debate on whether entrepreneurship leadership is determined by personalities or behaviours. Developing appropriate leadership requires understanding the context, individual traits, behaviours, and employee perceptions under the leadership influence. An analysis of customer, employee and business development profiles, trends and how these are linked to leadership theories, can determine and facilitate tourism entrepreneurship development success.

**<b>Analysis and Evaluation of Tourism Entrepreneurship Leadership Theories, Employee and Consumer Profiles, and Related Leadership Trends**

Consumer profiles are evolving based on a wide range of factors which include customer generations, community development needs and interests, knowledge explosion, and technology, especially the digital evolution and globalization. Consumer behaviour is transforming, based on demographic details that alter the needs and interests of customers. The current generation concentrates on digital technological development with an emphasis on virtual tourism experiences (Hassan & Ramkissoon, 2019). The older generation still demands personalized face-to-face experiences while other consumers are interested in blended products and service delivery experiences (Ramkissoon, 2018). Although the current generation is beginning to grow in numbers as tourists, most are still older. Generation Y are more financially stable compared to the Generation Z, for instance.

Evolving customer profiles have resulted in the transformation of tourism entrepreneurship facilities and service delivery strategies and operations among vibrant businesses. Remaining competitive in tourism entrepreneurship demands an awareness of current and future changes in the market. Entrepreneurship leaders, especially business owners, will need to engage with current research, workshops, conferences, and social media to encourage understanding of such profiles (Shoukat et al., 2022). External and internal business development analysis may determine the current and future innovative transformation of tourism and hospitality (Dewnarain et al., in press; Shoukat et al., in press). Recent developments in tourism and hospitality organisations have also witnessed changes in staffing situations. Many tourism

enterprises have seen an increase in employee turnover, for instance. An analysis of the causative factors reflects upon salaries, abuse, motivation, limited training and development, poor and user-unfriendly working hours, and seasonal challenges (Ramkissoon & Mavondo, 2023b). These problematic issues continue to impact the tourism and hospitality industry. Consequently, more effective ways of managing such problems continue to grow as the industry moves forward.

The other current trend is using globalized experiences to deliver to a wide range of customers from all over the world. Creating current global cultural- and digital-orientated service experiences continues to be a tedious task for many tourism entrepreneurs. Designating transformative facilities and related services continue to demand elevated levels of creativity and innovation. Creative transformation is currently on high demand, leading to innovative ways of addressing the necessary changes strategically and operationally. The delivery of virtual service experiences, and online products and services, including the use of big data, artificial intelligence, and a wide range of software applications, for example, is now the current trend. Future trends can make technologies obsolete and limit or prevent their efficiency and effectiveness. Staying in touch with current and future developments while addressing facility, product, and service changes remains key for tourism entrepreneurship leaders (Ramkissoon & Mavondo, 2023b).

Current trends reflect the need to engage with all the stakeholders and ensure that they are not operating in a silo. Stakeholder collaboration, including with customers, is necessary to ensure tourism and hospitality enterprises remain sustainable (Ramkissoon, 2023). Addressing political problems, such as the war in Ukraine and its fiscal impact on the rise of products and service costs, is a trend example affecting the tourism industry. Economically, the cost-of-living crisis growing day-by-day in Europe, Australia, and other parts of the world will impact the tourism industry negatively. Although some people are currently eager to travel for tourism, the cost-of-living trends may see a reduction in global travelling. Leadership perceptions regarding all these current trends and future developments have the scope to determine the extent to which businesses can remain financially solid (Hrstov & Ramkissoon, 2018). Many tourism and hospitality businesses have been grossly challenged by Covid-19 and have become dysfunctional (Ramkissoon, 2023a; 2023b; 2023c). The impact of all this on tourism is huge and, hence, stronger leadership is required to strategize ways of addressing these trending issues.

A major trend impacting the tourism industry now is associated with employee development. Based on their experiences during the Covid-19 crisis, employees are much more reflective regarding their relationships with entrepreneurship leadership. Several tourism entrepreneurs have faced issues for not addressing employee concerns. However, employees have become much more knowledgeable and very conscious of the leadership-related problems which affected them during Covid-19. Many employees lost their jobs without any support when many businesses became dysfunctional (Ramkissoon, 2021b). Employees realized that their employers were not incredibly supportive and, hence, they looked for alternative businesses who offered more humane employee treatment. These current staffing issues are impacting tourism enterprises. The staffing shortages have seen many enterprises close down. Potential tourism entrepreneurship employees are demanding user-friendly working environments, respect, and effective interaction with leaders. Empowering employees to address not only the business issues currently affecting the business but their health and well-being can no longer be ignored (Ramkissoon, 2022a; 2022c). Future employee trends will focus on emancipation, increased diversity and inclusivity, equity, and general respect of cultural values and traditions.

Employee trends indicate a wide range of job opportunities with higher levels of income within the tourism industry. Many tourism employees are now professionally qualified and have attractive work experiences. Furthermore, many countries are now developing rules and regulations that focus on the employment legal rights and treatment. Social media virtual discussion regarding gender development and equality in salary payments, rises, and promotions, for instance, is increasing. Rules and regulations now exist to determine how employee recruitment selection, hiring, and firing processes should be positively executed. The future trends for tourism entrepreneurship employment and treatment of employees are becoming increasingly legalised. Minimum wages are now under legal adjustment to address the rising cost of living. Attracting talented employees and retaining current employees need to be further discussed to enhance the employee position in tourism. Motivational issues to attract and retain employees, including pursuing their career development growth as an entrepreneurship competitive strategy, remains a huge challenge for tourism enterprise owners and related business leadership personnel.

The current customer, employee, and business development trends are a major concern for tourism entrepreneurship leaders. The need to create the right strategic and operational mode has never been so crucial. Success in business entrepreneurship is based not only on

designing the right project but creating the right business environment which reflects the right leadership orientation. Many researchers have developed numerous leadership theories and styles to enhance business success. Addressing leadership theories, therefore, demands a very analytical approach. Many studies now perceive these leadership theoretical models from a thematic experience. They have categorized the theories and summarized the basic principles.

**<b>Leadership Theories and Styles**

An analysis and evaluation of leadership theories and styles must consider personality traits and behaviours. These include democratic, laissez faire, authoritarian charismatic, transformative, transactional, and situational leadership theories. However, recent research has also addressed theories based on current environmental, technological, cultural, community, and innovative development and transformation. According to current theoretical narratives, generational gaps, stakeholder collaboration, and engagement with customers has taken on an extraordinarily strong stance. Based on a globalized viewpoint of sustainability which reflects 17 sustainable development goals, research on leadership is now addressing diversity inclusivity and equity. Community, human development, and reduction of global carbon emission is under critical assessment. Robust tourism entrepreneurship leadership concepts will need to be developed through effective application of identified theories.

According to recent leadership research proponents (Bemira and Agboola; 2020; Dias et al., 2022; Khan, Nawaz, Khan, 2016; Vasilescu, 2019; Zaccaro; 2004; Zalan 2019;) leadership theories can be summarized into categories. However, authors have developed different categories. An analysis of the categories relevant for tourism entrepreneurship is summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Summary of Leadership Theoretical Categories for Tourism Entrepreneurship*

| **Theoretical group** | | **Years of theory Development** | **Summary of Theory** | **Key Tourism Entrepreneurship Analytical Issues** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Great man theory of leadership | 1840s | Famous initial leaders whose extraordinary qualities and characteristics | Leaders are born with exceptional characters, skills, values, and knowledge. Examples include Julius Caesar, Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, and Abraham Lincoln. They |

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| | | | focused on biological inheritance | possess natural talents. Controversially, not all leaders are born as leaders because some people have the potential and can develop grand leadership performance. |
| 2 | Trait theory of leadership | 1900–1940s | Personalized distinctive attributes and characteristics of effective leadership are reflected in unique personalities | The general perception is that leaders can either be born as leaders or trained and developed. What is critical is the development of leaders based on mental, cognitive, physiological, and social unique traits. The challenge is that not all leaders can have all the traits suggested. |
| 3 | Behavioural theory of leadership | 1950s–1960s | Range of behaviours acceptable to influence and determine followers' actions | The theory focuses on traits and the fact that leaders are not born but developed and then shaped into specific behaviours necessary for leaders. While this is effective, the exhorted cultural and traditional personalities play significant roles in facilitating the development of personal skills leading to unique behaviours. |
| 4 | Situational leadership and contingency theory of leadership | 1970s–1980s | Personalized but environmentally-focused perceptions incorporate different circumstances and appropriate leadership behaviour. Focus is on relationship between effectiveness and impact on followers | The contingency leadership theory focuses on circumstances and environmental issues. While this is effective and realistic, understanding different circumstances is based on individual abilities and perceptions, including personal traits and behaviours. |
| 5 | Transactional theory of leadership | | Business orientated behaviours are based on rewards as a way of inducing higher performance levels | This theory is based on organizational goals and standards. It encourages manipulation of issues, including extrinsic motivation through rewards and incentives. This theory has generated several concerns with beliefs on intrinsic and humanised motivation which develops and empowers individuals. |
| | Motivational and transformational | 1990s–2000s | Drastic changes are generated to develop higher levels of | This theory focuses on creative and innovative perceptions of issues, including rapid changes such as disruptive technologies |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | values, morals, and behaviours | and globalization. The focus is on the complexity of issues, demanding more than just innovation and creativity but individual traits and behaviours in different situations. This concept addresses a wider range of beliefs in leadership. |
| 6 | Current Leadership Development Theories | 2000 | Focus is on technological collaborative, connectivity, sustainability, and current leadership challenges | This theory is based on contemporary complexities which should create viable problem solutions. While this makes a lot of sense given the evolving profiles of organizations, employees, customers and stakeholders, the need to understand issues from an environmental perspective is critical. Conceptualization of complexity is therefore based on individual skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes. |

Sources: Bemira and Agboola; 2020; Dias et al., 2022; Khan, Nawaz, Khan, 2016; Vasilescu, 2019; Zaccaro; 2004; Zalan 2019

Leadership theories are generalized and yet all of them are significant in tourism entrepreneurship leadership. Entrepreneurship leadership traits predict leadership styles and behaviours. The traits include extraversion, supervision, openness, agreeability, and consciousness. Supervisory leadership is linked to the startup phase during which a lot of engagement with employees is necessary to establish the key aspects of the business. Extraversion as a trait focuses on unique talents and vision linked to the entrepreneurship development and expansion phase. Openness is a leadership trait that encourages looking at and perceiving things with an open mind. Enterprises as open systems engage with other businesses and related external and internal factors to ensure adjustment of strategic and operational plans and processes when the need arises. Agreeableness is a leadership trait which reflects the flexibility and the ability to change business processes and procedures, for instance. Conscientiousness is a major trait that demands addressing things from a human perspective. Recognizing needs of employees demonstrates consciousness of human health and well-being, for instance, which is critical for tourism entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs are also self-sufficient, innovative, have an internal locus of control, are optimism, and have risk-

taking tendencies and abilities. These traits are important in ensuring the delivery of tourism entrepreneurship.

Behaviour theories insist on appropriate ways of seeing and doing things to facilitate business development. Different behaviours exist; for instance, some leaders can be authoritarian, which implies that people will need to follow their ideas and they do not need to consult others before decisions are made. A democratic leadership style involves effective consultation and engagement with others before decisions are made. This style looks at people as part of tourism entrepreneurship business growth and development. Other behaviours could reflect freedom in perceiving issues and making decisions freely without creating serious issues. Such behaviours, though not always deemed appropriate and serious, are also critical for tourism entrepreneurship. Situations are always different, based on the nature of the tourist. When leaders are free to incorporate ideas, the business may grow since some customers enjoy that kind of freedom.

While personalized traits and behaviour theories are important because entrepreneurship is personalized, the need to look at the context in which the business is operational is also critical. The debate on theories also addresses the need to acknowledge the inherited personalities. Simultaneously, addressing the potential skills, knowledge values, and attitudes could be achieved through appropriate training and development. It can be argued that entrepreneurship is situational and, hence, contingency and situational aspects need to be considered. Many entrepreneurs have failed because they have not taken the time to understand the external and internal environmental issues impacting their business. There is consensus regarding the failure of many enterprises based on limited risk assessment and analysis of the circumstances. Businesses therefore tend to collapse within the first few years after starting up. This is typical of tourism entrepreneurship.

The other issue that demands urgent attention is to make a positive contribution to people's lives from a community, economic, and environmental perspective (Ramkissoon, 2022b). Using motivational and transformational theories are critical because they generate the necessary impact. Strategically, in many developing countries, tourism entrepreneurship impacts local communities from an economic, social, and cultural perspective to contribute to residents' well-being and quality of life. Entrepreneurship leadership should therefore focus on the complexities that demand creative and innovative solutions, including the use of revolutionary digital technologies. This makes the businesses successful. Transformation

without addressing the strategic and operational goals and their implementation to create successful customer journeys will fail to deliver successful tourism entrepreneurship. This implies that transactional theories are fundamental.

The design of tourism entrepreneurship projects is based on goals and refinement of the scope. This unpacks the goals towards specific objectives, targets, deliverables, and final outcomes. Transactional leadership style is therefore critical for tourism business success. Evolutionally, tourism businesses cannot succeed without addressing the complexity associated with consumer behaviour profiles. In addition, environmental contexts and related trends determine how tourist experiences are delivered.

Interacting with consumers and stakeholders to design appropriate service experiences is necessary in tourism. Practices demand perceptions of community development. Connecting and consulting with employees and stakeholders are also critical. Employees are responsible for transforming strategic goals into reality. Delivering tourism entrepreneurship without effective collaboration, connectivity, and consultation with all the involved people will encourage dysfunctionality. Current challenges, including generational gaps in tourism entrepreneurship, justify the need for collaboration, connectivity, and consultation, for instance. If leaders are ignorant of the differences, it means their perceptions of the consumer profile remain inappropriate. On the other hand, addressing current issues, such as globalization, diversity, inclusivity, equity, and climate change, for instance, is fundamental. Failure to incorporate these theoretical leadership elements will create a big gap between the consumer profile, expectations, and entrepreneurship plans. The business needs to deliver on customer expectations, needs, and interests.

Although not effectively addressed as critical by many researchers, cultural leadership for tourism entrepreneurship is crucial. According to Stephen et al. (2016), cultures endorsing charismatic and self-protective leadership ideals have a higher rate of entrepreneurship. Cultural leadership is therefore more influential because it addresses cultural values, and their impact on entrepreneurship and cultural practices. According to this theory, the need to initiate cultural transformation while at the same time focusing on strategic growth and competitiveness is what tourism entrepreneurs is based on. Cultural values such as uncertainty avoidance and collectivism influence entrepreneurship through charismatic and self-protective leadership styles. Each tourism enterprise operates within a given cultural environment and needs to incorporate that as part of the customer experience. At the same

time, the need to understand other cultures from a global perspective is essential for tourism. Tourism is about people from other cultures coming to experience difference cultures while at the same time promoting its own cultural origin. The ideal situation is that cultural leadership ideals should align with entrepreneurship behaviour. Unfortunately, mechanisms connecting culture and entrepreneurship are rarely understood, since a wide range of cultural mechanisms exist. This explains why tourism entrepreneurship demands cultural understanding and appropriate leadership styles to deliver effective cultural tourism.

Tourism entrepreneurship focuses on all the leadership traits, behaviours, situational, and contextual analyses while addressing transformative, transactional issues and current complexities. How effective are these theories today and in the future, when the tourism is evolving and facing many challenges and opportunities? Leaders need to be contextual, skilled, informed, digital, generationally viable, and sustainability orientated. Businesses also need viability and strategic growth, diversification and inclusivity, and the ability to manage risks and crises from a strategic perspective. According to Benmira and Agboola (2020), the need for evolutionary leadership is essential, but Dias et al. (2022) were more implicit, suggesting that business entrepreneurship needs to address issues from an integrated perceptive. The question emerging is how can that be applied to yield successful tourism entrepreneurship based on affective conceptualization of the customer, business, and environmental context?

**<b>Synthesis and Evaluation of Leadership Theories**

Leadership traits, personalities, behaviours, skills, and knowledge are important in addressing tourism entrepreneurship development opportunities and challenges. The need to understand the context in which the enterprises exist, the stakeholders, and, in particular, the employees, their profiles, needs, and interests are important. Profound in tourism is the delivery of service experience based on empowerment, confidence, abilities, skills, and knowledge. This includes a full understanding of the customer profile, the context, and perception of the services enterprise. While leaders concentrate on economic outcomes to stabilize and grow their businesses, there is a need to create an understanding of risks and crisis management. Success is not consistently focused on financial outcomes only but on ensuring the stakeholders and employees are confident, empowered, and motivated to contribute towards productive performances.

Effectively articulated leadership styles are consistent with the involvement of customer and employee profiles. Some leadership styles, though useful and productive under normal circumstances, fail to deliver essentials during transformation periods (Baum 2007). Current and future challenges reflect the need to perceive the complexity of entrepreneurship in relationship to affective leadership perfections. This implies criticality in the design and in developing appropriate entrepreneurship projects, and strategically making appropriate decisions to guide and direct the establishment, stability, growth, and competitiveness of the tourism enterprise. Unpacking and implementing strategic goals to ensure appropriate objectives, plans, standard criteria targets, key performance indicators, deliverables and final outcomes is a complex issue. Attracting and retaining the right employees and collaborating with all the stakeholders while ensuring excellent customer experiences will yield elevated levels of customer satisfaction. It will also facilitate engagement with consumers and generate the most needed levels of customer loyalty. Professionally, all this demands exceptional leadership conceptualization which encompasses the integration, versatility, and evolutionary perception of leadership theories (see Figure 1).

**<b>Tourism Entrepreneurship Conceptual Framework**

An integrated evolutionary and versatile tourism entrepreneurship theoretical framework is necessary to facilitate an understanding of the complexity associated with the current and future customer, employee, and business trends and profiles (see Figure 1). An analysis and evaluation of all the leadership theories is conceptualized into four key themes based on integration, versatility, and evolution. Themes include the following:

- leadership traits and behaviours, skills, and knowledge
- evolutionary transformation
- sustainability of economies, communities, and environments
- generational gaps, cultural values, and attitudes.

**Insert Figure 2 here**

**<b>Traits and Behaviours, Skills, and Knowledge**

In tourism the need to develop appropriate leadership traits and behaviours are critical because this is what ensures successful start-up and development of entrepreneurship into growth. The necessary skills and knowledge will ensure detailed and viable perceptions of

employee, consumer and stakeholder development trends, profiles, needs, and interests, including competitive engagement with the consumers.

*<c>Business Strategies and Goal Orientation*

The conceptual framework demands the development of appropriate tourism business projects from both a strategic and operational perspective. Ensuring the establishment, then upscaling, stability, development growth, and competitive advantage of the tourism entrepreneurship is paramount. No business enterprise will succeed without understanding and engaging with the right strategic and operational leadership ideas, practices, and relevant theoretical underpinnings.

*<c>Empowerment, Confidence, Empathy, and Consumer Focus*

Leadership traits and behaviours are critical in ensuring the empowerment of employees to deliver excellent customer experiences. Emancipation of employees will generate prominent levels of confidence not only within the internal business environment but from an external viewpoint as well. Understanding the nature of business stakeholders, employees and consumers will ensure important levels of empathy and other soft human development skills which are necessary for tourism entrepreneurship development. Focusing on consumer behaviour perceptions, employees' performance and development tendencies, and stakeholders' needs and interests is crucial. Engaging and evolving with consumers and their behaviour trends is fundamental to tourism business success.

**<b>Evolutionary Transformation**

The need to see the role and impact of tourism entrepreneurship in developed, developing, or underdeveloped countries cannot be overemphasized. Every country has a different context, and entrepreneurship leaders must understand the context in which the business operates. Many businesses have failed due to a poor understanding of the local context. Tourism is also a complex business because it addresses a wide range of products and services for people at local and global levels. The complexity includes creating the right travel arrangements, viable tourism events, accommodation, food production and food consumption experiences, retail product services, destination packages and appropriate cultural experiences. Tourism cannot operate in isolation – it must engage with local communities and businesses, for instance, to address current and future challenges. These are necessary to transform not only the business

enterprise but its impact on the environment, the employees, the customers, and the economic growth.

*<c>Digital and Technological Innovation*

Delivering complexities requires technological solutions in tourism. Managing things manually is no longer viable. Digital tourism entrepreneurship is therefore a necessary development. Forecasting on future developments to strengthen the business processes and procedures remains a critical issue for leaders.

*<c>Tourism Complexity Crisis and Risk Orientation*

The current pandemic situation has illustrated how poor crisis management and lack of risk assessment and management as part of the tourism business has led many enterprises into failure. The Covid-19 pandemic saw many enterprises close down and many are still struggling even now. Future challenges, including political, economic, and socially-orientated crises demand attention. Having a theoretical mindset that can foresee such issues and bring forward solutions to mitigate impacts on tourism enterprises is a critical conceptual mindset which every leader needs.

**<b>Economic, Social and Environmental Sustainability**

Consumer profiles and related contemporary trends in tourism hinge around sustainability. Strategically, sustainability is a development stance that has seen the effective use of the UN sustainable development goals. Entrepreneurship leaders not engaging with sustainability are regarded as outdated and will eventually have a negative impact on their tourism customer experiences. Sustainability emphasizes the relationship between economic, environment, and community development. Tourism entrepreneurship leadership needs to demonstrate a viable conceptualization of sustainability and apply it to deliver their business goals. Tourism organizations are now focusing on sustainability as part of their strategic goals. Using sustainable processes and procedures such as low carbon emission; effective waste management; diversity, equality and inclusivity; are some examples of activities that leading tourism enterprises are pursuing.

*<d>Diversity, Inclusivity, and Equity*

Diversity involves ensuring no discrimination in recruitment and management of employees, accepting all cultural tourists, and providing acceptable experiences for them. This includes

serving the right kind of local and organic food for them which reflects what sustainability entails. Diversity also involves engaging with other organizations, globally and locally, in a way that will encourage multicultural tourism performances. Inclusivity, on the other hand, determines the need to acknowledge health and well-being needs and differences while ensuring that tourism facilities, products, and experiences, including employability, supply chains, and logistical facilities and processes, create great opportunities for all. Seclusion of people from employee recruitment because of their health situation is not useful for tourism because attracting people from all social classes is what makes tourism entrepreneurship more viable than other business enterprises. The process of ensuring equality demands addressing every customer, stakeholder, employee in the same way. On many occasions, the need to create extra efforts and time to manage unique individual experiences for tourists with specific ethics, health, language, and cultural backgrounds is what tourism should focus on.

*<c>Economic Growth and Community Development*

Entrepreneurship as a concept is about business growth and positive impact on the country's economic growth. This is one of the reasons why a lot attention is paid to tourism entrepreneurship in many countries. Economic growth implies improving the quality of life for many people by creating job opportunities and raising income levels. This is associated with community development because the idea is to enhance human development. Empowering communities and people, especially disadvantaged and vulnerable members, remains a key tourism entrepreneurship challenge. Community development creates opportunities to improve both privileged and underprivileged members in terms of product enhancement and life experiences. Tourism involves attracting people to enjoy unique community development destinations, cultural experiences, food production and consumption patterns, and related tourism packages. Environmental issues are part of community and economic development because leadership should be accountable for environmental actions.

**<b>Generational Gaps, Cultural Values, and Attitudes**

Tourism entrepreneurship also needs to dedicate its business experiences to distinguish types of people based upon their demographic details, including their age groups. The differences between age groups have demonstrated the differences in needs and interests, including specific consumer behaviour patterns, and choices of tourism products and experiences. Generational gaps have also indicated differences between employees and management

teams. For leaders to deliver successful experiences for both employees and customers, they will need to understand people's needs and effectively communicate with them. Conceptualized distinction of generational gaps data, including tourism entrepreneurship likes and dislikes, is therefore a major element of leadership.

*<c>Context, Stakeholder and Consumer Profiles, and Employee Needs and Interests*

The need to understand the context in which enterprises operate determines the success or failure of businesses. Engaging with communities and environments to understand what attracts customers and what creates a good reputation for the business remains predominant. Focusing on existing opportunities and emerging challenges will yield optimism. These are critical necessities for every business. Understanding the context is linked to creating relationships with people associated with the business. The need, therefore, to consult, connect, and collaborate with employees, for instance, will ensure delivery of excellent customer experiences.

Conceptualizing all the leadership aspects linked to the theoretical underpinnings associated with the identified themes and related leadership theoretical elements and principles demands an integrated, versatile, and evolutionary mindset. Entrepreneurs should create opportunities to understand, analyse, relate, and apply the traits, behaviours, trends, profiles, tourism patterns, contextual scenarios, and digital perspectives and all the other complexities linked to tourism. The need to look at issues with an open mind, and an integrated, evolutionary, and versatile orientation is what will determine entrepreneurship leadership success.

**<b>Conclusion**

The conceptual framework shown in Figure 2 creates opportunities for tourism business enterprise owners and related entrepreneurship leaders to develop the right perceptions and leadership orientations designed to make their business enterprises grow and compete effectively within the environmental business context. Leadership demands integrating ideas and behaviours, traits, environmental and business development contexts, current development issues, and contemporary profiles and trends impacting business enterprises. Tourism is an incredibly challenging business because the complexity involved demands continuous development and engaging with current research. Delivering exceptional tourism products and experiences is therefore a complex issue demanding a versatile and evolutionary leader with an integrated leadership approach. This chapter generated, analysed, and evaluated tourism entrepreneurship and leadership perceptions. Theoretical underpinnings

and practical execution of the entrepreneurship and business leadership strategic and functional challenges and recommendations were developed. These recommendations were synthesized to develop new knowledge and related conceptual frameworks which were designed to enhance tourism entrepreneurship and leadership practices towards contextualized, viable, innovative, and sustainable enterprises.

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Figure 1

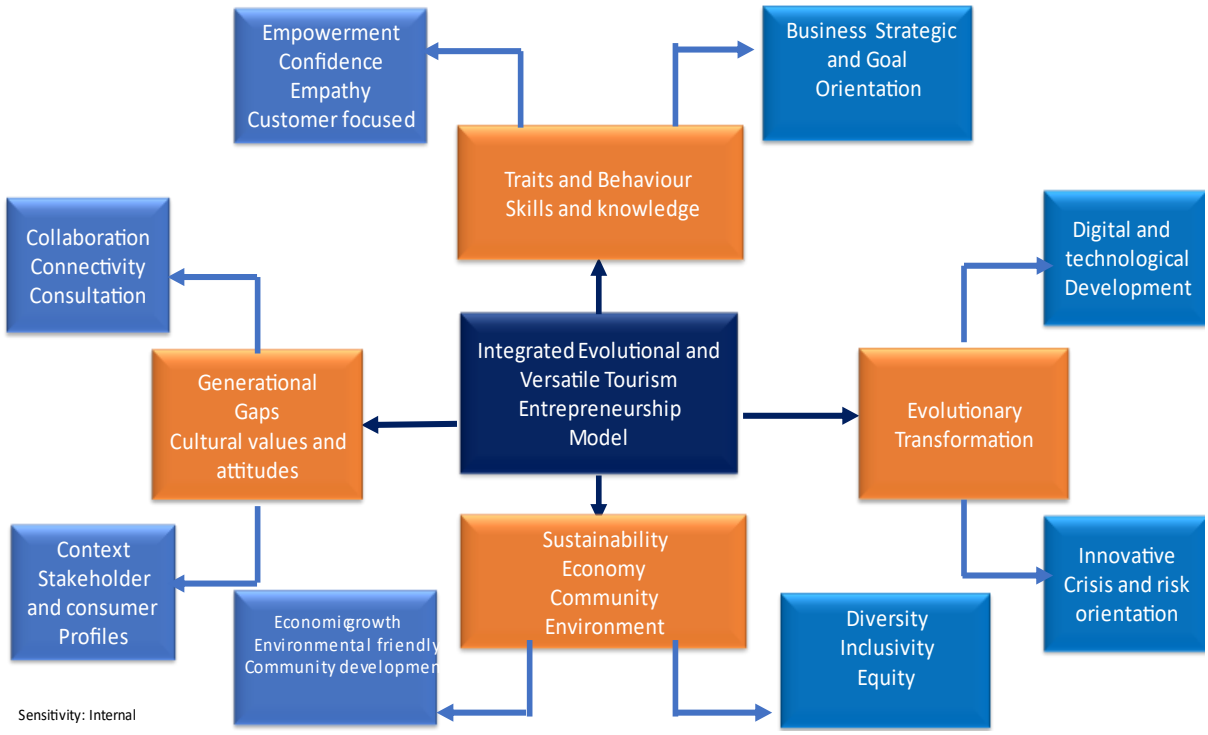
*Tourism Entrepreneurship Leadership Concept*




Source: Developed by authors

**Figure 2**

*Integrated, Versatile and Evolutionary Tourism Entrepreneurship Leadership Conceptual Framework*




Source: Developed by the authors