THE PROVIDERS' PERSPECTIVE ON MEMORABLE TOURISM EXPERIENCES AND SUSTAINABLE RURAL DESTINATIONS. AN EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

LA PERSPECTIVA DE LOS PROVEEDORES SOBRE EXPERIENCIAS TURÍSTICAS MEMORABLES Y DESTINOS RURALES SOSTENIBLES. UN ESTUDIO EXPLORATORIO

Mercedes Marzo-Navarro (Universidad de Zaragoza, España)[*1]

Carmen Berné-Manero (Universidad de Zaragoza, España)[2]

Marta Pedraja-Iglesias (Universidad de Zaragoza, España)[3]

Abstract

From an expansive and managerial perspective, this paper fills a significant and timely knowledge gap by analyzing service providers' perspectives on forming memorable tourism experiences (MTEs) in rural settings and preserving the sustainable development of destinations. It focuses on tourism destinations' sustainable development while stimulating further research as rural tourism expands in the Aragonese Pyrenees (Huesca, Spain). The opinions of the tourism providers about the role of MTE as the final output of their activities and the importance of sustainability development are essential to facing new challenges in an industry characterized by expert and exigent tourists. A structured description of the current research situation from the literature reviewed identifies the questions to include in an interview addressed to service providers selected among the Aragon Valley rural tourism context, public institutions, and tourist associations. The analysis of the qualitative data provides strengths and weaknesses of the rural tourism setting. The rural tourism providers interviewed show sensitivity towards sustainability issues. However, there is a lack of knowledge on the implementation of institutional, individual, and joint actions, on socio-cultural sustainability, and on how to take advantage of technologies. Tourism planning and implementing responsible and economically profitable practices arise as essential. Public bodies and private initiatives must allocate more resources to effective training, information, and awareness-raising. It is necessary to face the development of sustainable rural tourism through cooperation between all those involved in the value chain.

Keywords: memorable tourism experiences, rural tourism, service providers, rural tourism, sustainable tourism development.

JEL classification: M10

* Autora de correspondencia: mmarzo@unizar.es
[1] ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9628-5738
[2] ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3050-1634
[3] ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2551-5364

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Resumen

Desde una perspectiva expansiva y de gestión, este artículo llena un vacío de conocimiento significativo y oportuno al analizar las perspectivas de los proveedores de servicios sobre la formación de experiencias turísticas memorables (MTEs) en entornos rurales y la preservación del desarrollo sostenible de los destinos. Se centra en el desarrollo sostenible de los destinos turísticos a la vez que estimula nuevas investigaciones a medida que se expande el turismo rural en los Pirineos aragoneses (Huesca, España). Las opiniones de los proveedores turísticos sobre el papel de las MTEs como resultado final de sus actividades y la importancia del desarrollo sostenible son esenciales para afrontar los nuevos retos de una industria caracterizada por turistas expertos y exigentes. Una descripción estructurada de la situación actual de la investigación a partir de la literatura revisada identifica las preguntas a incluir en una entrevista dirigida a proveedores de servicios seleccionados entre el contexto del turismo rural del Valle del Aragón, instituciones públicas y asociaciones turísticas. El análisis de los datos cualitativos aporta fortalezas y debilidades del entorno de turismo rural. Los proveedores de turismo rural entrevistados muestran sensibilidad hacia las cuestiones de sostenibilidad. Sin embargo, falta conocimiento sobre la implementación de acciones institucionales, individuales y conjuntas, sobre la sostenibilidad sociocultural y sobre cómo aprovechar las tecnologías. La planificación turística y la implementación de prácticas responsables y económicamente rentables surgen como esenciales. Los organismos públicos y la iniciativa privada deben destinar más recursos a una formación, información y sensibilización eficaces. Es necesario afrontar el desarrollo del turismo rural sostenible a través de la cooperación entre todos los implicados en la cadena de valor.

Palabras clave: experiencias turísticas memorables, proveedores del servicio, turismo rural, desarrollo turístico sostenible**.**

Clasificación JEL: M10

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism boosts the economy, and affects society and also the environment. According to data from Exceltur, in 2023, tourism in Spain contributed 12.8% of gross domestic product, confirming the sector as the country's engine of economic growth. By 2024, it is even expected to increase to 13.4%. In the social sphere, the activity has created 17% of new employment in the last year, with better conditions in terms of less temporary employment and better salaries. On the demand side, the sector is following a new strategy, on which tourist adaptation is observed. The strategy aims at improving the socio-economic contribution of tourists without increasing pressure on mass tourism destinations. In relation to environmental issues, the sector managed to curb supply costs and reduce the energy cost generated (ICEX, 2024). In 2023, the Spanish Secretary of State for Tourism's program "Experiencias Turismo España" (Tourism Experiences Spain) came to an end. A program to support networks of public and private actors working on the same experiences. Among its objectives was to improve the sustainability of tourism experiences in its three axes, through the incorporation of good practices and alignment with the objectives of ecological transition, demographic challenge, and circular economy (MINTUR, 2024). It is possible that this program has indeed contributed to the improvements observed. However, the sustainable development of the activity requires a continued effort aimed at offering positive memorable tourism experiences, capable of respecting and reinforcing economic, social, and environmental benefits.

Understanding the nature of tourism experiences, their determinants, and their consequences for providers and consumers is currently a central focus of tourism research

(Campón-Cerro *et al.*, 2023). The consumers have generated the most concern among researchers, with a lack of research considering the tourism service providers. Tourism experiences are developed in destinations whose sustainable development depends on creating memorable tourism experiences (MTEs) aligned with sustainable development objectives. This is particularly evident in rural tourism contexts. Some questions emerge to explain the relevance of researching MTEs creation, sustainability tourism development preservation, and the tourism rural context.

What about consumer experiences? Experience is the term used to describe the sensations and encounters of everyday life. The first application of the term "experience" in relation to consumption is due to Holbrook and Hirschmann (1982), who focused on its hedonism, trying to capture consumption's sensory, emotional, and fantasy aspects. Today, experiences are central to markets, and experiences stored in memory are relevant because the information extracted from them strongly impacts purchase motivation and behavioral intentions. Enjoying a service consumption experience does not mean simply providing a service but offering a unique and memorable event (Pine and Gilmore, 1999).

What about memorable and positive tourism experiences? The main objective of tourism is to provide experiences (Cohen, 1979). Tourism is "the experience industry" by nature (Lee and Smith, 2015). Tourism experiences are produced through interaction with the tourism destination (Stamboulis and Skayannis, 2003), include everything the tourist encounters at the destination (Coudounaris and Sthapit, 2017), and create a mediating link between the destination and the tourist (Zhang *et al.*, 2018). Holiday time is an opportunity for unique, memorable, and even transformative experiences (Kirillova *et al.*, 2017). Tourism experiences should be memorable and positive because tourists seek unique experiences that are full of potential and leave a positive imprint in their memory. From a dynamic perspective, memory plays a vital role in the tourism environment when it comes to understanding the mental memories people take home from what they perceive as meaningful tourism experiences (Kim *et al.*, 2021). While episodic memories are stored information about personal experiences and their relationship in time and space, fixed or "flashbulb" memories are long-lasting and enduring. Flashbulb memories are essential in relation to MTEs (Larsen, 2007; Ye *et al.*, 2020). MTEs imply "memorability" (Ye *et al.*, 2020). The tourism experience is remembered when the tourist retrieves critical pieces of information defined by the specificity of the memory (Kim *et al.*, 2021). In this way, MTEs are unique and unforgettable life episodes that leave us with memories to reminisce and savor long after a trip (Zhang *et al.*, 2018). Although most tourists refer to an experience that leaves them with positive emotions and a desire to repeat it (Wong and Lai, 2021), MTEs can also be non-positive and lead to unintended consequences for the industry. Thus, delivering (positive) MTEs is the essence of the tourism industry and the core of competition between tourism destinations under the experiential marketing paradigm (Ye *et al.*, 2020). MTEs bring significant added value for both the tourist and the tourism agent; they represent an opportunity to differentiate the provider's service and a competitive advantage for the destination (Hanna *et al.*, 2018).

Tourism research highlights the importance of memorable experiences because memory is the main source of information drawn upon during a tourism experience. Since Pizam (2010) described the creation of MTEs as the essence of tourism and hospitality, research has made progress in defining the term, recognizing its importance for tourism development, and techniques to measure and model it. However, further work is needed to fill some gaps: developing a more structured research approach (Seyfi *et al.*, 2020), discovering ways to achieve MTEs (Ye *et al.*, 2020), and analyzing the supply-side perspective, as virtually the entire current body of knowledge is based on findings obtained by surveying tourists' perceptions (De Freitas *et al.*, 2018; Hosany *et al.*, 2022).

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Why is research on MTEs and sustainable development in the rural context interesting? Rural tourism should focus on revitalizing local economies without jeopardizing sustainable development goals. In line with this idea, Moral-Moral *et al.* (2019) define rural tourism as any small-scale tourism venture conducted in a natural rural environment (a local, authentic, and sparsely populated area) and designed to attract tourists seeking unique sensory, socially symbolic, and emotionally inspiring leisure experiences related to nature, agriculture, adventure, sports, gastronomy, local heritage, and culture, including ecotourism while promoting the sustainable development (SD) of the surrounding area.

Rural tourism is a community-based regional development strategy that promotes local and regional economic independence (Nugraha *et al.*, 2021). It is essential to link tourism-driven local development to sustainability goals, just as tourism can promote the protection of natural resources in natural destinations (Plumed *et al.*, 2018). Although the most talked about direct links between rural tourism and SD are those involving ecotourism and edu-tourism (rural tourism combining education, culture, environment, and sustainability, according to Wijijayanti *et al.*, 2020), SD involves all types of rural tourism and all rural destinations (Rosalina *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, rural destinations must continuously reinvent themselves by offering activities that attract tourists without undermining their local identity and environment (Sanagustin *et al.*, 2018).

The SD of rural tourism destinations depends to a large extent on the use of internal resources (Rosalina *et al.*, 2021) and the orientation of the tourism offer towards activities that are attractive to the consumer, aimed at preserving the identity and promoting the survival of rural communities through sustainability and respect for the environment (Sanagustin *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, the MTEs offered in rural destinations should serve to preserve and promote sustainable development.

Rural tourism experiences are conditioned and co-created by multiple actors in rural destinations competing for new business opportunities and sustainable rural development (Saxena, 2016). Rural areas offer a wide variety of characteristics with great potential to generate visitor experiences that are varied, complex, engaging, rich in sensory enjoyment, exciting, and meaningful. Based on the unique resources and competencies of the place and optimally presented and coordinated by local actors, these experiences are at the core of successful marketing and sustainability of rural destinations (Kastenholz *et al.*, 2020). Rural tourism positively influences the three pillars of sustainability: economy, culture (socio-cultural), and environment. Tourists and the local community are involved (Vinzon, 2014). However, without proper SD management, it could also have negative consequences. While rural tourism has experienced a marked development due to tourists' interest in the attractions of the rural environment and their desire for the unique and unforgettable experiences it can provide, the danger of increased environmental degradation due to overexploitation of rural resources should be a concern and taken into account in plans to seize the opportunity to revitalize and diversify local economies (Sanagustin *et al.*, 2018). Hence, the development of rural tourism destinations should be based on a sustainable management model of destinations and services.

Tourism managers in rural environments should direct their efforts to promote and explain the environmental, social, and economic benefits that can be obtained, both for the destination and its surroundings, from measures driven by a strong focus on sustainability in tourism (Moral-Moral *et al.*, 2019). What do the service providers in a tourism destination know about MTEs? Do they find differences when MTE's dissertation is transferred to a rural context? And what about sustainable development? How do they focus on the relationship between MTEs and the sustainable development of the tourism destination? They are basic questions to formulate to understand the service provider's point of view and thus contribute to the knowledge advance. For instance, from the tourist perspective, (socio-)cultural sustainability does not seem to play

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a clear role in the determination of rural MTEs, unlike economic (well-trained staff, sale of local products and local infrastructures) and environmental factors (respect and care for the environment, energy and water conservation and reuse/recycling policies, use of environmentally friendly products and pollution-free environments) (Moliner-Tena *et al.*, 2021).

This paper aims to promote the business perspective of the study of MTEs by exploring the perspective of rural tourism service providers on rural MTEs and sustainable development (SD). The absence of previous research in this framework is the main reason for the originality of this work. To meet this objective, a review of the specialized literature facilitates identifying critical points to be analyzed through exploratory research based on in-depth interviews among a selection of tourism providers in the rural destination Valle del Aragón (Huesca), located in the Spanish Pyrenees. The results and conclusions sections close the document. Among the main conclusions, the importance of developing sustainable rural tourism based on cooperation between all those involved in the value chain stands out.

2. RESEARCHING MTEs AND SUSTAINABILITY IN RURAL TOURISM CONTEXTS

There are three MTE research perspectives: expansive, economic/managerial, and modeling perspective (De Freitas *et al.*, 2018). The expansive perspective takes a holistic view of the MTE phenomenon based on qualitative, exploratory, and theoretical research information. It constructs a framework for the other two research perspectives. The issues are the positive-negative valence of the MTEs, the range of emotions aroused in the tourist, and their determining factors. The MTE required for tourism development must be one positive, created with as much or more insight into the tourist's mind than that contained in competing offers and more than fulfilling the requirements of any tourist experience. However, negative valence can leave a stronger imprint than positive valence through a phenomenon known as negativity bias or a tendency to dwell on the negative aspects of an event (Baumeister *et al.*, 2001). Tourism managers must identify factors leading to negative tourism experiences and ways to control them. The economic or managerial perspective, aimed at proposing and validating models, considers the basics of the experience economy and the views of companies and managers. Even though memorability evolves subjectively and MTEs must be measured and evaluated from the tourists' point of view, tourism companies must find ways to trigger such experiences by identifying the drivers of positive MTE. Finally, the modeling perspective investigates the measurement of the variable and its role in yielding positive results for the industry. Most of the MTEs' prior research focuses on this perspective. It requires studying their antecedents, their reflecting indicators, their role in mediating between antecedents and consequences, and their consequences. Hosany *et al.* (2022) provide a theoretical framework over the last 10 years presenting MTEs as mediators between internal and external antecedents and positive outcomes to the industry.

Some variables are found in over one of the chain's three levels. The exhaustive list of antecedents does not include some variables also identified as a cause of MTE, such as the sustainability of the rural destination (Moliner-Tena *et al.*, 2021) or visitor involvement (Rasoolimanesh *et al.*, 2021). Internal antecedents regard tourists' motivations, past experiences, and personality. External factors consider marketing images related to the destination, travel activities, patterns of change in the place, and companions (Ryan, 2002). Concerning MTE consequences, Hosany *et al.* (2022) divide them into cognitive, affective, and behavioral results. The literature has confirmed that MTE positively influences tourist decision-making, especially where revisiting and word-of-mouth (WOM) recommendations are concerned (Kim, 2017; Zhang *et al.*, 2018; Di-Clemente *et al.*, 2020; Rasoolimanesh *et al.*, 2021; Kim *et al.*, 2021; Anía-Melón *et al.*, 2021; Wong and Lai, 2021; Shafiee *et al.*, 2021). Other performance variables

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that have been examined are place attachment (Vada *et al.*, 2019; Trinanda *et al.*, 2021), tourist satisfaction (Kim, 2017; Nugraha *et al.*, 2021; Wong and Lai, 2021), self-perceived well-being (Coudounaris and Sthapit, 2017), and the accuracy of recall (Wei *et al.*, 2019). Recently, tourists' environmental responsibility has been found to be a consequence of memorable nature-based tourism experiences and a mediator towards tourist satisfaction (Obradovic *et al.*, 2023).

Measurement models of Destination attributes and MTE variables

Some of the main external antecedents of MTE have to do with the relationship between the tourist and the destination visited. Putting the point in these antecedents, Kim (2014) studies tourist destination attributes as an abstract variable composed of various destination features that might influence different stages of the tourism experience. This work validates a measurement scale of the construct composed of 10 dimensions and 33 items: infrastructure, accessibility, local culture, physiography, various activities, environmental management (dimension directly related to sustainable development), service quality, hospitality, place attachment, and superstructure. Although Hosany *et al.*'s review does not include this work, the prior validated dimensions are indirectly presented in their list of external antecedents of MTE. In addition to these dimensions, the study also reveals that specific negative destination attributes may cause feelings of frustration, anger, or shame, creating negative MTEs that must be avoided. The list of destination attributes' dimensions presents relationships with the three sustainability strands: the environmental aspect in physiography and environmental management; the socio-cultural aspect in local culture, superstructure, and hospitality; and the rest of the dimensions are closer to the economic dimension.

These 10 dimensions and their definitions are as follows:

- Destination infrastructure includes elements that enhance the imagination of travelers and tailor the experience: unique designs, high-quality infrastructure equipped with advanced technology, adequate signage/directions, and adequate available information. Beyond the original function of infrastructure in a destination, this factor should stimulate the imagination of visitors and facilitate their ability to create highly personalized memories of the travel experience.

- Accessibility, in terms of ease and quality of access, such as ease of transport to the destination and ease of getting around the destination.

- Attachment to place. The characteristics of the destination facilitate the visitor's level of attachment to the place.

- Variety of activities, interesting events, and festivals.

- Physiography: ecological zones, well-preserved areas, and breathtaking landscapes.

- Environmental management (traffic, pollution, safety, cleanliness).

- Quality of service received: reliable service, staff attention, personalization.

- Hospitality from the residents and the community towards visitors.

- Local culture and history. The destination allows visitors to experience life in the locality, learn about local history, and experience local culture.

- Superstructure: The destination has unique architecture, distinctive local cuisine, and buildings of interest.

The measuring scale does not consider the health and safety factors. However, this destination attribute has become more critical for tourists since the COVID-19 pandemic. The destination must ensure that visitors always feel safe during their stay. Therefore, it would be interesting to test the contribution of health safety, considering access to health services and protocols and how the destination encourages responsible tourist and/or resident behavior towards the environment. Kim (2017; 2022) confirms destination attributes as antecedents of MTE formation. However, empirical studies that include the destination attribute variable are limited to specific areas and destinations, and therefore, their results cannot be generalized.

Like the destination attributes variable, MTEs are abstract, multifaceted, and multidimensional. Measuring MTEs and understanding their role in the antecedents-MTEs-consequences value chain is fundamental to advancing academic knowledge and sound decision-making by tourism organizations seeking to implement SD. The first validated measurement scale for evaluating the positive valence of MTEs is composed of seven dimensions, and due to Kim (2009, 2010) and Kim *et al.* (2012):

- Hedonism: Pleasurable feelings leading to excitement (Dunman and Mattila, 2005).

- Invigoration: Opportunity to draw strength or energy (Howard *et al.*, 1993).

- Local culture: A positive impression is left by close contact with the local people and their culture (Kim *et al.*, 2012).

- Significance: Something that merits attention; something that is important and worthwhile. It is the feeling derived from something highly worthwhile and valuable (Wilson and Harris, 2006).

- Knowledge: Personal stock of information, facts, or (known) experiences (Blackshaw, 2003).

- Engagement or participation: Personal involvement (Kim *et al.*, 2012). It may include co-creation.

- Novelty: Psychological feeling brought about by a new experience (Farber and Hall, 2007).

Validation for the use of this scale has been tested in a variety of research settings (Kim *et al.*, 2012; Kim and Ritchie, 2014; Tsai *et al.*, 2016; Coudounaris and Sthapit, 2017; Zhang *et al.*, 2018; Rasoolimanesh *et al.*, 2021). Later studies have enriched the way the MTE variable is measured. Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015), warning the relative importance of every dimension can differ according to the destinations and travelers' demographic characteristics, confirmed a measurement scale with authentic local experiences, novel, self-benefit, significant travel, social interaction, serendipitous, local hospitality, impressive local guides and tour operators, and fulfillment of personal travel interests and affective emotions. Other items such as ambiance, socialization and excitement, reflection (severe thought or consideration), enthusiasm for the destination, and learning have been used as a one-dimensional variable measurement. In addition, items relating to the particular research setting have been considered (Hosany *et al.*, 2022).

Concerning the negative valence of the MTEs, Kim (2022) has made a decisive contribution by validating a scale of six dimensions that captures the associated destination attributes. The study confirms that different destination attributes can trigger negative emotions of different types, according to the tourist's personal cognitive judgment, which leaves a permanent negative memory of the tourist experience. The dimensions are health and safety, insufficient

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infrastructure, unexpected incidents, local hostility, non-ethical trading, and bad environmental management:

- The health and safety dimension includes perceived insecurity and lack of law and order.

- Infrastructure includes poorly equipped facilities.

- Unexpected incidents refer mainly to unforeseen negative situations and difficulties experienced by visitors during their stay.

- Hospitality/hostility refers to unfriendliness on the part of residents.

- Unethical trading includes unfair practices such as deception, over-charging, and forced consumption.

- Environmental management indicators include dirt, unpleasant smells, and pollution.

Modeling Rural MTEs and SD

The contributions described above are the basis for the general study of MTE, which, in principle, is transferable to the particular context of the study of rural tourism. However, it would be necessary to know the perspective of supply and demand in that particular tourism context. Focusing on modeling MTE and sustainable development in rural tourism destinations, to the best of our knowledge, the perspective of tourism providers is unknown, and research from the tourist's point of view is incipient. Notable contributions are Nugraha *et al.* (2021), Sthapit *et al.* (2022), Chen *et al.* (2023), and Cajiao *et al.* (2023). The impact of rural tourism destination quality, tourist engagement, and MTE on tourist satisfaction and WOM is tested by Nugraha *et al.* (2021). The measurement of MTE uses five dimensions of the seven dimensions of the Kim *et al.* (2012) measurement model: enjoyment of the tourism experience, feeling invigorated by the tourism experience, learning something about oneself through the tourism experience, the possibility of a close experience with the local culture at the destination, and experiencing something new. The results of the structural model test show that the quality of the (rural) destination significantly influences the two effects considered: tourism satisfaction and recommendation. At the same time, tourist participation in the experience influences the MTE and tourist satisfaction, thereby verifying the economic sustainability of the organizations involved (Casaló *et al.*, 2008). Maintaining satisfaction in subsequent consumption experiences is vital because of the relationship with organizational sustainability (economic). MTE also significantly impacts tourist satisfaction and WOM, and a direct relationship flows from satisfaction to WOM.

Nature-based tourism concerns the works of Sthapit *et al.* (2022) and Cajiao *et al.* (2023). The nature-based tourism is a broader type of tourism that includes rural tourism. The first mentioned research proposes and tests a model that confirms the influence of constructs such as novelty, co-creation experiences, experience enrichment (holiday photographs, etc.), experience satisfaction, and landscape experience on nature-based MTE. These are proposed as a source of place attachment and a driver of environmentally responsible tourist behavior. Novelty is closely related to MTEs, so travelers find novel, distinctive, and unusual tourist experiences more memorable than the typical kind (Chandralal *et al.*, 2015). In co-creation experiences, the customer is seen as an active value creator during tourism resource use and as a decision-maker for aspects such as trip duration, direct, personalized interaction with providers at the destination, or potential influence over other tourists (Mathis *et al.*, 2016; Malone *et al.*, 2018). Thus, in co-creation experiences, tourists actively create their own experiences, which is critical to memorability (Mathis *et al.*, 2016). The model includes a sequential relationship

between place attachment and environmentally responsible tourist behavior. A higher degree of place attachment promotes a tendency towards environmentally responsible tourist behavior. Considering nature-based tourism as an essential conservation tool for protected and natural areas, Cajiao *et al.* (2023) explore the impact of Antarctic tourism experiences on future conservation behavior. They find that there is still a need to cultivate transformative memories effectively. To this end, they offer insights into specific actions of travelers, operators, and guides in the tourism destination under study. Chen *et al.* (2023) studied sustainability and rural MTEs. They successfully test a stimulus-response model in which green consumption intentions in tourists are driven by closeness to nature and environmental awareness. Green consumption is a voluntary commitment to environment-friendly consumption to reduce environmental pressure (Connolly and Prothero, 2008). The MTEs in rural destinations support SD by encouraging subsequent (green) consumption by tourists. It is, therefore, essential to point out the importance of the RMTE-near-nature relationship as a driver of responsible tourist behavior toward sustainability.

3. METHOD

Following suggestions made by De Freitas *et al.* (2018) and Hosany *et al.* (2022), the empirical research approaches the analysis of MTEs from the tourism supply perspective. The aim is to collect qualitative data from a primary source by probing the views of these agents operating in the Aragon River Valley's rural setting, specifically in generating and managing both positive and negative MTE, aiming to promote sustainable tourism.

The interviewees were selected from the Aragon River Valley rural tourism context's service providers, public institutions, and tourist associations. The Aragon Valley is one of the five areas of the comarca of La Jacetania in the province of Huesca (Community of Aragon, Spain). Tourism activity has a great capacity to generate wealth in the region. It contributes 9% of Aragon's GDP, is constantly growing and employs 10% of the active population. The Aragonese Tourism Strategy Plan 2021-2024 of the Government of Aragon defends the existence of opportunities in rural and experiential tourism in the region to increase the value chain and fix the added value (PAET, 2021).

The valley comprises the municipalities of Jaca, Borau, Canfranc (Town and Station), Castiello de Jaca, and Villanúa. The Aragon River runs through the area from north to south. It is a tourist area of nature, with a wealth of culture, heritage, gastronomy and leisure, relaxation, and sporting activities (in winter, mainly snow, due to its proximity to the ski resorts of Astún and Candanchú). When the fieldwork was conducted, the entire accommodation offer included 1 campsite, 8 hotels (6 3-star hotels and 2 4-star hotels), and 8 hostels, which can be booked on platforms such as Booking, TripAdvisor, or Airbnb and rental flats. The valley's tourist association (www.valledelaragon.com) provides tourist information to interested parties. According to data from the National Institute of Statistics, the rural tourism offered in the community of Aragon is 5,801 accommodations, including hotels, flats, campsites, rural houses, hostels, mountain refuges, and dwellings for tourist use. In the Jacetania Region, the Aragon Valley registers more than 60,000 visits in summer at the Tourist Offices in the Region. The majority of visitors are Spanish. Therefore, rural tourism in the Jacetania region is mainly fed by domestic tourism. The most frequent visitors to the Aragon Valley are from the Valencian Community, followed by residents of Madrid, the Basque Country, Catalonia, Aragon, Andalusia, Castilla La Mancha, and Navarre.

Tourist agents operating in the valley were first contacted by telephone or email. After explaining the reason for the contact and the objectives of the research, they were asked to

TABLE 1. LIST OF INTERVIEWEES: TYPE OF PROVIDER AND POSITION

INTERVIEWEE (E)	TYPE OF SERVICE PROVIDER	POSITION
E1	Hostel 1	Manager
E2	Hotel 2	Director
E3	Hotel 3	Director
E4	Hostel 4	Director
E5	Hotel 5	Director
E6	Hotel 6	Director
E7	Hostel 7	Responsible staff
E8	Hostel 8	Manager
E9	Hotel 9	Manager
E10	Camping	Responsible staff
E11	Meson	Responsible staff
E12	Villanúa City Hall	Major
E13	Canfranc City Hall	Major
E14	Canfranc Valley Tourist Association (and Tourist Office)	Responsible staff

collaborate in the study under the guarantee of anonymity. 14 agents consented to participate (Table 1), that the interview would be recorded, and that their opinions would be used to obtain conclusions useful to the objectives of this research: directors/chiefs/majors of 4 hostels, 5 hotels, 1 campsite, 1 meson, 1 Valley Tourist Association, and 2 city halls (Table A1).

Data is collected through semi-structured interviews, including open-ended, closed, and follow-up questions. This method is particularly suited to allowing interviewees to give fuller answers based on their experience and knowledge. The interview script can be adjusted for better two-way communication if the interviewer considers it appropriate (Adams, 2015). The individual interviews were conducted and recorded using the Chrome Google Meet application, which enabled the conversation to be transcribed directly into a Word document[4]. Interviews were conducted between December 2022 and January 2023, lasting between 40 and 60 minutes. The content analysis was carried out under the requirements of objectivity, systematicity, and rigor in the procedure. From the literal answer (recorded and transcribed) to each question, given by the interviewee, results and conclusions are obtained and presented consecutively below. All of them are supported by the explicit presentation of the opinions collected from the participants.

The interview script (see Annex) was divided into headings to facilitate the interviewer's work and the interviewee's understanding. The script focuses on questions aimed at obtaining opinions on the particular characteristics of the tourism offer of the Valley, the potential of the destination to provide MTEs, the relationship between MTEs and Sustainable Development, and the indicators of positive and negative MTEs. This way, answers to the previously formulated questions are sought: What do service providers know about MTEs? Do they find differences when the MTE discourse is transferred to the rural context? What do they know and think

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[4] Word transcripts of the answers are available on request from the authors.

about sustainable development? How do they approach the relationship between MTEs and the sustainable development of the tourist destination, and how do they see the relationship between MTEs and the sustainable development of the tourist destination? In addition, other questions related to implementing co-creation and collaboration strategies seek complementary information.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Concerning Rural Tourism, MTEs, Sustainable Development, and the Aragon Valley

After reviewing the meaning of MTEs, all respondents believe that the Aragon Valley has great potential to achieve them. The reasons they give are novelty, convenience of location, rich supply, and emotional, cultural, and social experiences that the destination provides. Some particular explanations are: i) the wide range of activities provided: skiing, visits (guided and non-guided) to places of interest (Canfranc International Train Station and Canfranc Subterranean Lab, the Guixas Cave in Villanúa, Romanesque heritage places, etc.), the Way of Santiago (walking, by bike…, etc.), and several leisure activities (horse riding, zip-line parks, etc.); ii) it provides a real chance to switch off or escape the daily routine by trekking or learning about the valley's history; iii) the valley's unique location is on the border with France, and iv) the local cuisine, the friendliness of the locals, and the landscapes.

The consulted experts think this tourist offer leaves visitors with memorable experiences and a declared interest in returning. In short, the expert consensus is that the Aragon Valley destination provides memorable tourist experiences. Its strong point is offering a variety of experiences that remain etched in the memory, making visitors more likely to return and recommend the area to others.

Moreover, offering MTEs involves different types of rural tourism in the valley. Most respondents gave snow sports pride of place in the tourist offer ranking, although one ranked it second and three placed it third. Mountain tourism was in second place in the ranking. Generally speaking, the minor roles are attributed to the Way of Santiago and "relaxation," although one respondent placed the Way of Santiago second. Three respondents gave hiking trails no points in the memorability ranking, while another thought they belonged with the mountain tourism offer. Two added choices available are motor caravanning and sports tourism.

Environmental and economic sustainability are the most often mentioned versions of sustainability. Recycling, reducing water consumption, nature deterioration, pollution, community transport, crowd-free, seasonality, and pandemic crisis are the key points:

"... we need to increase our awareness of the importance of recycling and reducing water consumption, ... the countryside around here is very dirty." (E8)

*"In Canfranc, they changed to "LED" bulbs for the street lighting to save energy…
I see a serious deterioration in the fauna and flora and a worrying level of environmental pollution in the countryside." (E6)*

"One very good thing about this valley is the bus running four times a day from Astún to Jaca, which can positively affect environmental quality." (E1)

"The sustainability issue is very important because tourists coming to this valley are looking for a high quality, crowd-free destination." (E5)

"…we are faced with a crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic." (E8)

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"The problem facing this valley is economic sustainability because of seasonal tourism here..." (E13)

Less consideration is given to the social aspect. Only one respondent mention tourism support for vulnerable people:

"Local and regional authorities support those who need it most, such as foreigners and the disabled." (E8)

A great deal of confusion has been observed regarding sustainability strategies. While the respondents individually recognize the importance of sustainable development strategies, none of them knew of any joint actions or specific institutional initiatives:

"The definition of sustainable tourism strategy is unclear, for me at least." (E14)

"We do our best to recycle and avoid causing pollution, but I'm unaware of any strategy per se... I can't say to what extent the Aragon Valley follows a sustainability strategy..." (E2)

"To be honest, I don't think there's a sustainable development strategy in place, but I can't be sure about that." (E10)

"I can see that sustainable tourism development is very important, but I don't think the development of the Aragon Valley depends on a specific sustainability strategy." (E6)

"I don't think any sustainable development strategy is being implemented in the Valley. But I could be mistaken." (E11)

Even it is not clear that the destination development depends on it:

"I don't think the development of the Aragon Valley depends on this sort of thing." (E7)

Nevertheless, sustainable tourism destinations and the suitability of a joint strategy to achieve it are considered worthwhile:

"I think it's a great idea. Local authorities in the valley could implement a group strategy to promote sustainable development." (E8)

"We're always trying to avoid competing with each other, help one another out, and work for the common good because every business is looking to make a profit, trying to adjust to the needs of the public while remaining affordable." (E13)

"I think we're all very clear about the theory: avoid pollution, help the needy, etc., but I don't see any action." (E3)

These results show the need for training in the sector focused on implementing sustainability strategies and sharing objectives related to sustainable development. It is necessary to bring

together efforts to achieve memorable experiences as determinants of development and sustainable development.

Concerning indicators of Destination Attributes and MTE

Regarding tourist destination attributes, the experts find all the indicators appropriate, except for two experts (E8 y E11), who exclude health and safety because they think memorable experiences have nothing to do with health services and sanitary protocols. Protection against COVID is no longer considered necessary. However, one expert attaches great importance to security:

> *"Health and safety have always struck me as a major concern, although some improvements have been made." (E7)*

Cuisine (in the superstructure dimension of the measurement scale), silence's influence on the state of mind, and the destination's innovativeness (in the place attachment dimension) are mentioned as essential MTE attributes for valley rural tourism. Hence, the opinion of the service providers is in line with the literature contributions from the tourists' view. Safety and health should be included in future research to retest their interest.

Regarding MTE indicators, the respondents name some of those that appear in the literature and nod in agreement when the interviewer mentions others. However, one expert (E1) would exclude the dimension of participation, which means that, in their opinion, tourist involvement (in service production and co-creation) is not a determinant of achieving memorable experiences.

In this sense, some of the replies reveal a lack of knowledge while also indicating a keen interest in co-creation:

> *"This valley may have a shortcoming. Maybe we are a bit lacking in this respect. I would say that co-creation based on personalization or customization doesn't exist." (E10)*

> *"We haven't got very far with co-creation, as you describe here." (E6)*

> *"I can't think of a single example of co-creation right now. I would say that the products come ready-designed; there are no customer-created products." (E1)*

> *Other respondents claim that co-creation does take place:*

> *"All that comes to mind are those tour packages where it's more or less left to the customer to design the kind of service that is required… such as "Candanchú Experience" offering tailor-made tours, and some travel agencies in Jaca." (E8)*

> *"Some local and regional authorities occasionally organize workshops on typical cuisine and such like." (E11)*

> *"One example of this sort of thing would be the Strava social network, which people use to compete simultaneously with each other along different routes through the mountains. They do it mainly for their own sake, but indirectly, they are helping to develop and promote co-creation in mountain tourism experiences." (E12)*

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Some nuance in the understanding of the term indicates a need for training, but interviewees mostly see co-creation as a tangible activity with the potential to improve supply effectively.

All the respondents agree on the importance of identifying negative MTEs and trying to prevent them. They even go as far as to consider this more important than identifying positive MTEs:

"I think it is even more important to focus on negative MTEs than positive ones." (E9)

"You need to pinpoint negative outcomes and reverse them to improve tourism in this valley." (E14)

"It is essential to be aware of our mistakes to avoid repeating them and achieve improvements." (E7)

Concerning the causes of negative MTEs, the interviewees identify several to face in the Valley. They relate to internal and external variables, such as personal service quality, innovation, communications infrastructure (internal variables), public transport, massification, climate conditions (external variables), unexpected incidents, and, curiously, environment management (these last could be internal and external):

i) Poor quality of personal service (E4, E6, E9).

ii) Lack of innovation (E10).

iii) Lack of infrastructure (Wi-Fi, heating, facilities) (E6, E7, E9, E10, E11).

iv) Poor environmental management (E1, E7, E9).

v) Occurrence of unexpected incidents during the trip (E7, E11, E15).

vi) Mass tourism (E8).

vii) Weather conditions (E8, E14).

viii) Transport (public) inconveniences:

"Train journeys are too long, and only two a day. The bus service should extend timetables and frequency". (E7)

In regards to collaborative initiatives among destinations (businesses and institutions), seven respondents claim to have heard of no collaborative initiatives between different tourist destinations in the valley, whereas others mention:

"Astún and Candanchú 100K." (E8)

"Staying in touch and sharing information through social media is valuable, whether between tourist offices, accommodations, or restaurants. The purpose is to get the tourist to spend as long as possible in the valley, encouraging them to stay longer than a few hours or a single night." (E5)

"With the Ambar (a local beer brand) collaborative initiative, for every X beer you buy, you get a gift: a ski pass, a Chapstick, some sunscreen, or something else." (E1)

Nevertheless, E3 and E14 defend initiatives in this section, such as discounts offered by the hotels, such as a discount on a ski pass to Candanchú if you stay at the hotel, or a discount to visit the Canfranc International Train Station.

Finally, respondents' additional comments (free contributions) allude to stress some needs in the valley regarding:

i) The deseasonalization of demand:

"*... how to promote tourism in the low season, concerning economic sustainability.*" *(E8)*

ii) The need for training to further development:

"*… to try and modify a mature destination like this one.*" *(E14)*

iii) The importance of coordination and alliances among providers (E9, E14):

"*... currently, this is almost impossible. There's' quite a lot of action. It's a bit feeble and uncoordinated. So far, all attempts at coordination have failed.*" *(E14)*

iv) More private promotion and more investment: "*Stop being complacent and raise the valley to the status it deserves, so it's not just an offshoot from Jaca.*" *(E5)*

v) The stronger environmental commitment through individual strategies:

"*For example, we put up a blackboard in the bar with a notice to say that anyone who brought rubbish back from a hike in the mountains would get a free beer or drink. We wanted to do our bit towards reducing environmental pollution.*" *(E1)*

vi) The need for co-creation, promotion of the use of social media, and consideration of possible external investment/intervention:

"*A company to shake up the area of customer co-production would be great for promoting the valley's social media profile.*" *(E10)*

The role of technology appears very weak. There is recognition of the value of opinions published online (reviews) to collect and manage information effectively. However, there is no more mention of the application of technologies to improve experiences:

"*More effort should be made within each firm or sector if improvements are to be achieved.*" *(E5)*

"*Society in general and the business world in particular require more information on this matter.*" *(E14)*

5. CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This article explores the relationship between the formation of memorable tourism experiences and the development of sustainable tourism in the rural context from the point of view of tourism service providers (businesses and institutions). It thus contributes to the body of knowledge on the subject from the perspective of MTE research management. The literature review allows for the identification of critical points for analysis. The results of the qualitative research offer conclusions of interest and implications for future research.

From a theoretical perspective, the first conclusion is that scientific knowledge recognises the creation of MTE as the essential task of the rural tourism industry. The key variables of the antecedents-MTE-consequences value chain have already been identified, measurement models have been validated and it has been shown that MTEs determine positive outcomes for the

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tourism industry in terms of increased tourist satisfaction, revisit intention and recommendation. However, more attention needs to be paid to several points. One of them concerns the economic/ managerial research perspective of MTEs. The high competitive level in which providers operate leads them to face new challenges and innovations by pursuing strategies to satisfy an increasingly demanding tourist (Di-Clemente *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, the economic/ managerial research perspective of MTEs requires attention. Studying the point of view of service providers and other supply-side actors is essential because a MTE is not a voluntary act on the part of the tourist, but depends on their perception of the relationship between what they receive and the value proposition of the provider. Tourism experiences evolve in the tourist's memory from the enjoyment of the provider's service package. Consequently, along with the destination attributes and the environment, the supplier's decisions are essential to generate a MTE. Tourism providers must be aware of their role as issuers of value propositions capable of being transformed into memorable experiences in the tourist's mind.

Furthermore, the relationship between MTE generation and sustainable development has hardly been investigated. This research is fundamental for rural tourism, as sustainability is part of its definition. Rural tourism destinations can be more vulnerable by being at the forefront of the challenge to achieve sustainability based on the efficient use of economic and natural resources, protection of self-identity and respect for the environment. The opportunity to use tourism to galvanise local economies comes with a responsibility to make a concerted effort to avoid degradation of local environments. The conclusion is that rural tourism promoters must adopt a model of sustainable management of tourism destinations and services. Research in this field should focus on how to effectively contribute to the sustainable economic, social and environmental development of rural tourism through the creation of rural MTEs, while taking into account the specificities of the geographical area. The differences in the context of each case study (tourist destination) make it advisable to initiate empirical research based on the collection of qualitative information from managers. This initiative takes advantage of the expansive research approach and prepares the modelling approach. This paper presents a first approach to the problem, identifying key points and questions to address the point of view of the tourism supply agents of a rural tourism destination.

From a practical perspective, the research verifies points of common interest between the supply and demand perspectives that can be summarised: i) the attributes of destination attributes and MTEs are fully transferable to their rural tourism context, meaning that they can be used to measure memorable rural experiences; ii) the desirability of achieving tourism development from the angle of MTE generation, sustainability and co-creation potential (with some reservations); and iii) the potential value of further effort directed at investigating negative MTEs, as indicated by the literature. In addition, the analysis of the interviewees' opinions reveals the strengths and weaknesses of the tourism offer of the studied area in terms of MTEs.

In particular, the identification of aspects capable of generating negative MTEs as internal and external variables for service providers points to the recommendation to increase investment in infrastructures in the Valley (external), to use control and communication systems to help with travel incidents, and responsible environmental management (internal variables). The experts consulted call for more collaborative initiatives, coordination and alliances between them and increased use of technologies. All of these could improve the observed lack of innovation. Participation in social media platforms and apps are accessible and valuable way of conveying the meaning of being in a given place (Conti and Cassel, 2020). They can therefore intensify the sustainable aspect of the tourism experience.

In terms of sustainable development, this paper argues that the provision of MTE in rural destinations should serve to preserve and promote sustainable development. In this sense, the

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tourism supply agents consulted are sensitive to sustainability concerns, despite falling short in some aspects. Environmental and economic sustainability show some strengths among the experts' opinions. However, solutions such as the adoption of emerging technologies, micro-agriculture, green energy options, reuse of natural resources, and employment guarantee schemes are not mentioned. These are all factors to be promoted as part of the Valley's tourism offer. Socio-cultural sustainability is the least considered arm of sustainable development, coinciding with the results of Moliner-Tena *et al.* (2021) from the demand perspective. Responses show interest but also lack initiative, which requires more effective communication, training, and awareness-raising. Tourism managers in rural areas should direct their efforts to promote the environmental, social, and economic benefits derived from MTEs creation. A periodic exercise of measuring indicators of the degree of solution offered by tourism services (dimensions of MTEs) and by the destination (attributes) can provide valuable information to improve the value chain and added value in order to achieve customer satisfaction and the sustainable development of the tourism destination. This would involve assessing the level of novelty, co-creation, safety, and coordination between suppliers, for example, both from the suppliers' and tourists' point of view. From measures firmly focused on sustainability, the benefits are both for the tourism destination and its environment, as advocated by Moral-Moral *et al.* (2019).

There is a contradiction between the responses regarding sustainability strategies and the interest in implementing joint efforts to preserve the sustainability of tourism destinations, which is evidence that both public and private bodies should focus on implementing sustainability strategies and share objectives related to sustainable development. The Sustainable Tourism Cluster of Aragon (tsac.es), to which E14 belongs, can be a suitable framework to develop these dynamics.

After overcoming the trauma of the health crisis, it is necessary to rethink the appropriate way to take advantage of the Valley's resources to generate a tourism value proposition capable of generating unique experiences, while facing the challenges of seasonality and climate change. Tourism must be approached by planning and implementing responsible and economically profitable practices and by working to ensure that the Valley's tourism initiatives contribute to local cohesion, stability, and well-being. Public and private initiatives should allocate more funds to practical training, information, and awareness-raising to instill environmental awareness and commitment. A comprehensive SD strategy and greater stakeholder engagement in collaborative initiatives could significantly improve the sustainability of tourism destinations in the area.

This research covers its objectives and provides valuable information to fill the gap identified in the literature regarding the lack of research from the perspective of tourism supply. However, it has some limitations. One limitation is the non-existence of previous work analyzing the providers' perspective. This fact makes it difficult to establish comparisons with other studies. Furthermore, although the research procedure is generalizable, the results are not. It is exploratory and qualitative research, and the empirical application is carried out from subjective opinions and for a specific tourist destination. Conclusions are applicable to that destination, not others. Even so, the research is subject to changes in the context of the destination analyzed, such as changes in the competitive scenario. As of February 27, 2023, the 5-star Canfranc Station Hotel joins the accommodation providers in the Aragon Valley. We hope that this modification can positively affect the sustainable development of the destination due to the value proposition of the MTE company. Anyway, the study would have to be redone to get information on the situation for other tourism destinations. Everyone will have different environmental variables and destination attributes, moreover than other decision-makers. It

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should be interesting to replicate the study in close rural destinations to approach conclusions regarding comparisons.

Future research should also delve into finding other ways to obtain information from suppliers and contrast the opinions of supply and demand, which will allow further progress in this field. It would be interesting to incorporate other channel agents, such as distributors, into the investigation. Quantitative research is relevant to advance in the research line. Regarding the modeling research perspective, it is necessary to create a coherent model that integrates sustainable development objectives with the value proposition and the generation of MTE, thus considering both the supply and demand of the tourism service. This is of interest to rural tourism by definition, but also to any other type of tourism.

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ANNEX

INTERVIEW SCRIPT

V. Aragon Valley. Rural Tourism (RT), Memorable Tourism Experiences (MTE) and Sustainable Development.

V1. Definition of MTE: A tourism experience that is remembered and remembered positively after it happens (Kim *et al.*, 2012). Opinion: Does the Aragon Valley offer memorable tourism experiences (MTE)? Request justification.

V2. Types of rural tourism/main activity. For the context of the Aragon Valley: delete/add/indicate relevance.

Main activity
Enjoy Nature
Snow
Mountain
Hiking/Walking
Camino de Santiago
Cultural/Heritage
Relax

V3. To what extent does it believe that the Aragon Valley depends on pursuing sustainable tourism development in the area (in its economic, social, and environmental aspects)? Justification

V4. Do you think that the Valley's tourism and stakeholders are motivated and follow an individual and/or overall strategy in relation to sustainable development objectives? Justification

V5. Supplier-customer co-creation involves the tourist's involvement/participation in creating the tourist service, planning the trip, developing the whole tourist experience, or developing a specific activity. For example, participating in the production of souvenirs or in the preparation of food (cuisine) typical of the area or with local products, personalizing a tourist activity, such as an excursion.

Are tourism providers in the Aragon Valley developing or promoting the co-creation of tourism services with tourists, and does this action help to generate positive, memorable experiences?

D. Tourism Destination

Attributes of a tourist destination:

• Destination infrastructure: includes elements that enhance the imagination of travelers and tailor the experience: unique designs, high-quality infrastructure equipped with advanced technology, adequate signage/directions, and adequate available information.

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Beyond the original function of infrastructure in a destination, this factor should stimulate the imagination of visitors and facilitate their ability to create highly personalized memories of the travel experience.

- Accessibility: in terms of ease and quality of access, such as ease of transport to the destination and ease of getting around the destination.

- Local culture/history: The destination allows visitors to experience life in the locality and learn about local history and culture.

- Physiography: ecological zones, well-preserved areas, and breathtaking landscapes.

- Variety of activities, interesting events, and festivals.

- Environmental management (traffic, pollution, safety, cleanliness).

- Quality of service received: reliable service, staff attention, personalization.

- Hospitality: resident and community hospitality towards visitors.

- Attachment to the place: the characteristics of the destination facilitate the visitor's level of attachment to the place.

- Superstructure: the destination has unique architecture, distinctive local cuisine, and buildings of interest.

- Health safety (access to health services, COVID-19 protocols).

- The destination encourages responsible tourist and/or resident behavior towards the environment.

D1. Opinion on attributes - would you delete or add? Justification.

D2. Transferring the above idea to the context of the Aragon Valley, would it change your previous answer in any way?

E. MTEs Formation

E1. Positive MTE. Elements of a memorable and positive tourism experience. Opinion on each. Whether to remove and/or add.

The tourist:

- Experiences feelings of pleasure (Hedonism).

- The tourist gets renewed in strength or energy (Refreshment/renewal).

- Gets a good impression of the local residents, society, and culture.

- Gains great value or significance from doing or having done something important and valuable (Significance/significance).

- Gains information of interest (increased knowledge).

- Participates (involvement in the production and co-creation of the tourism experience).

- Experiences a new situation (Novelty of the experience).

- Intensifies their experience (taking photos or videos, buying souvenirs...).

- Performs intense social interactions of interest.

- Gains satisfaction with the services received.

- Makes unexpected fortunate and unintended discoveries (serendipity).

E2. Negative MTE. Which attractions of the Aragon Valley (or a specific Aragon Valley destination) have the greatest potential to determine positive MTE in tourists? (you can use the above list of factors as a basis)

Sample of elements of the tourist destination that cause negative MTE:

- Lack of destination security.

- Poor environmental management (lack of sanitary measures, dirt, bad smells, pollution).

- There is insufficient infrastructure and inadequate facilities (hot water, Wi-Fi, signage, tourist information).

- Unexpected incidents: unforeseen negative situations and difficulties during the trip.

- Hostility from residents.

- Unethical business practices (e.g., overcharging, forced consumption).

E3. What factors do you think can cause negative MTE in Aragon Valley destinations?

E4. Do you think it is important for tourism providers to identify negative MTEs and try to avoid them? Do you think something is already being done in this respect?