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Exploring the Experience of Creative Tourism in the Northern Region of Portugal—A Gender Perspective

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Abstract: Creative tourism is a quite recent tourism segment that has been rapidly diffused all over the world. Nevertheless, studies on this segment were not concerned, until present, with the differences in gender intention, evaluation and the overall satisfaction regarding creative tourism activities. For that, this paper examines these three components from a gender perspective regarding the creative tourism activities developed by CREATOUR pilots in the northern region of mainland Portugal between 2017 and 2019. The methods used were quantitative in nature. Five hundred and ninety-five questionnaires were applied to the participants in the 45 creative tourism activities developed by the 10 pilot institutions selected to join the CREATOUR project (Creative Tourism Destination Development in Small Cities and Rural Areas). The questionnaire used consisted of 31 closed questions aimed at the profile, the motivations, the perception and the evaluation of activities by the participants. It used descriptive statistics and discriminate analysis. The main results show that men and women had similar demographic characteristics (e.g., age and educational level), but they were significantly different in some variables, such as their intention to participate in creative activities, and their evaluation and overall satisfaction with their personal experiences. It is statistically confirmed that, based on their experiences in creative tourism, men and women fall into different clusters.

Keywords: creative tourism; creative activities; gender; Northern Portugal

1. Introduction

In the age of the experience economy, tourists are becoming more active and they seek to be involved in new experiences; they crave holiday experiences that may actually change their lives rather than simply packing their schedule with a variety of entertaining experiences [1–7]. Contemporary societies are moving towards an economy where cultural competence, together with human and organizational creativity, acts as the driving force [8,9]. Creativity and innovation are seen as key components in destination management strategies. The concept of creativity, which is at present widely used in tourism literature, is defined as the way host communities, which harbour the entire range of cultural heritage events and actors, may be re-designed and regenerated as creative cultural spaces, while using all their tangible and intangible cultural assets [10]. These two concepts, i.e., creativity and innovation, are crucial in creative tourism. This recent tourism segment must show the capacity to develop the main conditions for the exercise of creativity and the participation of tourists in creative workshops and activities, as well as the ability to provide a crucial, true and authentic tourist experience. This segment was first defined in 2000 by Richards and Raymond [11] as an extension or a reaction to cultural tourism, the latter being one of the segments of tourism that is significantly contributing to the economic development of tourist destinations [12,13]. According to Richards

and Raymond [11], creative tourism is a segment of tourism which offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential by actively participating in learning experiences offered in the holiday destination. In their view, this leads to the self-development of every tourist who participates in creative activities. Therefore, the basic concept of creative tourism derives from these tourists' experiences while learning from the traditional and cultural context of the environment. In the last few years, creative tourism has been in an uphill battle against massified cultural tourism and is trying to be an alternative to such a saturated segment, by aiming to contribute towards the sustainable development of destinations and their local communities.

Despite its fast diffusion all over the world, creative tourism is not yet a consolidated segment in tourism and relies solely on twenty years of existence, at least as far as a clear definition is concerned [13]. Also, there are not yet many studies that deal with the investigation of creative tourism and creative tourists. Likewise, there are few studies concerning the differences between men and women in this particular segment and in particular, taking into consideration less urbanized territories. In recent decades several studies have appeared that analyse the different preferences of both men and women in choosing destinations, particularly cities, and their perception of the attributes of destinations, particularly cultural destinations [14]. Nevertheless, it is not yet common to study the different perceptions of gender intention, evaluation and satisfaction regarding creative tourism activities.

Strategy planners see the potential in developing the creative sector to enhance the competitiveness of the region. In order to successfully do so, Richards and Wilson [15] emphasised that it is important to determine the relationship between the resources of that area and the needs of tourists. In fact, this highlights the connection between supply and demand. Creativity and the consequence, innovation, requires a suitable environment and sufficient resources. In addition, the ability to participate is a prerequisite for creativity [15]. However, not all groups in a community should be expected to be homogeneous in their attitudes towards tourism [16] and gender offers a basic means to gather insights into such differences, as to the support provided to all economic development options, including tourism. Though gender differences derive from biological factors [17], they are reinforced by societal norms and roles that steer judgements and decisions, particularly within cultural settings where males continue to dominate the traditional workplace and women the family household [18]. Prior research has demonstrated that women have, on average, a higher attachment to their communities than men [19,20] and evoke a higher level of concern for initiatives when their local communities are bound to be impacted [21–23].

No studies have so far examined tourists' attitudes towards creative tourism from a gender perspective; we developed, between 2017 and 2019, research to examine the experience of the CREATOUR Project in the northern region of Portugal from a gender standpoint, a central axis that remains marginal in tourism studies literature depicting post structural or postcolonial perspectives. Five hundred and ninety-five participants in the 45 creative activities organised by ten pilot institutions within that period were analysed.

The CREATOUR Project (Creative Tourism Destination Development in Small Cities and Rural Areas) was an incubator/demonstration and multidisciplinary research initiative, supporting collaborative research processes, which was developed from November 2016 to June 2020 (<https://creatour.pt/en/>), funded under the Joint Activities Programme of Portugal 2020, by COMPETE 2020, POR Lisboa, POR Algarve and FCT—the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology. The project aimed to develop a sustainable creative tourism sector in order to boost tourism in small-sized cities and rural areas of mainland Portugal, as well as to meaningfully contribute towards local cultural vibrancy and the holistic development in pilot communities. The main goal of this paper is to examine the intention, evaluation and overall satisfaction among both men and women as to the creative tourism activities developed by CREATOUR pilots in the northern region of mainland Portugal between 2017 and 2019. Five hundred and ninety-five questionnaires were applied to those who participated in the creative tourism activities implemented by the 10 pilot institutions selected to

join the CREATOUR Project. For the analysis of the data, descriptive and analytical statistics were processed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 25) software programme.

This paper is organised in 5 sections. After some issues discussed in the Introduction, Section 2 discusses the research framework and some main studies covering gender within the tourism field. The material and methods are presented in Section 3, followed by the main results, which are discussed in Section 4. The final section presents the main conclusions and directions for future research.

2. Research Framework

Tourism has only recently begun to be critiqued as the world's most gender-segregated service sector or the world's most gender-role stereotyped industry [24,25]. Even if more marginal than feminist critiques informed by economics and structuralism theories, its research is underpinned by post-structural and post-colonial feminist theories that offer a critique of the social-cultural nexus of gender-power relations in tourism [26].

Cultural tourism, as one of the fastest growing segments [14,27], is also one of the segments that has demonstrated a gendered influence, as confirmed by Silberberg [28] in the late nineties, in a pioneer study. A number of socio-demographic characteristics (higher level of education, being older, earning more money than the average and spending more money at destination) are associated with cultural tourism; in addition, women tend to experience this kind of segment at a larger scale [28]. Later, several studies (e.g., [14,29]) confirmed this profile of the cultural tourist, but revealed that some changes were taking place, with particular relevance to the fact that younger groups of tourists became more representative in cultural tourism destinations.

The profile of cultural tourists has been well documented since the late 1990s; it can give us some clues as to the creative tourist participating in creative activities. Creative tourism can be assumed to be an extension or a reaction to cultural tourism [11]; therefore something can be learnt from the several studies published on the profile of cultural tourists. According to UNESCO [30]—p. 3, creative tourism is defined as “travel geared towards an engaged and authentic experience, with participative learning in the arts, heritage, or special character of a place, and it provides a connection with those who reside in this place and create this living culture”.

Some studies confirm that there is no consensus on the profile of creative tourists, but they tend to ask for an active participation in creative activities and want to have great involvement with the local community [31,32]. They can be involved in dancing, painting or photo art or in handicraft workshops. They can also be involved in artistic residences where creativity can emerge and be tested. This magic word (creativity) derives from its elastic and democratic consumption and such is the basis of creative tourism.

Tourism activity is gendered in its construction, in presentation and, obviously, in its consumption [33]. One must not forget that tourism is a process constructed out of gendered societies and “all aspects of tourism-related development and activity embody gender relations” [16]—p. 145. Although it is commonly believed that, in modern times, the differences between the travel patterns of men and women are much less pronounced than before, gender differences related to traveling and tourism remain substantive [34]. In short, tourism needs to be considered not just as a type of business or industry, but as a powerful cultural arena and process that both shapes and is shaped by gendered (re)presentations of places, people, nations and cultures. In fact, tourism, as leisure traveling and the industry that supports it, is built on human relations, and thus impacts and is impacted by global and local gender relations [35]. Therefore, learning about the activities and interests of potential tourists from a gendered standpoint is vital to the planning and marketing of tourism resorts. However, the research conducted to address gender in tourism [24,35] has been manifestly limited and feminist research does not exist as a subfield of tourism [33]. It is observed that there is a lack of gender-specific concerns and a prevailing male bias in tourism research, where no allowance is made for gender differences in social research, because of a gender bias which subsumes female behaviour into that of the dominant male patterns [36]. As a result, the failure to fully recognise and integrate gender

perspectives with the design and marketing of tourist products would lead to gender-blind marketing and consumer dissatisfaction [37].

In terms of differences, perhaps the most telling finding is the consistently higher ranking of all potential motivations for agro-tourism by women as opposed to men [38]. Several studies have found that women frame problems and solutions in a different way than men. Studies in recent years indicate that women are more likely to be the primary leisure vacation planner and “gatekeeper” of the household tourism decision-making process among western couples and families [39,40]. However, men make decisions faster and intuitively, while women take into account the views of their families and friends and are influenced by their social networks [41,42]. These differences occur, in part, because women are socialised to be more empathic, caring of others and the environment, more interdependent and collectivistic, and are likely to be more adept at teamwork [22,41–44]. These attitudes and behaviours ultimately influence information processing and decision making, where women engage in a decision-making process that is more effortful and comprehensive when compared to the one of males engaged in selective information processes [17]. It has been observed that much of the research on gender and tourism has focused on employment patterns [35,45–49]. These differences can be expressed by the different profiles of the women (professional versus traditional) and by their preferences in activities [50]. In fact, women are usually described as more interactive, emotional and expressive than men [51–53]. On the other hand, men are described as more focused on tasks, are focused more on things they find useful, and men exhibit more solidarity than women [54–56]. Although still limited, a growing body of literature has been established in recent years on gender differences in leisure participation and travel/tourism issues [49,57,58]. Nevertheless, there are no studies on record which approach gender issues within the scope of creative tourism. The relevant literature mainly discusses the numerous gender differences regarding participation in leisure activities, travel patterns [59], preferences for travel experiences, perceptions, motivation and tourist decision-making processes. The literature states the importance of gender studies in tourism by arguing that tourism experiences are grounded in, and influenced by, our collective understanding of the social construction of gender.

For that, we developed a gender-empirical study by using the following research framework and taking into consideration other researches that focused on other segments of tourism activity (Figure 1). Being a man or a woman tends to influence differently the intention, satisfaction and evaluation with creative tourism activities. On the other hand, the intention can be determined by the sex of the potential user of a creative activity and determines also satisfaction. Satisfaction is induced by the intention and expectations about a particular creative tourism activity, which can induce the final evaluation of the creative activity [60–63].

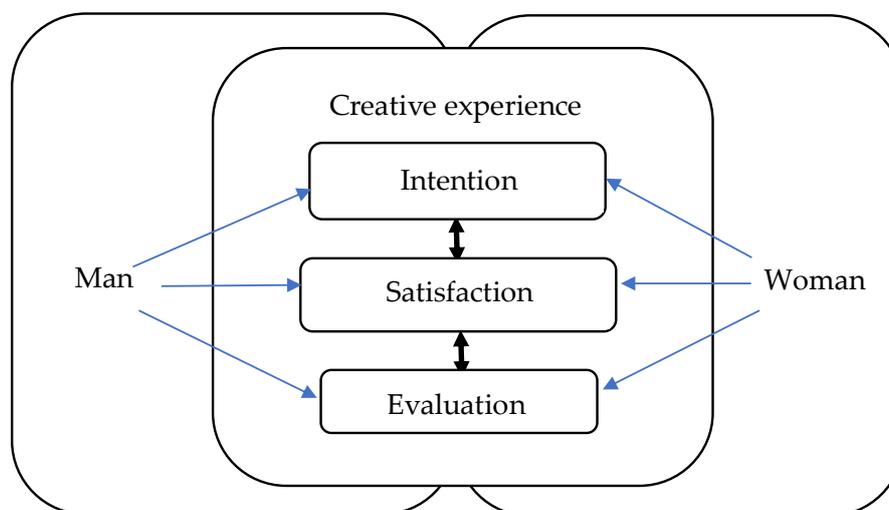


Figure 1. Research framework. Source: Author’s own elaboration.

From our standpoint, in addition to the influence of gender in intention, evaluation and satisfaction being a powerful variable, there are other variables that can have major influence. In the selection of any creative experience; income along with occupation and nationality can be pivotal. Despite not having research on the creative activities we also state that age, marital status, level of education and number of people in the household can be relevant in the intention and evaluation of the creative activity. An inexpensive creative activity that only takes up a couple of hours can attract a whole family and can be very stimulating, both to parents and their children. It can become a moment of mutual challenges in a world where it is hard to find activities that can meet the interests and needs of different generations. They can also be appealing to young single people who, besides enjoying their own self-expression, want to meet other people with the same lifestyle and type of expression.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Creative Activities Carried out in the Northern Region of Mainland Portugal

In our research, we choose a country where creative tourism has been growing in recent years (Portugal) and where the richness of its intangible heritage can be the starting point for the organization of creative activities. The northern area of mainland Portugal is a region particularly abundant in this kind of heritage. This region has registered a significant increase in terms of tourism activity between 2004 and 2014, with 3,043,900 guests and 5,400,608 overnight stays in tourist accommodations in 2014 and with a VAB of 21.5% of national value [64].

The national and regional institutions enrolled in the planning of the Portuguese tourism activity invest in some strategic products such as nature, cultural and landscape touring, health and wellness, exploration of a city and short exploration breaks (mainly in Porto), religious tourism, gastronomy and wines and business tourism (also in the big cities of the region) [64]. Cultural and landscape touring appears as a relevant tourism segment as the region spreads over a large number of small cities, with relevance to the history of the country, and is accessible mainly by a decent road network and/or by a modernised rail network, especially in connecting coastal cities.

The region has a rich and diverse cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, which proves to be extremely valuable for the development and diversification of creative activities. It was, for many centuries, a region of deep traditions and of significant intangible heritage, while enhancing its strong connection to the agriculture work and husbandry.

Taking this into consideration, the CREATOUR Project (Creative Tourism Destination Development in Small Cities and Rural Areas), included, from November 2016 to June 2020, a total of 10 organizations which were monitored in the northern region; it also included another 30 organizations from another three regions of mainland Portugal (Centre, Alentejo and Algarve—Figure 2). The project focused on four regions. The areas of Porto and Lisbon were not considered in the project as they are highly urbanized areas, are commonly associated with mass tourism, and have been considered priority destinations in the national strategies designed for the tourism sector. It is the first time that this kind of project and analysis specifically concerned with creative tourism occurs in Portugal and focuses on small cities and rural areas, which are also the territories with more relevant intangible heritage, which is being lost with time.

The institutions were selected in two phases. The first call was held in 2017 and the second one in 2018.

From 2016 to 2020, the 10 pilot institutions (public and private) monitored in the northern region developed 45 creative activities on a wide range of cultural aspects from the northwest to the northeast of this region (e.g., small-scale festivals, creative gastronomy and handcraft—Table 1). Some of them were already working in the tourism market (e.g., Amares municipality, VERde NOVO, São João da Madeira municipality), but for most of them it was the first time they were enrolled in creative tourism activities.



Figure 2. Forty pilot institutions monitored under the CREATOUR Project. Source: Author's own elaboration.

Table 1. A summary description of the creative activities developed from 2017 to 2019 in the northern region of mainland Portugal.

Name of Institution	Description of Institution	Creative Activities Offered	Sample
ADERE-PG Creative Experiences with Sense(s)	Non-profit institution that has developed creative activities in the 5 municipalities of the Peneda-Gerês National Park. Since 2009, the project has propelled	The main activities offered were: honey tasting, honey chocolates show cooking and Artisanal bread workshop and others.	72
CM Amares ARA—Artistic Residencies Amares: co-creation project	Encontrarte Amares. The festival reinforces interest in the immaterial heritage of the region (e.g., gastronomy, customs, images and sounds).	The main activities offered were: Cyanotype workshop and Modelling workshop in clay.	128
LRB Creative Tourism in Augmented Reality	The venture has developed creative activities resorting to new tools for tourism activity such as Augmented Reality.	It associates creative tourism with a technological component, namely through the insertion of elements of augmented reality in various activities.	23
CM São João da Madeira Municipality Creative Industrial Tourism	This institution aims to provide visitors with an opportunity to experience the daily life of a locality marked by industry, where a solid industrial fabric joins the technological and creative industries within a culturally and artistically rich environment.	Can be detached a screen printing workshop and Technique workshop of felting with soap and water for the production of a hat.	135

Table 1. Cont.

Name of Institution	Description of Institution	Creative Activities Offered	Sample
VERde NOVO Linen craft from Cerva and Limões: weaving the future	The venture has been developing activities in the fields of culture, heritage and tourism related to linen culture.	The main activities were: visit to the Linen Museum and to the linen field, weaving workshop, childrens' workshops, photographic raid and photography contest.	27
Galandum Galundaina The Donkey and the Bagpiper Festival	The association has been developing a traditional festival in rural villages of Miranda do Douro municipality celebrating a wide range of traditional cultural aspects, e.g., the Mirandese language (second official language in Portugal), traditional instruments, bagpipes and donkeys.	It includes some workshops: bagpipe; percussion; mixed Mirandese dances; Mirandese language and others.	144
ADRAT Revitalizing Vilar de Nantes Black Pottery	Non-profit association that has been developing creative activities associated with black pottery.	Some activities like a workshop on making clay pieces.	17
CM Bragança Homemade couscous workshop	The institution has developed creative workshops regarding the preparation and confection of traditional couscous recipes.	Creative tourism workshops aimed at making Cuscos from Trás-os-Montes region.	9
CM Esposende The art of reed	The institution develops activities based on the creation of handicraft experiences associated with the traditional art of reed work.	Some activities like reed basket making workshops.	16
Desteque Unmasking the Careto through the thread of the costume	The association has developed creative workshops related to the costume and masks of the Caretos de Podence (Intangible Cultural Heritage—UNESCO).	A workshop titled "Paint your Own Mask" (Caretos).	24

Source: Author's own elaboration.

The creative activities proposed did not feature on their profile and characteristics any trait which could be deemed as gender-specific. They involved a low level of difficulty and were accessible to all ages.

3.2. Structure and Pre-Test of the Questionnaire

Our research used primary and secondary data. Concerning primary data, a survey approach was conducted to evaluate the experience of creative activities every time one of the 45 creative activities occurred. As there were not any other studies that feature our research we designed the questionnaire following a literature review made on creative tourism and cultural tourist profiles.

The survey was conducted in the four regions of the country. However, in this paper, we focus on the results obtained in the northern region of Portugal, where the sample was more representative compared to the other regions. In the other regions less activities were organized; activities occurred less frequently and there was lower attendance at the activities. In addition to there being a higher number of activities performed in the Northern region, the organizers of the activities implemented the survey in a more systematic way with the help of researchers from Lab2PT (University of Minho). Our statistical population is, therefore, composed of tourists who participated in the 45 creative activities that were developed from 2017 to 2019 and organized by the 10 pilot institutions that participated in the project. A sample of 595 tourists was selected based on the Cochran formula (margin of error = 0.05) using a completely random sampling method. The respondents had an ongoing right to decline or withdraw from answering questions and data were discarded in each instance. No incentives were provided to the respondents as compensation for answering.

Data for this study were collected from these individuals using a self-administered questionnaire of a total of 31 closed questions targeted at the profile of the visitors, their motivations, perception and their evaluation of creative activities. The design of the questionnaire resulted from the literature review on creative and cultural tourism. In the fourth part of the questionnaire, three perception variables were constructed as follows.

Overall satisfaction was based on the American Dictionary, satisfaction is the pleasant feeling you get when you receive something you wanted, or when you have done or are doing something you wanted to do. In this paper, overall satisfaction was assessed by eight statements such as "I tried a new

activity”, “I learned more about the local culture”, “I learned to do something”, “I had fun”, “I meet interesting people”, “I interacted with the local community”, “I acquired new skills” and “I contributed to the local community”.

Intention was based on the Cambridge English Dictionary and was considered as something that you want and plan to do. In this study, Intention was assessed using three items, such as “I’m ready to repeat this experience”, “I recommended this experience to others” and “I like to participate in more activities of this organization”.

Taking into consideration the evaluation of the experience; the current ISO definition on user experience evaluation focuses on a person’s perception and the responses resulting from the use or anticipated use of a product, system, or service. Authors assessed this in terms of ten statements such as “I had an original experience”, “I had a creative experience”, “I had an emotive experience”, “I had an enriching experience”, “I had a stimulating experience”, “I had an absorbing experience”, “I had a memorable experience”, “I had a frustrating experience”, “I had an annoying experience” and “I had a tiring experience”.

The face validity of the questionnaire was confirmed, in May 2017, by a multidisciplinary panel of 30 researchers from the CREATOUR team. Also, the reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed by calculating Cronbach’s alpha in a pilot study. The alpha coefficients for the constructs were 0.86 for the “Evaluation of experience”, 0.82 for the “Overall satisfaction”, and 0.83 for the “Intention”. All of them were higher than the acceptable rates. The participants in CREATOUR activities were asked about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the items using a 5-point Likert scale (from disagree completely = 1 to agree completely = 5). The values of skewness and kurtosis of all items did not identify any serious violations of normality, because all the coefficients were below ± 2 . The summation of the answers to all indicators for each construct was computed as the score of that construct. Data were analysed by SPSS (version 25).

Concerning secondary data, in addition to international publications and papers from international journals, a few official documents were also used to single out and highlight some characteristics of the northern region.

4. Results and Discussion

The respondents’ socio-demographic characteristics are shown in Table 2. Following what often occurs in cultural tourism, most respondents were women ($n = 351$ –60.4%). The project accounted for 230 men (39.6%) as well. It is relevant to highlight that the basic socio-demographic characteristics of both men and women were very similar. Most of them, 46.2% of women and 48.6% of men, were single. The results also show that the majority of the two groups, 79.6 % of females ($n = 270$) and 75.7% of men ($n = 174$) fell into the 21–40 age group. More than half of the women (60.1%) and men (53%) stated a higher education level (Bachelor’s degree or above). The results also revealed that 85.5% ($n = 301$) of female participants and 81.7% ($n = 188$) of male participants were domestic tourists. About two-thirds of the participants (64.7% female and 63% male) stated that the main reason for their travel was participating in creative activities. In regards to the occupation of these participants, the most representative were Manager, Intellectual and Scientific Specialists (31.9% of women and 36.5% of men), Other occupations included students, retired, unemployed and stay at home persons (32.2% of women and 32.6% of men), Technicians, Associate Professionals and Clerical Support Workers and Service and Sales Workers (24.2% of women and 18.7% of men). Also, regarding the household’s monthly income, most participants, 58.4% ($n = 205$) of women and 62.2% ($n = 143$) of men, stated having an income of less than 2500€ per month. These results state that, in general, participants emerge from a medium social class background.

Table 2. Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents by gender.

Variable	Categories	Female		Male		Chi-Squared	Sig.
		Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency		
Marital status	Single	46.2	162	48.6	112	3.035	0.386
	Married	39.6	139	37	85		
	Divorced	6.0	21	5.7	13		
	Widow	2.8	10	0.9	2		
	NR	5.4	19	7.8	18		
	Total	100	351	100	230		
Age	Up to 20 years old	13.7	48	14.3	33	4.866	0.182
	21 to 40 years old	76.9	270	75.7	174		
	41 to 64 years old	7.7	27	10.0	24		
	65 and more years old	0.0	0	0.0	0		
	NR	1.7	6	0.0	0		
	Total	100	351	100	230		
Education level	Primary	7.6	27	8.5	19	11.743	0.228
	Secondary	12.3	43	11.7	27		
	Tertiary	8.0	28	13.0	30		
	Professional Training	7.4	26	10.0	23		
	Bachelor's degree	31.6	111	24.4	56		
	Post-graduation/Master's Degree	23.4	82	24.8	57		
	Doctoral degree	5.1	18	3.8	9		
	NR	4.6	16	3.8	9		
Total	100	351	100	230			
Socio-professional situation	Manager and Intellectual and Scientific Specialists	31.9	113	36.5	84	9.540	0.089
	Technicians and Associate Professionals, and Clerical support Workers and Service and Sales Workers	24.2	86	18.7	43		
	Skilled Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery Workers and Crafts and related Workers	1.4	5	3.9	9		
	Plant and Machine Operators, and Assemblers and Elementary Occupations	1.2	4	1.8	4		
	Armed Forces Occupations	0.0	0	0.9	2		
	Other Occupations	32.2	113	32.6	75		
	NR	9.1	30	5.6	13		
	Total	100	351	100	230		
Net monthly income of the household	Up to 500 €	7.1	25	7.8	18	10.001	0.075
	501€–1000€	21.1	74	19.6	45		
	1001€–2500€	30.2	106	34.8	80		
	2501€–4000€	10.8	38	13.5	31		
	More than 4000€	4.3	15	7.3	17		
	NR	26.5	93	17	39		
	Total	100	351	100	230		
Was this creative tourism activity the primary reason for your visit to this location?	Yes	64.7	227	63.0	145	0.030	0.861
	No	29.3	103	29.6	68		
	NR	6.0	21	7.4	17		
	Total	100	351	100	230		
Provenience	Domestic	85.8	301	81.7	188	15.693	0.403
	International	13.3	47	17.9	41		
	NR	0.9	3	0.4	1		
	Total	100	351	100	230		
Number of elements by family	Mean	2.20		2.18		-	

Note: NR = No Response. Source: Author's own elaboration.

The chi-squared test was used to compare socio-demographic characteristics between men and women. The results revealed that the socio-demographic characteristics of the study sample were not affected by the gender variable. In other words, men and women participating in creative activities were homogeneous in terms of socio-demographic characteristics.

Three hundred and thirty-one tourists (55.7%) participated in these creative tourism activities for the first time and 44.3% ($n = 262$) attended these kinds of activities more than once. Regarding this being their first experience in creative tourism, the result is very close when comparing both genders: 55.2% of women and 56.5% of men.

Concerning the reasons for choosing the creative activity, by using a Likert scale of 5 levels on ten statements, one can conclude that men had, in all statements of Table 3, a more neutral opinion, when we consider the "Neither agree or disagree" level. Women revealed a more assertive position as demonstrated in seven of the statements and taking into consideration the percentages of the "Completely agree" level. Nevertheless, women tend, more than men, not to answer the statements

presented in the survey. Men presented higher percentages, particularly in the statement “It enabled interaction with other participants”.

The reasons for attending the creative activity were very diversified, but the ones that received the highest percentages (sum of “Agree” and “Completely agree” levels) were “It is culturally motivating” (82.2% in men and 85.5% in women) and “It is original” (77.3% in men and 82.4% in women) followed by the statement “Due to its location” for women which received the highest score—128.6% (Table 3).

Table 3. Reasons underlying the choice of creative activity by gender.

Statement	Gender	Completely Disagree		Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Agree		Completely Agree		NR	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
It is culturally motivating	F	4	1.1	6	1.7	21	6.0	94	26.8	206	58.7	20	5.7
	M	2	0.9	7	3.0	22	9.6	77	33.5	112	48.7	10	4.3
It is original	F	4	1.2	6	1.7	24	6.8	89	25.4	200	57.0	28	8.0
	M	3	1.3	3	1.3	34	14.8	79	34.3	99	43.0	12	5.2
It is fun	F	3	0.9	6	1.7	36	10.3	105	29.9	170	48.4	31	8.8
	M	3	1.3	10	4.3	29	12.6	84	36.5	90	39.1	14	6.1
To stimulate my creativity	F	8	2.3	5	1.4	48	13.7	112	31.9	144	41.0	34	9.7
	M	4	1.7	12	5.2	40	17.4	84	36.5	76	33.0	16	6.1
It enables me to meet and interact with the local community	F	8	2.3	8	2.3	46	13.1	102	29.1	165	47.0	22	6.3
	M	4	1.7	8	3.5	39	17.0	71	30.9	96	41.7	12	5.2
It enabled interaction with other participants	F	4	1.1	16	4.6	46	13.1	120	34.2	138	39.3	27	7.7
	M	4	1.7	8	3.5	37	16.1	69	30.0	100	43.5	12	5.2
It is suitable for the whole family	F	18	5.1	13	3.7	65	18.5	89	25.4	132	37.6	34	9.7
	M	20	8.7	12	5.2	59	25.7	53	23.0	72	31.3	14	6.1
Due to its location	F	22	6.3	20	5.7	56	16.0	94	26.8	124	35.3	35	10.0
	M	19	8.3	12	5.2	42	18.3	67	29.1	77	33.5	13	5.7
To accompany someone	F	73	20.8	29	8.3	60	17.1	86	24.5	65	18.5	38	10.8
	M	40	17.4	16	7.0	47	20.4	59	25.7	50	21.7	18	7.8
I know the promoter of the creativity	F	61	17.4	23	6.6	53	15.1	66	18.8	97	27.6	51	14.5
	M	43	18.7	19	8.3	42	18.3	45	19.6	61	26.5	20	8.7

Note: NR = No Response. Source: Author’s own elaboration.

Regarding the evaluation of the creative activity, it is worth mentioning that women continued to have more expressive statements, especially in “I contributed to the local community” statement (116.2%—Table 4).

Men revealed to be less positive with a higher percentage of the “Completely disagree” level in “I learnt to do something” (7%) and “I acquired new skills” (7.4%). This means that men tend to be more focused in “doing” and women in “interacting with others”.

Table 4. Evaluation of the creative activity by gender.

Statement	Gender	Completely Disagree		Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Agree		Completely Agree		NR	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I had fun	F	6	1.7	2	0.6	17	4.8	86	24.5	224	63.8	16	4.6
	M	0	0.0	2	0.9	22	9.6	76	33.0	124	53.9	6	2.6
I met interesting people	F	9	2.6	6	1.7	49	14.0	85	24.2	182	51.9	20	5.7
	M	6	2.6	4	1.7	24	10.4	80	34.8	107	46.5	9	3.9
I tried a new activity	F	18	5.1	15	4.3	32	9.1	80	22.8	188	53.6	18	5.1
	M	12	5.2	13	5.7	41	17.8	59	25.7	91	39.7	14	6.1
I learnt more about the local culture	F	12	3.4	10	2.8	40	11.4	110	31.3	160	45.6	19	5.4
	M	6	2.6	8	3.5	33	14.3	88	38.3	87	37.8	8	3.5
I learnt to do something	F	11	3.1	19	5.4	61	17.4	98	27.9	139	39.6	23	6.6
	M	16	7.0	14	6.1	52	22.6	79	34.3	59	25.7	10	4.3
I interacted with local people	F	11	3.1	15	4.3	49	14.0	96	27.4	157	44.7	23	6.6
	M	4	1.7	11	4.8	33	14.3	85	37.0	86	37.4	11	4.8
I acquired new skills	F	11	3.1	26	7.4	71	20.2	99	28.2	122	34.8	22	6.3
	M	17	7.4	19	8.3	64	27.8	69	30.0	49	21.3	12	5.2
I contributed to the local community	F	24	6.8	30	8.5	89	25.4	84	23.9	97	27.6	27	7.7
	M	7	3.0	18	7.8	51	22.2	76	33.0	64	27.8	14	6.1

Note: NR = No Response. Source: Author’s own elaboration.

To confirm these results in a more consistent way, a “t-test” was performed in order to investigate the difference between the means of the motivation variables, i.e., “Intention”, “Evaluation of Experience” and “Overall Satisfaction” both in male and female tourists (Table 5). The results revealed significant mean differences between males and females. Females showed more “Intention” and “Overall Satisfaction” than males regarding the creative tourism activities. Also, women participants had a more positive evaluation of their experience in the creative activities organised by CREATOUR pilots.

Table 5. Mean comparison of motivation variables between female and male respondents.

Variables	Mean (SD)		t-Value	Sig.
	Female	Male		
Intention	40.32 (5.90)	39.17 (6.55)	1.99	0.04
Evaluation of Experience	32.93 (5.48)	31.83 (5.52)	2.24	0.02
Overall Satisfaction	13.92 (1.96)	13.48 (2.15)	2.45	0.01

The focus of this research was to assess which motivational factors could be different between males and females. In this regard, a discriminant analysis was conducted to assess how these three motivational factors (“Intention”, “Evaluation of Experience” and “Overall Satisfaction”) were classified according to male and female categories. One discriminant function was calculated, using discriminant analysis, with gender as the dependent variable (Table 6).

Table 6. Discriminant analysis results.

Key Variables	Function 1 ^a
Overall satisfaction	1.000
Eigenvalue	0.11
Variance explained	100%
Canonical correlation	0.102
Wilks’ lambda test statistics	
Wilks’ lambda	0.99
Chi-squared	4.70
Df	1
Sig	0.03

^a 59.1 % of the original grouped cases were correctly classified. Source: Author’s own elaboration.

To test the statistical significance of the discriminant function, a Wilks’ lambda test was conducted. SPSS used chi-squared statistics, which resulted in 4.70 (df = 1; $p < 0.03$). Thus, the derived discriminant functions were statistically significant. In more detail, a Wilks’ lambda test and F-statistics were used to analyse the statistical significance of each of the motivational dimensions included in the discriminant functions (Table 6). The tests showed that “overall satisfaction” made a statistically significant contribution to the discriminant function. In other words, this factor contributed to a statistically significant separation between the genders of the respondents and could correctly classify 59.1% of the cases.

More specifically, “Overall Satisfaction” was able to separate the two groups as well and this construct presents significant classification relevance among genders (Table 7). In Table 8, the construct entered the discriminant analysis, with women having higher scores than men.

Table 7. Classification results in the discriminate analysis.

Clusters	Predicted Group Membership		
	Female	Male	Total (n)
Female	74.6	25.4	n = 339 (100%)
Male	64.7	35.3	n = 221 (100%)
Ungrouped cases	53.8	46.2	n = 13 (100%)

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Table 8. Descriptive statistics of the sub-constructs considered in the discriminant analysis.

	Gender			
	Female		Male	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Overall satisfaction	13.94	1.95	13.51	2.24

Source: Author's own elaboration.

In order to explore the association between the sub-constructs of motivation in tourism activities (i.e., "Intention", "Evaluation of Experience" and "Overall Satisfaction"), a series of Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated (Tables 9 and 10).

Table 9. Association between the key factors of the study on female respondents (Pearson and Spearman correlation).

	Evaluation of Experience	Overall Satisfaction	Intention	Age	Maximum Educational Qualification †	Net Monthly Income of the Household †	Number of Family in Total †
Evaluation of experience	1						
Overall satisfaction	0.527 **	1					
Intention	0.420 **	0.375 **	1				
Age	0.07	-0.03	0.09	1			
Maximum educational qualification †	-0.163 **	-0.121 *	-0.125 *	-0.05	1		
Net monthly income of the household †	-0.06	-0.114 *	-0.05	0.007	0.07	1	
Number of family in total †	0.028	0.096	0.088	-0.198 **	-0.100	0.04	1

** $p \leq 0.01$ * $p \leq 0.05$ † Spearman coefficient used. Source: Author's own elaboration.**Table 10.** Association between the key factors of the study on male respondents (Pearson and Spearman correlation).

	Evaluation of Experience	Overall Satisfaction	Intention	Age	Maximum Educational Qualification †	Net Monthly Income of the Household †	Number of Family in Total †
Evaluation of experience	1						
Overall satisfaction	0.516 **	1					
Intention	0.629 **	0.419 **	1				
Age	0.055	0.163 *	0.088	1			
Maximum educational qualification †	-0.127	0.01	-0.051	-0.044	1		
Net monthly income of the household †	-0.066	-0.07	0.046	-0.044	0.035	1	
Number of family in total †	0.009	0.021	-0.055	-0.109	-0.050	0.098	1

** $p \leq 0.01$ * $p \leq 0.05$ † Spearman coefficient used.

As shown in Table 10, there was a significant, positive, and robust inter-correlation between "Evaluation of Experience" and "Overall Satisfaction" ($r = 0.521$, $p < 0.01$), "Evaluation of Experience" and "Intention" ($r = 0.518$, $p < 0.01$), and, to a lesser degree, "Overall Satisfaction" and "Intention" ($r = 0.394$, $p < 0.01$). This revealed that all these sub-constructs have positive associations.

5. Conclusions

This study examined the intention, evaluation and the overall satisfaction of creative tourism activities among participants in the northern region of mainland Portugal from 2017 to 2019 from a gender standpoint. This was the first effort made, in Portugal (which is a good example of the scenario from the countries of South Europe), about gender differences on intention, evaluation and the overall satisfaction of creative tourism activities. This follows what is happening in international studies. As in the present decade Portugal is showing an increase in the offer of creative activities (as is happening in the other countries of South Europe), it was an opportunity to analyse what is the profile and behaviour of the participants.

The results from the survey showed that both male and female participants were remarkably similar regarding socio-demographic characteristics. Gender comparisons on motivation revealed significant mean differences between males and females. Females showed more “Intention” and “Overall Satisfaction” than males in relation to the creative tourism activities. Also, female participants carried out a more positive evaluation of their experience in creative activities. Discriminant analysis between female and male tourists revealed only the item “Overall Satisfaction” was able to separate the two groups and present significant classification relevance among genders.

The major participation of women ($n = 351$ –60.4%) in the creative activities carried out by the pilot institutions of the CREATOUR Project can be explained by the fact that women are more predisposed to trying activities linked to cultural heritage (e.g., gastronomy or handcraft workshops). These results can also be explained by the fact that most of the main pilot project coordinators were female ($n = 6$). These aspects may have affected the female tourists’ satisfaction and evaluation.

In fact, most of the creative activities developed in the northern region granted tourists a glimpse of local women’s rural lives, e.g., in the creative activities “The art of reed” and “Homemade couscous workshop”. For Portuguese participants, participation in such activities may have been an opportunity to relive moments stored in their memories and to get back in touch with activities that were carried out by their grandparents or mothers; whereas for foreign participants, it was an opportunity to get to know the local culture in a more authentic and genuine manner.

Additionally, women participated more in these activities, similar to what occurs in cultural tourism, where women tend to be higher consumers of this kind of segment. Given that creative tourism is in evolution, as an extension or a reaction to cultural tourism, the results obtained are understandable. While women seemed to be more concerned in their evaluation with interaction with other people and their contributions to the community, men were more focused on the execution and learning experience. This can be a relevant result for the organizers to draw more tourists to creative activities and to future proposals exploring other types of heritage.

These results can be used in planning and management strategies by companies that work on tourism recreation as well as regional and local tourism authorities, local councils and associations.

Closer attention to the marketing strategy is needed. As part of the activities were organized without the support of local councils (which must be the main stakeholder in the dissemination and connection of such creative activities to the territory), we are convinced that the organizers must establish a more structured partnership with the local council’s municipality. The local council can be pivotal in the dissemination of the activities, as they have more human resources to share these activities in social media, also because part of the institutions that organised the creative activities implemented during the CREATOUR Project were not able to invest in a professional marketing strategy. The deficit of human resources in the pilot institutions was the main reason.

Pilot institutions also need to establish a regional network that could help them schedule, in a more sustainable way, their activities and thus contribute to a longer permanence of tourists in the region. Perhaps, a “passport” with discounts can be a good motivation to participate in the different creative activities offered in the region. It is, then, mandatory to establish partnerships with the regional institutions that are associated with the tourism activity and other economic sectors (e.g., transportation, accommodation, restaurants and travel agencies). To encourage this type of tourism, a more structured

calendar and the dissemination of the programme in languages other than Portuguese could be helpful; this could more easily attract international tourists. Currently all local councils have a website in Portuguese and English; they could profit from this and have more time to think about new activities to organise. On the other hand, some communication and marketing training/lecturing is also needed. Universities and local councils can have a relevant role in this area as well.

Some limitations of this study are the difficulties felt by the organizers of the creative activities in applying the questionnaire. This was a task that had to be carried out in each activity. As they did not have enough human resources to do so and they were not used to the practice, the team from the University of Minho assisted them in the application. Fortunately, this proved to be a good solution as we received a high number of questionnaires.

One thing is for sure: we still need to know more about the creative tourist's profile, motivations and satisfaction; future studies are required and each pilot institution must adopt a more systematic approach to attract creative tourists by questioning them at the end of each activity. Only with such a systematic approach and regular data access will they be able to structure a good marketing strategy. Finally, a deeper analysis of the role of females in the organization of the creative activities proposed to tourists is also needed. What is their role in the entrepreneurship of creative tourism? Can multidisciplinary teams organise more diversified creative activities which, in turn, may meet, more positively, the needs of women and men?

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