

COOKING UP PROSPERITY: POP-UP RESTAURANTS, INNOVATION, AND LIFESTYLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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Entrepreneurship is central to diversifying and enhancing the competitiveness of tourism offerings. The current literature underscores a critical oversight in nurturing entrepreneurship for tourism innovation and urges further exploration of entrepreneurial motivations in tourism start-ups. This is particularly relevant because the tourism sector heavily relies on new ventures to drive innovation, as established firms often struggle to meet the growing demand for distinctive and unique travel experiences. This study examines the entrepreneurial journey and innovation process within the tourism scene. Through comprehensive desk research and an in-depth entrepreneur interview, we aim to deepen our insights into the motivations driving entrepreneurs and the innovation processes behind their tourism products and services. Specifically, our research focuses on pop-up restaurants, illuminating their embodiment of innovation and lifestyle entrepreneurship. The findings reveal that a sense of freedom, creativity, and the pursuit of uniqueness stand out as key motivational factors of establishing pop-up restaurants. These motivations extend into a continuous business innovation cycle, as the drive to enhance and offer novel experiences remains paramount. This study elucidates the uncharted territory of tourism entrepreneurship and offers valuable insights into the driving forces and innovative dynamics within this evolving market.

Key words: Entrepreneurship; Pop-up services; Lifestyle; Norway; Restaurant innovation

Introduction

“Pop-up restaurants?”

Ana took the tablet back, practically vibrating with excitement: *“Once a month, even once a week. Fixed menu, unusual locations. Heavy emphasis*

on experience and hospitality . . . tickets were as coveted in the food world as white truffles.” (Carla Laureano, *The Saturday Night Supper Club*)

Carla Laureano did not spare on pleasantries on the novelty and excitement a pop-up restaurant

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brought her characters in her award-winning book, *The Saturday Night Supper Club*. Such excitement is understandable, as pop-up restaurants have consistently in the past decade solidified themselves as a significant player in the industry (Taylor et al., 2018). This is due to pop-up restaurants' unique ability to increase experiential value, a trait increasingly sought by diners, as well as their advantage to be in unique locations otherwise impossible for traditional restaurants—ergo where the tourists and diners are, and wish to be (Bundgaard et al., 2017). Media have also heralded pop-up restaurants in that they allow “chefs of repute to bring their unique experience and talent to shine” (Dwyer, 2017) in other locations, and that at the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic have changed the food scene for the better and how we dine (Ting, 2020). It is therefore unsurprising that world renowned culinary actors such as Danish chef René Redzepi, creator and owner of Michelin star restaurant NOMA, also recently opened a pop-up restaurant in Kyoto, Japan for a duration of 2 months (Jyllands-Posten, 2023).

But what exactly constitutes a pop-up restaurant? The pop-up concept is a temporary experience, a product or service offered for a shorter period before closing or relocating (Jones et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2010). From large urban centers to remote areas, pop-up restaurants offer new elements to gastronomic experiences for locals and visitors alike and have become influential in reshaping local foodscapes (Hjalager & Kwiatkowski, 2023). The temporary nature of the concept gives entrepreneurs the freedom to continuously change their product or service (e.g., the location, the setting itself, or the offered menu). Yet our knowledge about pop-up restaurants still needs to be expanded. Specifically, a deeper understanding of the innovative nature of the pop-up concept in general and its application to gastronomy is needed.

This research aims to trace the innovation process of establishing a pop-up restaurant in three diverse rural settings from the perspective of an innovative lifestyle entrepreneur. The temporary nature is a predominant element that differentiates a pop-up restaurant from a traditional dining experience. Therefore, obtaining a deeper knowledge of an entrepreneur's motivational factors for creating such a temporary experience is of both academic

and managerial relevance. Within the context of pop-up restaurants, we answer Demetry's call (2017) for more research to reveal heterogeneous pathways that entrepreneurs can take when creating new businesses. Many tourism entrepreneurs are often called “lifestyle entrepreneurs” (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000; Bredvold & Skålén, 2016). Lifestyle entrepreneurs are recognized for pursuing a satisfactory and harmonious way of life, and their priorities extend beyond profit and growth, as they base their decisions on subjective criteria rather than objective economic facts (Bredvold & Skålén, 2016; Dias & Silva, 2021). The emphasis on freedom, creativity, and innovation enables lifestyle entrepreneurs to differentiate themselves and create distinctive experiences for tourists. The study aims to deepen our understanding of entrepreneurial motives and the innovation process of a tourism product/service in a changing and developing market. Furthermore, this article explores how pop-up restaurants embody the spirit of innovation and lifestyle entrepreneurship, showcasing their impact on the culinary industry and beyond.

We seek to deepen the knowledge on the phenomena of pop-up restaurants by answering the following research questions:

- RQ1:** What motivates/drives an entrepreneur to start pop-up restaurants?
RQ2: How does an entrepreneur innovate in the pop-up restaurant business?

This study focuses on a specific start-up: PopUp Norge. The company differs from other pop-up restaurants in Norway due to its rural and peripheral locations, and that their business model includes changing menus and chefs each weekend.

Literature Review

Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Tourism

Since the 1980s, innovation has shifted to include immaterial products and service industries, recognized for their innovation potential (Hjalager, 2010). A high proportion of services characterize the tourism industry (Pikkemaat et al., 2019), and the 20th century represents solid innovative activity with significant implications for tourism

(Hjalager, 2015). Service innovation is related to new or improved ways of designing and producing services (Nordli, 2018; Toivonen & Tuominen, 2009). Innovation in services has become a topical issue and appears in several research disciplines, with important contributions in, for example, marketing and management research (Toivonen & Tuominen, 2009). The COVID-19 crisis has also inspired innovation in the industry (Hoff-Jørgensen & Leer, 2022).

Innovation is especially important for businesses in changing markets (Alsos et al., 2014). Coenen and Morgan (2020) stated that innovation has become a global buzzword and that it is a phenomenon to which many decision-makers in public and private sectors aspire, as it is seen as a key determinant of growth. Innovation has been recognized as a strategic issue for growth and long-term-oriented success for hospitality enterprises, organizations, and destinations (Dragin-Jensen et al., 2022). The phenomenon has been widely accepted as a critical factor for success (Pikkemaat et al., 2019) and is considered a decisive driving force for companies' value creation and competitiveness. However, wider societal goals beyond economic growth, jobs, and competitiveness are now being debated (Coenen & Morgan, 2020). Due to innovations, cognitive and social challenges in tourism have been eased, giving the industry more control and predictability over different situations (Hjalager, 2015). However, companies in the tourism industry need to be creative and adaptable to be successful with their innovation work, whether it involves developing something new or renewing existing products and services (Hjalager et al., 2018).

Throughout history, tourism has been a phenomenon characterized by immense innovativeness, and the role of entrepreneurship is an important determinant of innovation. Entrepreneurship and innovation are connected in many ways (Sorcau et al., 2022). Hall and Williams (2008) argued that "the two concepts of innovation and entrepreneurship overlap in key ways, not least because many definitions of the latter implicate, explicitly or implicitly, notions of innovation" (p. 202). The tourism industry is subject to changes due to continuous shifts in consumer preferences and the introduction of new technology (Hall & Williams, 2008). Entrepreneurs are considered "creative destructors" who

set new standards with their concepts, products, and ideas (Hjalager, 2010, p. 4). Furthermore, with their innovativeness, entrepreneurs radically shift customers' tastes and preferences (Hjalager, 2010). Entrepreneurs create a disturbance through innovation. They disturb the original balance between demand and production by changing the production process or introducing new products. This disturbance leads to existing relationships being replaced by something new (Hall & Williams, 2008), which is why entrepreneurship is crucial for diversifying tourism products and increasing competitiveness (Hjalager, 2010).

Entrepreneurs in tourism are considered by many to have limited innovativeness and, to start with, relatively scarce business skills (Hjalager, 2010; Lerner & Haber, 2001; Morrison et al., 1999). New businesses quickly enter some tourism segments; however, many entrepreneurs also fail (Getz & Petersen, 2005; Hjalager, 2010). The tourism industry depends on new businesses to support innovation in offering more experience-based products. However, to a limited extent, established firms have been able to innovate successfully to meet the increased demand for unique tourist experiences (Solvoll et al., 2015).

The theory of disruptive innovation explains how large and successful organizations in different industries have been overturned by smaller start-ups (Christensen, 1997; Raynor, 2011). By entering what could be considered small and unattractive markets for successful organizations, such start-ups purposefully established a position for themselves. Furthermore, as larger organizations mainly focus on their established customer's needs, start-ups capture new, often smaller, markets. This strategic move leads to start-ups being in a position where further progress can be made, improving the initial offerings that would allow them to compete effectively for larger markets (Christensen, 1997; Raynor, 2011). By employing a business model tailored to the needs of the smaller markets while improving their original solution in ways that larger organizations cannot replicate, start-ups perform a "disruptive" strategy. Studying the interplay between the disruptive innovation/entrepreneurship theory and the context of pop-up restaurants would provide new insights into the phenomenon of this (relatively) new dining concept.

Ateljevic and Doorne (2000) stated, “key descriptors of the entrepreneur have come to include: risk-taking, innovation, creativity, alertness and insight” (p. 380). Entrepreneurial behavior to implement needed innovations is necessary for transitioning to more experience-based products in tourism (Sundbo et al., 2007). Experience-based products and services, to a greater extent, supplement or replace traditional hospitality services in accommodation, transport, and food (Alsos & Andreassen, 2015). The pop-up phenomenon is a creative experience-based response to traditional food-related hospitality services.

Lifestyle Entrepreneurship

Existing research commonly refers to entrepreneurs in tourism as “lifestyle entrepreneurs” (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000; Bredvold & Skålén, 2016). A considerable number of tourism enterprises are managed by lifestyle entrepreneurs who actively seek to contribute to sustainable change, foster community development, and actively engage as proactive members of their local communities (Carlsen et al., 2008; Cederholm & Hultman, 2010; Fuchs et al., 2021). Lifestyle entrepreneurs are recognized for pursuing a satisfactory and harmonious way of life, managing the interplay between their economic, family, and social life. Their priorities extend beyond profit and growth, as they base their decision making on subjective criteria rather than on objective economic facts (Bredvold & Skålén, 2016; Dias & Silva, 2021).

Lifestyle entrepreneurs in tourism create and manage businesses that align with their interests, passions, and desired way of life. Lifestyle entrepreneurs exhibit profound intrinsic motivations in their businesses, perceiving them as avenues for expressing their aspirations for creativity, independence, and freedom. Their driving forces include the creation of purposeful employment opportunities and the operation of businesses rooted in social, cultural, and environmental values rather than purely economic principles (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000; Fuchs, 2022; Fuchs et al., 2021). The emphasis on creativity and innovation enables lifestyle entrepreneurs to differentiate themselves in the industry and create distinctive experiences for tourists. Lifestyle entrepreneurs use the opportunities

within societal changes and new trends using local, cultural, and natural resources (Bredvold & Skålén, 2016; Fuchs et al., 2021; Kwiatkowski et al., 2021).

Pop-up Restaurants: An Alternative Dining Concept

In the literature, there is limited research on the pop-up phenomenon, even though it is considered a significant trend in the food service industry (Taylor et al., 2018). The same trend can be seen in, for example, the retail industry, with the increase in pop-up retail experiences offered worldwide, which are often used to market products and/or services. Large and small businesses have embraced pop-up retail to provide an experiential environment desired by consumers, building a brand’s image, and attracting attention (Kim et al., 2010). Pop-up shops are widely seen as temporary, as a store appears and disappears quickly, and their life span can range from just 24 hr to a few days and weeks up to a year (Jones et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2010). Although there is limited research on pop-ups in the food service industry, examples from pop-ups in the retail industry can thus be used as a foundation when defining pop-up restaurants and dining experiences. As with pop-ups in the retail industry, pop-up restaurants and dining experiences are temporary and allow guests to participate in experiences that are very often new and unique (including menu, service, atmosphere, setting, etc.). Pop-ups have been dubbed the alternative start-ups of the food service industry (Demetry, 2017), and continue to receive recognition in the industry, as the American Culinary Federation (a professional organization for chefs and cooks) has recognized pop-up restaurants and pop-up dining events as a growing trend in providing interesting experiences and foods (Taylor et al., 2018). Hoff-Jørgensen and Leer (2022) stated that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the global trend of opening food events increased, and highlighted the importance of having different design strategies in such uncertain times. For example, the NOMA restaurant in Copenhagen, known for “local, seasonal, foraged, vegetable-focused cuisine,” was transformed into a burger pop-up restaurant during the COVID-19 pandemic (Hoff-Jørgensen & Leer, 2022).

Novel and innovative ways to accommodate diners' and visitors' desire for new experiences have emerged in recent years (Niehm et al., 2006). The temporary nature of pop-up stores may appeal to consumers seeking diverse experiences (Kim et al., 2010). Pop-up concepts have been developed in various spaces, shapes, sizes, and locations, offering consumers various products and services (Jones et al., 2017). This includes original settings such as shopping centers, local shopping areas, and more creative settings such as buses, vans, former shipping containers, disused factories and warehouses, canal boats, rooftop terraces, car parks, and locations on the street. The pop-up concept, with both retail and restaurants, is also increasingly visible at different sporting events and music and arts festivals (Jones et al., 2017). Locality is not only perceived through food but also includes a larger cultural frame reflecting local, national, and global dimensions (Aaltojärvi et al., 2018).

Food experiences can influence tourists' travel decisions and are considered a valuable and valued experience in tourism (Henderson, 2016). There is a growing demand for new and unique dining experiences. Diners are searching for and visiting pop-up restaurants because they are perceived as an experience with an increased experimental value compared to what traditional restaurants are offering (Taylor et al., 2018). Pop-up restaurants highlight a growing trend to provide an appealing combination of experiences and food. As pop-up restaurants are temporary, it is important to understand diners' perceptions regarding the multidimensions of pop-up dining experience compared to traditional dining in "normal" restaurants (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al., 2013).

Pop-up restaurants provide new marketing opportunities, define expectations, and create new frames of interpretation of a unique place, food, and scenery. Food is considered a central theme in destination marketing and can function as a tool when communicating the desired image of a destination in the market (Henderson, 2016). A pop-up event is a convenient way for restaurants to test a theme for experimental dining, as the risk is not as high as it would be to make permanent changes in a restaurant (Aaltojärvi et al., 2018). Furthermore, Taylor et al. (2018) examined the relationship between value–relationship quality and relationship

quality–behavioral intentions in the pop-up restaurant industry. The results showed that the experiential value of pop-ups leads to increased relationship quality (reflected in satisfaction with and trust in pop-ups). This, in turn, leads to increased positive behavioral intentions, including intentions to spread positive WOM and intention to return. Respondents reported positive feelings toward pop-ups, highlighting that the concept provides an exciting atmosphere and enjoyable dining experiences and services (Taylor et al., 2018).

Case Description

The Norwegian food and beverage scene has developed rapidly over the past 15 years, and today gastronomy, culinary experiences, and local food are important drivers in the tourism industry. However, Norway does not yet have enough impact in this regard in the international arena. Therefore, further efforts are needed to tap into the potential the food and beverage scene can offer and reinforce Norway's position as an attractive destination (Innovation Norway, 2021). Such tourism strategies have also been used internationally with success, coined either as food tourism, gastronomy tourism, or culinary tourism (Henderson, 2016).

PopUp Norge, the case company this study is based on, offers a cultural experience where urban culinary arts are in focus (<https://www.popupnorge.com/>). PopUp Norge is a unique concept, in that a different team of chefs are invited each weekend to take over the kitchen, allowing guests to experience a unique set menu of 7–10 courses with the chefs' specialties, ranging from, for example, neo-Nordic to Spanish, to Japanese tasting experiences. Until 2023, the pop-up dining experience was also unique in that it offered its urban culinary arts in three distinct, rural, or peripheral locations (Fig. 1).

PopUp Otternes was located in an authentic traditional Norwegian village yard, Otternes Bygdetun, and was open for guests during the summer seasons of 2021 and 2022. The second experience, PopUp Svalbard, was located in an old, closed mine, Gruve 3, on the Svalbard Islands—a Norwegian archipelago in the Arctic Ocean during the winter seasons of 2022 and 2023. For the summer of 2023, the business changed its location to a light-house on a remote island outside Bodø, Northern



Figure 1. PopUp Norge's locations.

Norway. This will also be the location for the summer season of 2024, due to the town being awarded the European Capital of Culture title in 2024. The dining experience is offered every weekend (Thursday–Saturday) for approximately 8 weeks.

Methodology

This study adopts a case study approach to deepen the understanding of entrepreneurial motives and the innovation process of a tourism product/service in a changing and developing market. Furthermore, this article explores how pop-up restaurants embody the spirit of innovation and lifestyle entrepreneurship, showcasing their impact on the culinary industry and beyond. As the knowledge about pop-up restaurants is still fragmented (due to their temporary nature and impact in a gastronomic context), a deeper understanding of the innovative nature of the pop-up concept in general is needed. A case study is particularly useful when an in-depth appreciation of an issue, event, activity, process, or phenomenon in its

real-life context needs to be obtained (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Crowe et al., 2011). This has been a common research method in sociology and arises from the desire to understand social phenomena (Bukve, 2021; Yin, 2014). The research design was considered beneficial as innovation in tourism has been described as a critical factor for success and is being recognized as a strategic issue for achieving growth and long-term success (Dragin-Jensen et al., 2022; Pikkemaat et al., 2019). Moreover, in-depth information about innovation in tourism products in its natural real-life context needs to be obtained. This study aims to explore this topic from the perspective of entrepreneurs. The case study design is established in a wide variety of fields and disciplines, particularly in the social sciences, and is well suited to capturing information on more explanatory “how,” “what,” and “why” questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Crowe et al., 2011; Yin, 2014).

To answer the presented research questions, a qualitative research method is considered the most effective method when paired with the case study approach. Qualitative research methods are essential for studying the complex and multifaceted phenomena—in our case, innovation and lifestyle entrepreneurship in rural and peripheral tourism. Unlike quantitative methods, which focus on numerical data and statistical analysis, qualitative methods emphasize exploring meaning, context, and subjective experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This signifies that qualitative research can contribute to theory building by uncovering new insights. Moreover, there is a strong plea that tourism innovation needs to be addressed in multiple ways and with several methodological approaches (Hjalager, 2010). This article contributes to this call of diversifying methodological approaches when assessing tourism innovation.

It is important to emphasize that the case study approach has also attracted criticism. Many researchers believe that the method is only appropriate for the exploratory phase of an investigation (Yin, 2014). However, it is argued that case studies are important in innovation research because they contribute to insights and explanatory value (Hjalager, 2010). Thus, in case study research, qualitative methods offer a comprehensive understanding of a subject and can be used to uncover

the depth and complexity of the pop-up restaurant phenomenon. As the case study approach demands multiple sources of data, this study has used desk research and a semistructured interview to obtain the necessary information and data. Extensive desk research has been conducted. The web page and corresponding media outlets of PopUp Norge activities provided the empirical grounds for developing further insights into the development process of decision-making surrounding the innovation process of creating and managing pop-up restaurants. The data from this research have been analyzed and provide insights into the environment in which PopUp Norge was established and the surrounding factors that influence its continuous development. Following the results from the desk research, an interview guide was developed. The interview guide was tested before an in-depth interview was conducted with the CEO and founder of PopUp Norge. A semistructured in-depth interview was employed to obtain rich and detailed data that could illuminate the underlying motivations, dilemmas, and resources in the innovation processes. Since potentially sensitive information was being collected, The Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (Sikt) was informed of the study, and the interview guide was approved. The data have been handled according to the data protection legislation. The respondent was given a consent form and informed about the opportunity to withdraw from the research at any time. As the data were collected from only one entrepreneur (PopUp Norge), the data are not anonymous and was explained to the respondent before the interview began. The collected data from the interview are stored safely at the database of the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences.

The in-depth interview was conducted digitally during August 2023 and lasted 1 hr and 10 min until reaching the point of saturation. The interview questions were aimed at finding information regarding the innovation process of establishing and managing pop-up restaurants, as well as the entrepreneur's own motives for starting such a business. This included questions regarding idea generation, resources, and innovation. In total, 12 questions were asked, in addition to follow-up questions based on our conversation.

Analyzing interviews is a crucial step in qualitative research, as it is helpful for deriving meaning, identifying patterns, and generating insights from the collected data (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The in-depth interview was recorded and later transcribed. The empirical results from the interview provide the baseline for further desk research, which involved an analysis of the literature and online information regarding pop-up restaurants in the case of PopUp Norge. The combination of primary and secondary data is the basis of insights into the phenomena of pop-up restaurants. Elements that highlighted key questions were identified and systematically condensed into concepts. Coding and condensing can provide structure and an overview of the comprehensive data material that is often retrieved from an interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The main features and concepts further contributed to generating a meaningful understanding of entrepreneurial decisions in the innovation process of establishing and managing pop-up restaurants.

Results

The PopUp Norge Experience: Unique Locations, Food and Service

The respondent described the company's services and experiences in the following way: "Eight weeks. Eight different teams of chefs." Most of the visiting guest chefs would take time off from their daily work to enjoy cooking in the pop-up restaurant, often during their vacation. In the summer season of 2023, for example, chefs Yongsang Lee and June Son, the owner of J2, an exclusive Korean restaurant in Oslo, spent a week at the Landego lighthouse outside Bodø. With the challenges that come with being located on a remote island, chef Lee stated in an interview with national media that: "It's a big challenge, but it's a unique opportunity to meet new guests and serve Korean food in our own way and with Norwegian ingredients" (Salater & Jensen, 2023). Using local food is an integral part of PopUp Norge's pop-up concept, often providing a unique twist on the chefs' menus. Chef Son further explained: "We had fish delivered the other day, and it was so fresh that the salmon was still alive. We are also out harvesting food on

the island ourselves. For example, we have used seaweed in one of the dishes” (Salater & Jensen, 2023). Furthermore, the unique locations, including a traditional village yard from the 1700s, a former mine, and now, the over 120-year-old Landego lighthouse, are an essential part of the pop-up experience.

The PopUp Norge management team hand-picks these locations and considers unique history to be a crucial factor when deciding on a location. The locations must be rural or peripheral, which is a strategic choice in differentiating them from other pop-up restaurant experiences that are primarily located in urban centers (Jones et al., 2017). The respondent corroborates this, stating that, “we want to be located at locations where no one would even believe it would be possible to have such an experience” and “we choose destinations where we can tell a story and where there are fine food traditions.” History, storytelling, and personalized service are important elements of the experience, and pop-up restaurants are often perceived as an experience with an increased experimental value compared to that of traditional restaurants (Taylor et al., 2018). This is further cemented when looking at the Landego lighthouse pop-up experience, where the evening starts with the guests being transported by boat to the island, followed by a 7–10 course set menu with paired wine.

The PopUp Norge-team consists of what the founder described as “an experienced group of women with long experience in different roles in the tourism industry,” who have a solid knowledge of how to create memorable experiences and deliver high-quality service. This experience came to the forefront at PopUp Norge’s inception, established because of, and during, the COVID-19 pandemic. As the respondent adds, “COVID-19 was heavy, especially in our industry. There was such an uncertainty. So, when we started, everyone thought it was exciting . . . the first year, it was a long time since people have cooked, right, because of the pandemic. So, everyone was positive about something happening.” The timeline from starting a pop-up restaurant to opening was short: “This was a crazy idea that we came up with in March, and then we opened in June.” This is in line with current

research, in that the global trend of opening food events increased during the COVID-19 pandemic (Hoff-Jørgensen & Leer, 2022) and that the crisis also inspired innovation and new design strategies for the tourism and event industry (Dragin-Jensen et al., 2022).

Motivation and Inspiration for Setting the Pop-up Dining Venture

Several motivational factors that are often described by typical lifestyle entrepreneurs arose during the interview. In line with previous research on lifestyle entrepreneurship (Carlsen et al., 2008; Cederholm & Hultman, 2010; Fuchs et al., 2021), the respondent described herself with characteristics or personal traits that included wanting to contribute to sustainable change, to foster community development, and to be a proactive member of the local communities where the pop-up restaurants are located. The motivation to start pop-up restaurants stemmed from personal interest and passion rather than an economic interest. This is corroborated by Bredvold and Skålén (2016), Dias and Silva (2021), Fuchs et al. (2021), and Fuchs (2022), arguing that, for example, the social, cultural, and environmental values are seen as more important than economic principles for a lifestyle entrepreneur. The main motivation was connected to creating an experience that the PopUp Norge team wishes to experience themselves while visiting a restaurant: “All we have taken with us into this is what we want to experience in a restaurant ourselves: the storytelling, the food and the wine experiences.” Characteristics such as an aspiration for creativity, independence, and freedom were also mentioned during the interview. While for many the temporary nature of running a pop-up restaurant could be seen as a significant hurdle in running a business, this was actually highlighted as an important motivational factor several times, with the respondent stating that “you are not locked for more than a certain period of time” and that “there is a freedom in knowing it is for a limited period.” In the case of the PopUp Norge experience, this is approximately 2 months per location. Even though the respondent mentioned that the period in which they are open is intense and consists of hard work with long hours, they highlighted that the limited

number of weeks they are open was an essential factor as to why the pop-up concept was suitable for them.

Another motivational factor when establishing the company was “to show what we ourselves think is beautiful and offer what we like ourselves”—beyond the scope of a dining experience. The respondent stated, “I think Norway is such an incredibly beautiful country, a destination that is truly unique.” She continued by stating that she has traveled extensively, both for leisure and business, and is adamant that not every tourism business shows the standard that she wishes to show tourists as well as locals. An important distinction to note, as according to the respondent, the visitor make-up of PopUp Norge is approximately 50% tourists and 50% locals. This drive to deliver unique and high-quality experiences was reflected when starting PopUp Norge, where she was able to shape the company in the exact way that she wanted to (i.e., by inviting the gourmet chefs she wanted her guests to experience). She did not necessarily have the customer group or foundation to do this at her previous workplace (she had previously been the owner of a traditional mountain hotel located in the Sognefjord region). Having the chance to meet and work with people with a genuine passion for tourism and gastronomy has been a highlight during their 3 years in business. Furthermore, having the chance to be a part of different teams that create high-quality food experiences has been valuable: word-of-mouth between chefs, nationally and internationally, has spread; chefs are now contacting her with the question of “what does it take and how they can become a guest chef at the pop-up restaurant” in the future. The response from the industry, as well as from guests, is a motivational factor to continue to develop the experience. The respondent cited a best-case scenario where several “foodies,” both young and old, had visited all three locations, and had actually planned their vacation around where the pop-up restaurants were located. This corroborates with research from Taylor et al. (2018), whose findings suggested that pop-up dining events offer guests an engaging atmosphere and enjoyable experience, all while ensuring excellent service. These assets contribute to higher levels of trust and satisfaction, leading to increased intention among guests

to revisit, positive word-of-mouth and willingness to pay for offered services.

An Innovative Approach to Restaurant Locations, Culinary Teams, and Local Partnerships

A positive outcome of receiving positive feedback from the industry is that PopUp Norge is now in a position where tourism businesses and destinations are contacting them, offering them their local facilities and locations as to where the next pop-up destination should be. The tourism industry depends on new businesses to support innovation and offer more experience-based products and services (Solvoll et al., 2015), and in this way, PopUp Norge has succeeded and is growing each year. The pop-up phenomenon is a creative experience-based response to traditional food-related hospitality services. A vital element of their pop-up experience is their (so far) three unique locations. The respondent emphasized that their next location must be something new and of equally unique stature to the previous locations.

Their time frame per location is 2 years. The entrepreneur explained, “we have been 2 years at each location, and that is what the project is about. We were 2 years at Otternes, 2 years at Svalbard, and now we are at this lighthouse location, which will also be the location for next summer.” While they have decided to keep the basic elements of the experience similar each time, she explained that many guests come back several times during the period as the experience differentiates since they have a new guest team of chefs each weekend. This also occurs for the following year, and she states, “We have made it very clear that we do not want the same chefs in the same location the following year. However, we have had the same chefs visiting us at the different locations. One team has been with us in Otternes and Svalbard and is now coming to Bodø. In that way, the local community gets new chefs. However, we have worked with them earlier and know it is a great fit.” This benefits the company, as they know the guest team of chefs will deliver the quality they expect while returning guests will experience new locations and experiences. The innovation lies in the dynamic approach to maintaining a consistent core experience while introducing novelty and variety through a rotating

team of chefs. By featuring a new guest team of chefs each weekend and changing locations every 2 years, the company ensures a differentiated experience for returning guests. This innovation adds a unique element to the traditional dining model, fostering a sense of anticipation and exploration for customers who can enjoy the similarities of the overall experience while also being exposed to new culinary talents and diverse locations. This dynamic approach enhances customer engagement and satisfaction, contributing to the overall success and appeal of the company's business model.

The use of local food produce is essential to the experience. A positive outcome of their partnering up with local food producers is the extended effects it has had on small local food producers in particular. The respondent noted that this is an element that they are planning to expand further, stating, "There is a huge interest for local food everywhere, but many local food producers have problems with distribution." The respondent provided an example from the seasons when they were operating in Otternes, as a local food producer delivered their products to the teams of chefs, and these chefs later ordered the producer's products for their restaurants. Because of this, they reached a market they likely would not have reached without partnering up with PopUp Norge. In this way, PopUp Norge has functioned as a distributor between local food producers and the teams of chefs visiting the restaurant. The management team has discussed how to create more synergies for small local food producers around Norway. Their next project involves creating a "local food coffin," a collection of high-quality local food products that they bring to each location for the team of chefs to use. The innovation lies in the company's strategic partnership with local food producers, creating a mutually beneficial relationship. This collaboration has the potential to significantly boost the sales and market exposure of local food producers who may otherwise struggle with distribution challenges. This is a significant finding, as food—particularly food tourism—is seen as a potential starting point for a more regenerative, equitable and inclusive tourism future (Fountain, 2022). This is innovative as the dining experience is not only centered around local food but also actively contributes to the growth and sustainability of small local food producers, fostering

a more regenerative and inclusive approach to gastronomy tourism.

Furthermore, during the last year, PopUp Norge has expanded its business to include pop-up events. An example is an event where the team served lunch on the Jostedalsglacier to a group of tourists. A Norwegian high-end travel agency hired PopUp Norge to do this event, and by partnering with such agencies, the team has more strings to play on in the future. For the summer of 2024, the PopUp Norge team plans to arrive at Landego lighthouse earlier to obtain customers from the business market in the region by hosting summer parties for local companies in the Bodø region, for example. Whether this will impact expanding the season (8 weeks) is still to be decided. This strategic move to target the business market showcases an innovative approach. This approach not only broadens the company's service offerings but also opens new revenue streams and partnerships, as evidenced by the collaboration with the travel agency.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated how a pop-up restaurant embodies the spirit of innovation and lifestyle entrepreneurship, showcasing its impact on the gastronomy industry and beyond. It is the first contribution to the pop-up concept created in Norwegian gastronomy settings.

The results indicate that pop-up restaurants provide a special market opportunity that creates new settings for food consumption and interpretation, allowing potential owners to successfully link a lifestyle entrepreneurial passion with a more comprehensive societal mission related to promotion and empowering unique places, resources, and people in a business–passion symbiosis. As the results indicate, the entrepreneur is very well networked. This can be a case-specific result driven mainly by the personal traits of the owner. Pop-up restaurants offer new meaning to a traditional gastronomic experience, allowing the transition of knowledge, formats, and trends from urban centers to "local places," ultimately converting their local assets into new formats and tourist attractions.

This study also shows that pop-up restaurants can offer an excellent experience for residents and tourists by allowing them to immerse themselves

in different culinary traditions, both local and external. Therefore, pop-up restaurants can serve as getaways for tourists to local culinary products, customs, and traditions. In contrast, for locals, restaurants can provide a window into global culinary trends and experiences. This double offer and mining of pop-up restaurants, combined with their temporary and, in many places, new formats, results in a truly unique phenomenon of high societal and entrepreneurial value. The concept of “localness” with regards to food has enjoyed a rapid growth in many European countries (Denver et al., 2019), and coupled with responsible tourism paradigms gaining momentum—that is, stewardship (Liburd et al., 2022) and regenerative tourism (Bellato et al., 2023)—offers unique opportunities and implications for both academics and practitioners. Future research should assess if pop-up restaurants contribute to a more responsible manner of tourism (and if they do not, how can they adapt). Moreover, stewardship only functions optimally in a fully private–public governance model (Imbsen et al., 2021), and local DMOs, municipalities, and governments should take a strategic standpoint on how to best support pop-up restaurants to showcase their “localness.” Traditional restaurants might also wish to exhibit a push-back on these initiatives as this signifies that constant new competitors will arise, so local institutions need to understand the necessary balancing act to keep both parties satisfied.

Considering the motivational dimension, the result shows that the owner of the PopUp Norge is characterized by a potent mixture of classical “lifestyle” motivational factors seen before in the literature and a high degree of place embodiment and place uniqueness acknowledgment that defies business uniqueness. The uniqueness of the locations seems to be central in decision-making and, to a large degree, the operation of an entire business. Furthermore, robust environmental and awareness of local products was uncovered in this inquiry as another critical factor allowing PopUp Norge to become a successful, innovative company with good prospects for further development and change. The uniqueness of location, coupled with local produce, offers practical implications. For restaurateurs, this can offer unique possibilities to expand (temporary) operations to unique

locations, where they can host potential boons such as increased revenues, positive word of mouth, and increased experience and employee satisfaction. Oppositely, destinations can also heighten the quality and variety of their local food scene by highlighting the uniqueness of their location, as well as ensuring support and an environment that encourages pop-up restaurants to appear. Future research should focus on what specific elements demarcates a unique location—local produce, access to nature, unique heritage sites and other locations, available clientele base, etc., and how important these different dimensions are to lifestyle entrepreneurs.

The company, per se, is also characterized by a high degree of innovation potential, starting from the unique business settings and company positioning and ending with the offer that links local culinary resources with the global world. Although all three elements have been seen previously in different settings and contexts, the way they have been associated is genuinely new and entrepreneurially innovative.

This study is not without its limitations. As there was only one company, PopUp Norge, being studied, the presented results do not represent all pop-up restaurant entrepreneurs. While the case study approach offers rich and detailed information for deeper study, it also limits the findings to delivering context-specific knowledge. Further research could try to investigate other pop-up restaurants in different locations and with different missions to provide a wider picture of the pop-up concept applied in gastronomy settings.

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