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Creative Tourism: An Umbrella for Agrifood Travel Experiences?

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Abstract: Creativity is becoming more relevant to increasing destinations' distinctiveness. While anecdotal evidence suggests that travel to experience any aspect of the agrifood process encompasses key indicators of Creative Tourism (CT), the alignment of agrifood experiences with CT remains unexplored, limiting destinations' potential to leverage the growing demand for both creative and agrifood experiences. Thus, we assessed the importance of CT indicators across three types of agrifood experiences (agritourism, craft beverages, food) in contrast with beach-going (control) while traveling using hypothetical scenarios. We collected data in 2023 from a non-random panel of 1019 residents across the USA (250 pre-established quotes per travel scenario) using an electronic survey. Results showed that those in the agrifood travel scenarios, notably in agritourism, perceived higher levels of creativity as compared to those in the control group across all creative domains, which supports CT as a suitable scholarly framework to position agrifood travel experiences. Results also indicate that destinations having strong agrifood experiences—and notably agritourism—should build upon their shared creative elements, mainly gravitating around experiencing local livelihoods, to increase their competitiveness. This study's results can inform destinations seeking to strengthen their distinctiveness by catering to the increasing number of tourists seeking creative food, agricultural, and beverage experiences.

Keywords: agritourism; craft beverage tourism; creativity; culinary tourism; travel scenario

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1. Introduction

Tourists are actively seeking new, unique, and meaningful experiences that move beyond mere entertainment that allows them to change their lives [1,2]. To capitalize on this trend, tourism destinations are incorporating creativity into their offerings to stand out and increase their competitive advantage [3]. Furthermore, Creative Tourism (CT) has emerged to bring together locals and tourists through engaged activities offered in shared spaces that create meaningful interactions, foster unique and life-changing experiences, and strengthen local culture and traditions [2].

From its early development in the 1990s, additional benefits of CT continue to emerge notably by increasing differentiation in a competitive tourism market, promoting collaboration, and supporting local communities [4] through fostering cultural exchange, economic development, and sustainable tourism practices [2]. It responds to tourists' increasing desires, especially young ones, to engage in interactive experiences that can support their personal development and identity creation [5]. Blending creativity into tourism has also served to foster entrepreneurial diversification by supporting local producers (e.g., farmers, craft distillers), artists, and performers who directly or indirectly support destination offerings [4,6].

Agrifood tourism, understood as travel activities centered in any stage (production, processing, distribution, consumption) of the agri-food system [7], seems to embody attributes that are in line with CT. As such, over the past two decades, agrifood tourism

has advanced interest from policymakers, marketers, local food producers, and scholars seeking to maximize its potential [8] while capitalizing on its growing popularity among travelers [9]. This is especially pertinent for travel to visiting working agricultural settings for recreation or education (agritourism) [10], to enjoying unique and authentic foods (culinary tourism) [11], and to taste, prepare, or learn about craft beverages (craft beverage tourism) [12].

The growing popularity of these forms of agrifood tourism is pushing destinations to increase their level of creativity to distinguish themselves based on the uniqueness of their agricultural, food, and beverage products [9]. Agrifood tourism provides resources for immersive, authentic experiences (e.g., U-pick, cooking classes, grape stomping) through close interactions with locals, thus promoting co-creation [1]. Such interconnectedness of food, culture, and community fosters learning [13–15], which ultimately instills revisit intention and positive word of mouth [16,17].

The existing literature on both CT and agrifood tourism reveals that these forms of travel share common elements, particularly their emphasis on offering unique and authentic experiences and fostering active engagement with local cultures and communities. However, the extent to which agrifood tourism can integrate the principles of CT to offer transformative and culturally enriching experiences remains largely unexplored. More specifically, there is no information on the potential alignment of the staple forms—agritourism, culinary tourism, craft beverage tourism—of agrifood experiences with CT. Filling this knowledge gap is essential and timely given the increasing demand of travelers seeking transformative and agrifood experiences and the suitability of CT to move destinations beyond sustainability towards regeneration. Such information can guide destinations and travel agencies in programming, managing, and marketing offerings to enhance the creativity of their culinary, beverages, and agricultural activities, ultimately supporting community development.

Thus, we conducted this study to evaluate the stated relevance of CT indicators across agritourism, culinary tourism, and craft beverage tourism by addressing three interconnected objectives. First, to identify the perceived significance of CT indicators associated with agritourism, culinary tourism, and craft beverage tourism. Second, to contrast the perceived significance of CT indicators between agrifood tourism and a standardized form of travel experience (beach tourism). Third, to test the extent to which personal and lifestyle indicators are associated with different forms of agrifood and beach tourism.

2. Literature Review

The production and consumption of travel experiences have evolved towards fostering the active involvement of tourists; in such evolution, destinations have increased their efforts to infuse creativity into their offerings to enhance their attractiveness [1,18]. The growing articulation between tourism and creativity also responds to the need for alternative development models that reduce negative impacts on the destinations and increase benefits for locals [3], as well as the expansion of the creative economy, which provides numerous opportunities for synergy and collaboration and that relies on creative industries (e.g., arts, communication) to increase distinctiveness in the global economy [19]. In this growing quest, CT has emerged as the academic and industry framework to depict the infusion of creativity into travel offerings. Notable efforts to infuse creativity into travel experiences are evident when associated with local food production, distribution, and consumption, coined as agrifood tourism [7].

2.1. Creative Tourism (CT)

CT started as an elongation of or a reaction to cultural tourism that emerged from tourists' increased desire for interactive experiences that would instill their personal development and identity rather than a static cultural appreciation, notably related to tangible resources [2,20]. Over time, CT has evolved into a diversification strategy that seeks to incorporate local traditions into a broad range of travel experiences. Doing so makes CT

a catalyst for local value-added offerings (thus increased price), destination innovation, sustainable development, cultural preservation, and increased economic return for local entrepreneurship [1,3].

CT heavily relies on building relationships across tourism actors, notably by devising experiences that require the interaction of locals and tourists (co-creation) through cultural immersion and creativity [21]. While the stimulation of tourists' senses through co-creation creates distinction [1,18], cultural immersion helps to revive local craftsmanship, intangible heritage, customs, and traditions (re)making destinations appealing for residents to live and outsiders to explore [2,3]. Furthermore, personalizing experiences (e.g., choosing the level of spice in a cooking class), nurturing or untapped creative potential (e.g., artwork training), and facilitating meaningful interactions with locals shifts the destination's value from its resources to the tourists' experiences [6,18], which produces highly satisfied tourists [16,17].

The development of CT necessitates the presence of a mix of characteristics (i.e., creative indicators) in four domains: activities, place, facilitator, and conscientious travel attitudes. However, it is important to acknowledge that the four-domain typification of creative indicators is for scholarly purposes. Put together, CT embodies creativity through the engaged and conscious participation of tourists, locals' engagement from the experience design to delivery, and how and where the local–tourist relationship is facilitated [22].

The first domain refers to the activities offered, which should be creative enough to stimulate active participation and meaningful interactions from locals (experience providers) and tourists (experience consumers) to the point of co-creating the experience [1,18]. A typical example is engaging in traditional arts (e.g., folk dances) and crafts (e.g., pottery making), which, in addition to their learning component, allow tourists to experience a different lifestyle and culture. Tourists favor creative activities for their uniqueness and authenticity, which tend to be a once-in-a-lifetime experience [16]. The level of embedded creativity that may even push tourists outside of their comfort zones tends to imprint memorability [16,20].

The second domain refers to the need to embed creativity into the places tourists visit or where activities are offered to add value to the destination [20,23]. Creative places convey stories, heritage, and history through their physical ensemble or visual décor [22], which facilitate tourists' learning about and immersing themselves in the local lifestyle [22,23]. However, the pinnacle of creative places occurs when locals share their spaces with tourists, such as local bars and diners [6,22].

Activity or travel facilitators (third creative domain), such as guides or artisans leading classes or demonstrations, also contribute to creative experiences by easing meaningful interactions between locals and tourists [16,17]. Creative facilitators entice tourists' participation by boosting their interest [22] and creating equal, empathetic, and respectful tourist–local relationships [6] to the extent of making their experiences salient from similar ones [23]. Locals, especially those entrenched in their communities, are the most suitable to facilitate such interaction as they can share firsthand unique information about the community (e.g., stories, myths) and the activity (e.g., culinary secrets) that tend to be passed on orally to the next generation [6].

The last CT domain is conscientious travel attitudes (i.e., conscientiousness). Tourists seeking creative experiences have strong attitudes toward conserving the natural, agricultural, and cultural elements of a destination [22], which is intertwined with their desire to gain a more profound knowledge of the locals' culture and lifestyles [6,24]. Such interest, along with cultural embeddedness, may seed local–tourist collaborations that can preserve traditions and cultivate creative skills in the host destination [25]. CT also stimulates identity formation and self-improvement that can reach (by educating and inspiring) the younger generation of travelers and locals [22,24].

2.2. Creative Indicators Behind Agrifood Tourism

Agrifood tourism is a specialized type of travel that caters to visitors seeking unique experiences centered around local cuisine, such as tasting traditional dishes and beverages,

and agricultural practices, like olive harvesting and grape stomping [7]. Professionals in tourism, policymakers, food producers, and scholars are showing a growing interest in agrifood tourism as a means of regional revitalization and a pathway for enhancing resilience [8]. Agrifood travel experiences promote the destination's competitiveness and are suitable for delivering a mix of economic (e.g., job creation), socio-cultural (e.g., heritage preservation), and environmental (e.g., reduced transportation costs) benefits to host communities [26–28]. Three distinct types of agrifood tourism stand out for their rapid expansion on a global scale: agritourism, culinary tourism, and craft beverage tourism. All these forms of agrifood tourism include unique and authentic experiences that connect tourists with the host community, revealing an insider's perspective of local ways of living [13,27]. Thus, they align with escapist experiences that require participants to take an active role (e.g., hands-on activities), which, beyond enabling visitors to break away from their daily routines, empower them to become co-creators of their own experiences, fostering a deeper connection with the local culture and community [29].

Agritourism, which results from the agriculture and tourism intersection, is broadly understood as visiting agricultural facilities to engage in recreational or educational activities in working agricultural settings for recreation or education [10]. The range of agricultural practices (e.g., agroforestry, cattle ranching), landscapes (e.g., mountains, coastal), and activities (e.g., cookouts, leisure tours) shuffled to satisfy the variety of visitors' motivations (e.g., landscape appreciation, agricultural education, entertainment), defines a diverse agritourism industry. Broadly, agritourism encompasses farm recreation and hospitality (e.g., farm stays, festivals, hayrides), agricultural education either through formal (e.g., workshop) or hands-on (e.g., u-pick) experiences, and outdoor recreation (e.g., nature observation, fishing).

Despite such variation, and although never investigated, evidence suggests that agritourism embraces several CT indicators. Common agritourism offerings (e.g., u-pick, cheesemaking workshops, school visits) tend to be [agriculturally] authentic [30] and involve some sort of experiential and place-based education [31]. Also, tangible agricultural heritage (e.g., old tools, historic tractors) is often used to indirectly (e.g., décor) or directly (e.g., repurposing of barns into chapels) support agritourism offerings [26], which aligns with CT's emphasis on cultural preservation [20,22]. Furthermore, locals' active role in the provision of CT [13] is a key agritourism feature as farmers are not only the predominant developers and managers, but their interaction with visitors is fundamental for success [32].

Culinary tourism, defined as traveling for the primary purpose of tasting unique foods, has become one of the fastest-growing forms of niche tourism [11]. Culinary tourists seek authentic fares to experience first-hand the destination's traditional ways of living (e.g., dining at authentic local restaurants) and deepen their relationships with local people, such as interacting with chefs and cooks [33], which appear to correspond with CT [15,34]. In their quest for authenticity, culinary tourists step beyond traditional eateries, taste prepared foods, and visit local ingredients stores (e.g., specialty shops) and farmers' markets [34]. Doing so strengthens local food systems, which contributes to environmental (e.g., lower transportation costs), socio-cultural (e.g., local cuisine preservation), and economic (e.g., job creation) sustainability [28], which is also an aimed output of CT [20,24].

Craft beverage tourism, or traveling to taste, prepare, or learn about craft beverages, such as artisanal brews, spirits, and wines [12], keeps flourishing in popularity [14]. Focused on authenticity, community, and exploration, the development of craft beverage tourism requires infusing creativity and innovation into their products (e.g., beer, moonshine, whiskey) and methods (e.g., traditional brewing techniques) to attract these specialized tourists who seek unique experiences [27] and to immerse themselves in the local history, culture, and ways of living [35]. Thus, craft beverage tourism seems to align with CT by emphasizing localism [14] by using locally produced or Indigenous ingredients (e.g., fruits, herbs) and shared spaces (e.g., local bars) while fostering meaningful producer–consumer interactions [35].

2.3. Ontological Synthesis

Chiefly, there is a pressing need to investigate alternative models that can minimize the negative impacts of the tourism industry while maximizing benefits for local communities. Creative tourism offers a promising solution by infusing destinations with creativity and leveraging local talents (e.g., artists) and resources (e.g., crafts, stories) to attract the growing number of travelers seeking enriching and meaningful activities. Travel to engage with various aspects of the agrifood system—notably through agritourism, culinary tourism, and craft beverage tourism—appears to embody several indicators across the four creative domains. However, the extent to which these three types of agrifood experiences align with the CT indicators remains unexplored, a gap our study was set to address.

3. Materials and Methods

Our evaluation of the stated relevance of CT elements across agritourism, culinary tourism, and craft beverage tourism was guided by a positivist approach, supporting the conception that knowledge is divulged from a neutral and quantifiable observation of activity, action, or reaction to generate explanatory associations [36], in this case between CT indicators and agrifood tourism. Accordingly, quantitative methods were used to measure and compare these variables.

3.1. Survey Instrument

Guided by the literature, we designed a survey instrument for data collection to address the study objectives by querying indicators of CT and a set of personal characteristics and travel behaviors. We used an extensive multi-dimensional inventory of CT indicators (activities, place, facilitator, conscientiousness) as a guiding point [22], although modified to acclimate the narrative to study hypothetical scenarios based on other supporting scales. Specifically, we queried the importance of 11 activity characteristics (e.g., unique activities, hands-on participation) capturing uniqueness, authenticity, immersion in the local culture, and personal growth [1,16–18]. We assessed the importance of the place through seven items (e.g., are used by the locals, display stories of the history) reflecting a connection to the place and culture [23].

We queried the extent to which respondents like activity facilitators to do through six items (e.g., encouraging participation, sharing local knowledge related to the activity) that foster participants' engagement in experiences while traveling [6,22]. We gauged participants' attitudes toward conscientious travel through four items (e.g., feeling responsible for preserving the local heritage, seeking to reinforce self-identity), capturing their cultural, environmental, and individual awareness [22,24]. All items were ordered randomly and measured on a series of 21-point scales ranging from zero (extremely unimportant, dislike very much, strongly disagree) to 20 (extremely important, like very much, strongly agree).

In terms of personal characteristics, we queried personality traits through eight items (e.g., doing frightening things, exploring unknown places) depicting risk seeking and exploration [37] as well as attitudes towards creativity (five items, e.g., making me forget about other things, cultivating potential) which are fundamental to assess stimulation, emotional reinforcement, and escapism [22] in a series of 21-point scales (0 = strongly disagree; 20 = strongly agree). Participants also reported their political ideology through a 21-point scale anchored in far left (0) and far right (20). Travel behavior indicators (number of trips per year, length of the trips, change in travel behavior due to COVID), lifestyle indicators (e.g., relationship status, household composition), and socio-demographic indicators (gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, income, geographic region, adulthood residency) were also queried using a combination of nominal and ordinal scales as suitable.

3.2. Study Sample, Survey Procedures, and Data Analysis

We opted for a non-random sampling technique for this study as it is well suited for exploratory studies on less-understood topics, such as this one. More specifically, we followed a quota sampling design that allowed us to ensure the representation of

participants with specific characteristics that need to be represented [38], in this study, we balanced distributions between genders and geographic representation across the United States of America (USA). We purchased a sample of adults residing in the USA from a survey panel provider (Dynata, Shelton, CT, USA). We collected data in March 2023 via an online survey. The participants first accessed a travel scenario page describing an all-expense paid trip of two days, including accommodation in a 5-star hotel. The scenario asked participants to imagine that they had no barriers to travel (i.e., no time conflicts and no family obligations). Specific details of the itinerary (e.g., arrival and check-out times), as well as a 4 h excursion to choose from, were provided; participants could also choose "I prefer to stay at home", in which case they exited the survey.

The four excursion options were to visit two local working farms to tour the orchards, harvest fruits, pet some farm animals, and chat with the farmers to learn about the farm lifestyle (1—Agritourism); two local eateries to tour their facilities and try samples of local foods, and prepare a couple of traditional dishes with the local chefs (2—culinary tourism); two local alcoholic craft beverage facilities to take a tour, taste samples of their products, and learn to prepare a traditional beverage from the producers (3—craft beverage tourism); and a popular nearby beach to enjoy the sun, swim in its calm waters, access beach equipment, refreshments from two local stands, and a paddle board (4—beach tourism). The latter was included as a control group given its popularity among the masses that tend to encompass few if any, indicators of CT. No matter the destination chosen, participants went through the same questions. We collected data until scenarios reached their target (originally set at 250). To encourage participants to select their preferred activity, participants exited the survey if their preferred scenario was fulfilled. Given the time elapsed between the scenario quota being reached and closing it, responses slightly exceeded the quota for all scenarios (agritourism = 255; culinary tourism = 255; craft beverage tourism = 254; beach tourism = 255).

A total of 1019 responses were included in the analysis, which included a mix of descriptive and inferential statistics. We ran descriptive tests to profile participants based on their personal attributes (e.g., demographic, travel behaviors) and to summarize CT elements. We computed Cronbach's Alphas (α) to confirm the internal reliability of the four CT indicators, two personality traits, and creative perceptions adopting a minimum 0.6 threshold [39]. As the assumptions of analysis of variance were not met (i.e., data were not normally distributed), we used the Kruskal–Wallis test to compare the independent samples, followed by pairwise comparisons across the travel scenarios, as suggested for studies with large sample sizes [40]. For better interpretability, the four CT indicators (activities, place, facilitator, conscientiousness) and three personal characteristics (risk-seeking, exploration, creative perception), which we measured on a continuum scale, were divided into three groups: low (0–10.99), medium (11–16.99), and high (17–20). We used chi-square tests to compare personal and lifestyle indicators across the four travel scenarios ($p < 0.05$). We applied Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons in all post hoc tests ($p = 0.05/6$).

4. Results

4.1. Respondents Profile

Respondents were proportionally distributed across genders, being 50.8% male, 47.9% female, and 1.3% non-binary (Table 1). They were also from across all age groups; the largest proportion (21.6%) were between 36 and 45 years old, followed by those aged between 26 and 35 (18.9%) and 66 and above (16.0%). Most respondents were White (79.4%); smaller proportions of participants self-identified as Black (11.4%), Latin, Hispanic or Chicano/a (11.4%), or Asian (5.2%). Respondents reported having high levels of formal education; about half hold a four-year college (21.8%) or graduate (26.5%) degree. Similar proportions of respondents reported an annual household income lower than USD 50,000 (36.8%) or at least USD 100,000 (32.6%). On average, respondents had a centrist political ideology

(M = 11.53), although those self-positioned within the far right (16.9%) doubled those within the far left (7.8%) political ideologies.

Table 1. Respondents' socio-demographic profile.

Socio-Demographic Indicators	Number	Percent
Gender *(n = 1019)*		
Male	518	50.8
Female	488	47.9
Non-binary	13	1.3
Age *(n = 1019)*		
18–25 years	139	13.7
26–35 years	193	18.9
36–45 years	220	21.6
46–55 years	147	14.4
56–65 years	157	15.4
66 and above	163	16.0
Education *(n = 1019)*		
High school graduate or less	219	21.5
Some college	197	19.3
Technical degree	111	10.9
College degree	222	21.8
Master's degree	193	18.9
Doctoral/professional equivalent	77	7.6
Income *(n = 1019)*		
Less than USD 25,000	178	17.5
USD 25,000–USD 49,999	197	19.3
USD 50,000–USD 74,999	157	15.4
USD 75,000–USD 99,999	155	15.2
USD 100,000–USD 149,999	176	17.3
USD 150,000 or more	156	15.3
Political Ideology *(n = 1014)* [1]		
Far left	79	7.8
Center left	138	13.6
Center	415	40.9
Center right	211	20.8
Far right	171	16.9
Mean		*(11.53)*

[1] Measured on a 21-point scale, ranging from "0 = Far Left" to "20 = Far Right".

The geographic representation of the respondents was proportionally distributed in the Northeast (24.5%), Midwest (24.0%), South (27.4%), and West (24.1%) regions of the USA (Table 2). During adulthood, most of the respondents lived in either large cities (25.2%) or their suburbs (38.7%), with the smallest proportion being rural (18.1%) or small town (18.0%) dwellers. Most respondents were parents (53.0%) or living only with adults at home (70.4%); 36.7% reported being in a committed partnership, and 27.9% were singles. Respondents were avid travelers who predominantly took one or two (44.6%) and three to five (37.6%) trips per year, mostly short (55.0%) and medium (61.6%) term trips. About half of respondents traveled about the same before and after COVID (49.2%).

Cronbach's alpha showed high internal reliability within the exploration ($\alpha = 0.866$) and risk-seeking ($\alpha = 0.916$) personality traits and creative perceptions ($\alpha = 0.929$; Table 3). Respondents showed high levels of exploration ($M = 13.06$) traits and their comprising variables, with over a third reporting high levels of likeness to explore unknown places (39.9%; $M = 14.46$) and love for trying new and exciting experiences (34.7%; $M = 14.14$). Conversely, respondents had low levels of risk-seeking ($M = 9.07$), having most little likeliness for wild parties (62.0%; $M = 8.68$), trying risky sports/activities (58.1%; $M = 9.27$), and doing frightening things (57.0%; $M = 9.28$). Respondents reported high levels of

agreement with creative perspectives (M = 13.87). Over one-third agreed that creative activities positively affect emotions (35.9%; M = 14.29), are stimulating (35.8%; M = 14.25), and make people forget about other things (35.5%; M = 13.90).

Table 2. Lifestyle and travel indicators of respondents.

Lifestyle Indicators	Number	Percent
Geographic Region *(n = 1019)*		
Northeast	250	24.5
Midwest	245	24.1
South	278	27.3
West	246	24.1
Adulthood Residency *(n = 1014)*		
Large city	256	25.2
Suburb near large city	392	38.7
Small city or town	182	18.0
Rural area	184	18.1
Family Role and Relationship Status *(n = 1291)* [1]		
I am a parent	538	53.0
I am a primary caregiver	97	9.5
I am in a committed partnership	373	36.7
I am single	283	27.9
Household Composition *(n = 876)* [1]		
Living only with adults	617	70.4
At least 1 child younger than 6 years old	67	7.6
At least one child 6–11 years old	87	9.9
At least one child 12–17 years old	105	12.0
Number of Trips per Year *(n = 1019)*		
None	81	7.9
1–2 trips	454	44.6
3–5 trips	383	37.6
More than 5	101	9.9
Length of Trips *(n = 1232)* [1]		
Short-term trips	515	55.0
Medium-term trips	577	61.6
Long-term trips	140	15.0
Change in Travel Behavior due to COVID *(n = 937)*		
Travel less than before COVID	365	39.0
Travel about the same than before COVID	461	49.2
Travel more after COVID	111	11.8

[1] Participants could check more than one response.

Table 3. Respondents' personality traits and creative perceptions.

Personal Indicators (*n* = 1019)	Low (0–10.99)	Medium (11–16.99)	High (17–20)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Exploration Personality Trait *(α = 0.866)* [1]				**13.06**	**4.32**
Like to explore unknown places	24.3%	35.8%	39.9%	14.46	4.96
Love to try new and exciting experiences	25.6%	39.7%	34.7%	14.14	4.94
Change my itinerary on impulse when I travel	38.4%	36.9%	24.7%	12.46	5.45
Get restless when I spend too much time at home	39.2%	33.0%	27.8%	12.28	5.88
Prefer friends who are spontaneous	43.3%	34.5%	22.2%	12.00	5.48

Table 3. *Cont.*

Personal Indicators (*n* = 1019)	Low (0–10.99)	Medium (11–16.99)	High (17–20)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Risk Seeking Personality Trait *(α = 0.916)* [1]				**9.07**	**6.26**
Like to do frightening things	57.0%	24.6%	18.4%	9.28	6.75
Like to try risky sports/activities	58.1%	23.8%	18.1%	9.27	6.68
Like wild parties	62.0%	20.5%	17.5%	8.68	6.86
Creative Perceptions *(α = 0.929)* [1]				**13.87**	**4.41**
Positively affect my emotions	23.4%	40.7%	35.9%	14.29	4.80
Are stimulating	23.3%	40.9%	35.8%	14.25	4.76
Make me forget about other things	26.9%	37.6%	35.5%	13.90	5.26
Increase my confidence	30.2%	38.1%	31.7%	13.61	5.08
Cultivate my potential	32.2%	38.3%	29.5%	13.28	5.10

[1] Measured on a 21-point scale, ranging from "0 = Strongly disagree" to "20 = Strongly agree".

4.2. Perceived Importance of Creative Tourism Indicators

All four CT domains had very strong internal reliability (Table 4). Creative characteristics of the place (α = 0.935; *M* = 14.38) were the CT domain with the highest importance rate. Specifically, respondents considered most important that the settings for engaging in activities while traveling are visually attractive (*M* = 15.20), are one of a kind (*M* = 14.68), and help experience the local lifestyle (*M* = 14.56). Facilitator conduct (α = 0.922; M = 14.21) followed. Respondents reported high levels of likeness to facilitators that shared local knowledge related to the activities (*M* = 14.79) and shared something unique about the local community (*M* = 14.51). Although still over the scale mid-point, less than a third of respondents liked facilitators who encouraged participation (29.4%; *M* = 13.66) or led them into the imaginative world (26.9%; *M* = 13.91).

Regarding activities (α = 0.940; *M* = 14.09), over one-third of respondents considered it most important to engage in those that are authentic (38.5%; *M* = 15.01), once in a lifetime experience (39.6%; *M* = 14.77), enable close interactions with family and friends (39.5%; *M* = 14.71), are unique (37.9%; *M* = 14.60) and representative of the destination (35.8%; *M* = 14.59), and let to experience different lifestyles (35.2%; *M* = 14.14). Conversely, activities that are out of their comfort zone (*M* = 12.19) or that require hands-on participation (*M* = 13.27) were considered the least important. Conscientious travel attitudes (α = 0.875; *M* = 13.35) were the ones that respondents ranked the lowest, although they agreed on activities that seek to conserve the natural environment (*M* = 14.07). Engaging in activities that seek to reinforce self-identity (*M* = 12.06) was the creative indicator with the overall lowest ranking.

Table 4. Perceived importance of creative indicators by domains.

Indicators by Domain (*n* = 1019)	Low (0–10.99)	Medium (11–16.99)	High (17–20)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Activity *(α = 0.940)* [1]				**14.09**	**3.77**
Are authentic	18.5%	43.0%	38.5%	15.01	4.31
Once in a lifetime experience	21.7%	38.7%	39.6%	14.77	4.60
Enabled close interactions with my family/friends	22.5%	38.0%	39.5%	14.71	4.70
Are unique	21.3%	40.8%	37.9%	14.60	4.59
Representative of the destination	21.7%	42.5%	35.8%	14.59	4.37
Allow me to immerse in the local culture	24.6%	42.5%	32.9%	14.21	4.62
Let me experience different lifestyles	26.2%	38.6%	35.2%	14.14	4.79
Involve some sort of learning	28.3%	40.4%	31.3%	13.80	4.90
Create meaningful interactions with locals	29.0%	38.9%	32.1%	13.67	4.99
Require hands-on participation	33.1%	38.4%	28.5%	13.27	5.06
Outside of my comfort zone	39.9%	37.6%	22.5%	12.19	5.39

Table 4. *Cont.*

Indicators by Domain (*n* = 1019)	Low (0–10.99)	Medium (11–16.99)	High (17–20)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Place *(α = 0.935)* [1]				**14.38**	**3.87**
Visually attractive	17.4%	40.7%	41.9%	15.20	4.21
One of a kind (unique)	20.5%	42.0%	37.5%	14.68	4.39
Experience the local lifestyle	22.7%	38.6%	38.7%	14.56	4.59
Reflect the traditional culture	24.5%	42.0%	33.5%	14.20	4.57
Display stories of its history	27.3%	38.8%	33.9%	14.11	4.72
Feeling connected to the local heritage	27.0%	40.0%	33.0%	13.97	4.74
Used by locals	27.8%	38.7%	33.5%	13.97	4.68
Facilitator Conduct *(α = 0.922)* [2]				**14.21**	**3.93**
Sharing local knowledge related to the activity	20.4%	40.1%	39.5%	14.79	4.49
Sharing something unique about the local community	22.1%	42.6%	35.3%	14.51	4.45
Give me space to try the activity my way	26.1%	39.1%	34.8%	14.20	4.57
Tell stories	25.8%	40.9%	33.3%	14.18	4.60
Leading into the imaginative world	26.9%	41.2%	31.9%	13.91	4.64
Encourage my participation	29.4%	39.4%	31.2%	13.66	4.98
Conscientious Travel Attitudes *(α = 0.875)* [3]				**13.35**	**4.39**
Seek to conserve the natural environment	27.5%	37.6%	34.9%	14.07	4.93
Feel responsible to preserve the local heritage	29.6%	39.5%	30.9%	13.74	4.97
Look for self-improvement	30.9%	39.0%	30.1%	13.54	5.08
Seek to reinforce self-identity	43.5%	33.5%	23.0%	12.06	5.57

[1] Measured on a 21-point scale, ranging from "0 = Extremely unimportant" to "20 = Extremely important". [2] Measured on a 21-point scale, ranging from "0 = Dislike very much" to "20 = Like very much". [3] Measured on a 21-point scale, ranging from "0 = Strongly disagree" to "20 = Strongly agree".

4.3. Differences in the Importance of Creative Indicators Across Study Scenarios

The perceived importance of composite creative activity characteristics, as well as most of their individual indicators, significantly varied across scenarios (Table 5). Pairwise tests indicated that respondents who preferred agritourism (M = 14.87) rated higher creative activities overall than those who chose culinary (M = 14.11) and beach (M = 13.58) tourism. Participants in this group also placed significantly higher importance on activities that are authentic (M = 15.43), representative of the destinations (M = 15.24), unique (M = 15.19), and allow experiencing different lifestyles (M = 14.69) than those preferring beach tourism (M = 14.40, M = 13.90, M = 14.05, M = 13.24, respectively).

They also considered more important than those who opted for culinary and beach experiences activities that allow them to immerse in the local culture (M_{agri} = 14.96; M_{food} = 14.06; M_{beach} = 13.42), include learning involvement (M_{agri} = 14.92; M_{food} = 13.66; M_{beach} = 12.70), require hands-on participation (M_{agri} = 14.32; M_{food} = 13.11; M_{beach} = 12.30), and are outside their comfort zone (M_{agri} = 13.39; M_{food} = 11.53; M_{beach} = 11.53). The agritourism group also considered activities enabling meaningful interaction with locals more important (M = 14.91) than those who opted for the other experiences (M_{food} = 13.67; M_{craft} = 13.76; M_{beach} = 12.34). Craft beverage enthusiasts (M = 13.76) considered it more important to have meaningful interaction with locals than beachgoers (M = 12.34).

The perceived importance of creative places while traveling also significantly differed across scenarios regarding their composite score and most indicators. Pairwise, those who chose agritourism considered more important places that are overall more creative (M = 15.03) and those who help to experience the local lifestyle (M = 15.26) and reflect traditional culture (M = 14.96) than those who chose beach tourism (M = 13.62, M = 13.50, M = 13.38, respectively). Places displaying the stories of history were more valued by those in the agritourism scenario (M = 15.25) than their culinary (M = 14.07) and beach (M = 12.74) counterparts; this indicator was also more valued for those who chose craft beverage experiences (M = 14.36) than those in the beach tourism group (M = 12.74).

Participants in the agritourism scenario rated significantly higher places that facilitate the connection to local heritage (M = 14.99) than their counterparts (M_{food} = 13.95, M_{craft} = 14.03, M_{beach} = 12.90). Places that are used by locals were more important for the agritourism group (M = 14.91) than the craft beverage (M = 13.95) and beach (M = 12.88) tourism groups. Those who chose culinary experiences considered more important than their beach counterparts places that help to experience the local lifestyle (M_{food} = 14.94; M_{beach} = 13.50) and are used by locals (M_{food} = 14.14; M_{beach} = 12.88).

Table 5. A comparison of creative indicators across travel scenarios.

Indicators by Domain (n = 1019)	Agri-Tourism	Culinary Tourism	Craft Beverage Tourism	Beach Tourism (Control)	H-Value	p-Value
Activity [1]	**14.81** [a]	**13.98** [b]	**14.14**	**13.39** [b]	**20.890**	**<0.001**
Are authentic	15.43 [a]	15.06	15.14	14.40 [b]	8.147	0.043
Once in a lifetime experience	15.14	14.82	14.67	14.43	3.252	0.354
Close interactions with my family/friends	14.77	14.39	14.67	15.02	4.534	0.209
Are unique	15.19 [a]	14.57	14.59	14.05 [b]	8.958	0.030
Representative of the destination	15.24 [a]	14.47	14.76	13.90 [b]	12.703	0.005
Allow me to immerse in the local culture	14.96 [a]	14.06 [b]	14.39	13.42 [b]	15.204	0.002
Let me experience different lifestyles	14.69 [a]	14.54	14.09	13.24 [b]	10.423	0.015
Involve some sort of learning	14.92 [a]	13.66 [b]	13.91	12.70 [b]	25.840	<0.001
Meaningful interactions with locals	14.91 [a]	13.67 [b]	13.76 [b,c]	12.34 [b,d]	33.846	<0.001
Require hands-on participation	14.32 [a]	13.11 [b]	13.33	12.30 [b]	20.215	<0.001
Outside of my comfort zone	13.39 [a]	11.53 [b]	12.33	11.53 [b]	22.349	<0.001
Place [1]	**15.03** [a]	**14.50**	**14.39**	**13.62** [b]	**20.802**	**<0.001**
Visually attractive	15.01	15.09	15.08	15.60	3.040	0.386
One of a kind (unique)	14.82	14.86	14.73	14.32	3.683	0.298
Experience the local lifestyle	15.26 [a]	14.94 [-,c]	14.54	13.50 [b,d]	20.767	<0.001
Reflect the traditional culture	14.96 [a]	14.44	14.02	13.38 [b]	16.402	<0.001
Display stories of its history	15.25 [a]	14.07 [b]	14.36 [-,c]	12.74 [b,d]	35.164	<0.001
Feeling connected to the local heritage	14.99 [a]	13.95 [b]	14.03 [b]	12.90 [b]	27.041	<0.001
Used by locals	14.91 [a]	14.14 [-,c]	13.95 [b]	12.88 [b,d]	26.857	<0.001
Facilitator Conduct [2]	**14.98** [a]	**14.03** [b]	**14.27**	**13.55** [b]	**19.479**	**<0.001**
Sharing local knowledge	15.28 [a]	14.79	15.04	14.08 [b]	11.856	0.008
Sharing something unique about the local community	15.19 [a]	14.76	14.37	13.74 [b]	13.961	0.003
Give me space to try the activity my way	15.16 [a]	13.59 [b]	14.09	13.95 [b]	16.017	0.001
Tell stories	14.99 [a]	14.22	14.23	13.31 [b]	16.004	0.001
Leading into the imaginative world	14.66 [a]	13.67	13.91	13.44 [b]	11.718	0.008
Encourage participation	14.64 [a]	13.17 [b]	14.04 [-,c]	12.81 [b,d]	21.227	<0.001
Conscientious Travel Attitudes [3]	**14.43** [a]	**12.79** [b]	**13.54**	**12.65** [b]	**25.891**	**<0.001**
Seek to conserve the natural environment	14.84 [a]	13.52 [b]	14.39	13.55 [b]	12.860	0.005
Feel responsible to preserve local heritage	15.00 [a]	13.27 [b]	13.96	12.77 [b]	27.634	<0.001
Look for self-improvement	14.40 [a]	13.10 [b]	13.65	12.93 [b]	13.102	0.004
Seek to reinforce self-identity	13.43 [a]	11.31 [b]	12.17	11.37 [b]	22.431	<0.001

[a,b,c,d] Different literal superscripts indicate significant pairwise differences. [1] Measured on a 21-point scale, ranging from "0 = Extremely unimportant" to "20 = Extremely important". [2] Measured on a 21-point scale, ranging from "0 = Dislike very much" to "20 = Like very much". [3] Measured on a 21-point scale, ranging from "0 = Strongly disagree" to "20 = Strongly agree".

We also found significant differences in preferences for creative indicators in the facilitators' conduct across respondents from different scenarios in their composite and item-by-items indicators. Those in the agritourism group liked significantly more the overall facilitators' creative conduct (M = 14.98) as well as their ability to share local knowledge (M = 15.28) and something unique about the local community (M = 15.19), telling stories (M = 14.99), and leading visitors to imaginative world (M = 14.66) as compared to those

in the beach tourism group (M = 14.08, M = 13.74, M = 13.31, M = 13.44, respectively). Participants in the agritourism group, as compared to those in the culinary and beach tourism groups, also significantly liked more facilitators that give space to try activities in the respondents' way (M_{agri} = 15.16; M_{food} = 13.59; M_{beach} = 13.95) and encourage their participation (M_{agri} = 14.64; M_{food} = 13.17; M_{beach} = 12.81). Those who chose craft beverage tourism (M = 14.04) liked significantly more facilitators who encouraged their participation than those who chose beach tourism (M = 12.81).

Regarding conscientious travel attitudes, those who preferred agritourism reported significantly higher attitudes in the composite score (M = 14.43) than those who opted for culinary (M = 12.79) and beach (M = 12.65) experiences. We obtained similar results for all the domain indicators, namely attitudes toward conserving the natural environment (M_{agri} = 14.84; M_{food} = 13.52; M_{beach} = 13.55) and the local heritage (M_{agri} = 15.00; M_{food} = 13.27; M_{beach} = 12.77), as well as looking for self-improvement (M_{agri} = 14.40; M_{food} = 13.10; M_{beach} = 12.93) and reinforce their self-identity (M_{agri} = 13.43; M_{food} = 11.31; M_{beach} = 11.37).

4.4. Profiling Respondents Across Study Scenarios Across Study Scenarios

Respondents across study scenarios showed several statistical personal differences except for their gender composition (Table 6). Age-wise, respondents who chose to engage in agritourism seem younger (χ^2 = 50.880; p = <0.001), notably as compared to those preferring craft and beach experiences. Specifically, a larger proportion of respondents between 18 and 45 years old (66.6%) opted to engage in agritourism than in craft beverage (47.3%) or beach (46.3%) experiences. Results also indicate a significantly smaller proportion of very young adults (18–25 years) in the craft beverage group (5.9%) as compared to the beach group (16.1%). Respondents who chose the agritourism scenario reported significantly higher levels of education than their counterparts (χ^2 = 44.847; p = <0.001), especially related to post-graduate degrees (37.5%) as compared to those who opted for excursions featuring culinary (23.6%), craft beverage (23.6%), and beach (21.3%) experiences.

In terms of personal tendencies, respondents statistically varied on their political leaning (H = 7.395; p = <0.001), exploration (H = 14.557; p = 0.002), and risk-seeking (H = 40.725; p = <0.001) personality traits, and creative perceptions (H = 16.360; p = <0.001). Pairwise comparisons indicate that those preferring agritourism experiences leaned more towards the right political views (M = 12.63) than those who opted for culinary (M = 10.65) and beach (M = 11.04) experiences. They reported higher levels of exploration (M = 13.82) and risk-seeking (M = 11.19) personality traits than their counterparts in the culinary ($M_{explore}$ = 12.68; M_{risk} = 8.03), craft beverage (M_{risk} = 9.04), and beach ($M_{explore}$ = 12.59; M_{risk} = 8.05) groups. Those opting for agritourism experiences also reported higher levels of agreeability (M = 14.76) with creative perceptions than those who opted for culinary (M = 13.27) and beach (M = 13.59) tourism.

We found a few significant differences across the groups' lifestyle indicators (Table 7). In terms of household composition, although the proportion of households composed of only adults was significantly different (χ^2 = 7.957; p = 0.047), no significant differences were obtained in the post-hoc pairwise comparisons. In terms of where respondents have resided most of their adulthood (χ^2 = 24.690; p = 0.003), it seems that a larger proportion of respondents who chose agritourism have lived in rural areas (21.8%) and large cities (32.5%) as compared to those who chose culinary (12.7%, 27.6%, respectively), craft beverage (19.0%, 20.8%, respectively), and beach (19.2%, 20.0%, respectively) tourism. Regarding travel behavior, only medium-length trips were significantly different across groups (χ^2 = 9.255; p = 0.026), although no significant differences were obtained in the post hoc pairwise comparisons.

Table 6. A comparison of personal attributes across travel scenarios.

Personal Indicators	Agri-Tourism	Culinary Tourism	Craft Beverage Tourism	Beach Tourism (Control)	Significance	
					Statistic	*p*-Value
Gender						
Male	49.0%	49.8%	54.0%	50.5%	$\chi^2 = 7.191$	0.304
Female	49.4%	47.8%	44.9%	49.5%		
Non-binary	1.6%	2.4%	1.1%	0%		
Age						
18–25 years	18.8% [a]	13.7%	5.9% [b,c]	16.1% [b,d]	$\chi^2 = 50.880$	<0.001
26–35 years	24.7%	20.4%	18.9%	11.8%		
36–45 years	23.1%	22.3%	22.5%	18.4%		
46–55 years	13.8%	11.8%	17.3%	15.0%		
56–65 years	9.8%	15.7%	16.5%	19.5%		
66 and above	9.8%	16.1%	18.9%	19.2%		
Education						
High school graduate or less	23.2% [a]	22.3% [b]	19.3% [b]	21.1% [b]	$\chi^2 = 44.847$	<0.001
Some college	13.4%	22.3%	18.9%	22.7%		
Technical degree	8.6%	7.5%	13.8%	13.7%		
4-year college degree	17.3%	24.3%	24.4%	21.2%		
Master's degree	23.4%	16.8%	18.1%	17.3%		
Doctoral/professional degree	14.1%	6.8%	5.5%	4.0%		
Personal Tendencies (means)						
Political ideology [1]	12.63 [a]	10.65 [b]	11.88	11.04 [b]	$H = 23.528$	<0.001
Exploration personality trait [2]	13.82 [a]	12.68 [b]	13.20	12.59 [b]	$H = 14.557$	0.002
Risk seeking personality trait [2]	11.19 [a]	8.03 [b]	9.04 [b]	8.05 [b]	$H = 40.725$	<0.001
Creative perceptions [2]	14.76 [a]	13.27 [b]	13.86	13.59 [b]	$H = 16.360$	<0.001

[a,b,c,d] Different literal superscripts indicate significant pairwise differences (Bonferroni adjusted $p < 0.008$). [1] Measured on a 21-point scale, ranging from "0 = Far left" to "20 = Far right". [2] Measured on a 21-point scale, ranging from "0 = Strongly disagree" to "20 = Strongly agree".

Table 7. A comparison of lifestyle indicators across travel scenarios.

Lifestyle Indicators	Agri-Tourism	Culinary Tourism	Craft Beverage Tourism	Beach Tourism (Control)	Significance	
					Statistic	*p*-Value
Household Composition [1]						
Only adult(s)	66.8%	69.8%	71.0%	73.6%	$\chi^2 = 7.957$	0.047
Kid(s) 6 years old or younger	9.3%	8.4%	6.2%	7.2%	$\chi^2 = 0.921$	0.820
Kid(s) 6–11 years old	11.7%	10.9%	11.4%	5.9%	$\chi^2 = 5.301$	0.151
Kid(s) 12–17 years old	12.2%	10.9%	11.4%	13.3%	$\chi^2 = 0.879$	0.831
Adulthood Residency						
Rural area	21.8% [a]	12.7% [b]	19.0% [b]	19.2% [b]	$\chi^2 = 24.690$	0.003
Small city or town	15.5%	17.8%	19.7%	18.9%		
Suburb near large city	30.2%	41.9%	40.5%	41.9%		
Large city	32.5%	27.6%	20.8%	20.0%		
Number of Trips per Year						
None	7.9%	9.5%	6.3%	8.3%	$\chi^2 = 14.814$	0.096
1–2 trips per year	39.6%	44.3%	42.5%	51.7%		
3–5 trips per year	43.9%	36.4%	40.5%	29.4%		
More than 5 trips per year	8.6%	9.8%	10.7%	10.6%		
Length of Trips [1]						
Short-term trips	45.1%	41.7%	41.0%	39.8%	$\chi^2 = 1.024$	0.796
Medium-term trips	44.4%	43.2%	48.4%	51.1%	$\chi^2 = 9.255$	0.026
Long-term trips	10.5%	15.1%	10.6%	9.1%	$\chi^2 = 6.940$	0.074

[a,b] Different literal superscripts indicate significant pairwise differences (Bonferroni adjusted $p < 0.008$). [1] Participants could check more than one response.

5. Discussion

Collectively, these results indicate that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to integrating CT into agrifood experiences. Among participants in this study, agritourism experiences, rather than craft beverage or culinary experiences, seem most likely to align with CT. In line with prior studies suggesting the potential for integrating creative elements into agritourism [13], these findings advance the understanding of how agritourism operations can leverage CT elements. Doing so could help agritourism providers diversify their offerings to stand out in a competitive marketplace, increase market share, and achieve the intended outcomes of offering agritourism experiences (e.g., educating the public about agricultural production).

The elements of CT that emerged as central to respondents' connection to an agritourism experience revolve around meaningful interactions with locals and their culture. Elements such as opportunities to "immerse in the local culture" or "experience local lifestyle", facilitators "sharing local knowledge", and a feeling of being "responsible to preserve local heritage" were significantly more important to those interested in agritourism experiences than for those preferring other agrifood experiences or going to the beach (control). It is well-established that farmers engage in agritourism to connect visitors to agrarian spaces [26], educate them on agricultural practices [13,31], and sustain cultural practices [30,32]. Our findings indicate that individuals drawn to agritourism experiences are in line with farmers' cultural and educational desires, particularly concerning immersion into agrarian lifestyles and processes. These findings advance our understanding of the outcomes of agritourism and offer actionable marketing and product development actions for agritourism operators, effectively bridging theory to practice.

Additionally, our findings provide an initial foray into understanding the profiles of visitors who may engage in CT in an agrifood context. Such information is vital for expanding the knowledge of CT, particularly on how the tourism industry can utilize it for marketing and promotion purposes. Aligning with previous knowledge that agritourism attracts families [31], younger participants in this study chose agritourism experiences over other agrifood or the control (beach) experiences. Additionally, the highest level of formal education among those choosing agritourism supports the extant literature [13].

Beyond demographics, however, these findings paint a more comprehensive picture of the profile of potential agritourism visitors. Our findings show that those who chose agritourism experiences displayed significantly higher levels of exploration and risk-seeking personality traits, and creative perceptions constitute an emerging knowledge, thus reinforcing the distinctiveness of specialized niche markets that programming and marketing actions should consider, especially in relation to CT [22,28,41]. The higher proportion of political right-leaning among participants who chose agritourism adds to the nuanced factors, notably political ideologies, shaping attitudes toward travel [42]. In the increasing political polarization context of the USA, this finding is especially intriguing. While political right ideologies align with their strong concern and presence in the agrarian context of the USA, they challenge the political left-leaning of those who are more concerned with local food system issues and, thus, more eager to support agritourism.

5.1. Scholarly Contributions

A major contribution of this study is providing evidence to position agrifood experiences within the CT framework, which advances the emerging body of literature on CT and agrifood tourism in key ways. Our study results expand the conceptualization of CT that is heavily associated with cultural and artistic manifestations by incorporating travel experiences on different aspects of local food production (agrifood tourism), notably agritourism and, to a lesser extent, craft beverage, and culinary tourism.

Our study also advances the understanding of the complex dynamics of agrifood tourism [7,8] by identifying commonalities and differences across their three staple forms. Chiefly, while agritourism is salient for embedding most CT elements, craft beverage and culinary tourism share the quest for intimacy with host communities and their ways of

living. Yet, differences in some creative elements (e.g., the extent to which facilitators should encourage tourists' participation) enrich our understanding of the extent to which tourists experience or expect creativity in different contexts.

Our study also carries methodological contributions related to CT, especially in the context of agrifood experiences. Although we used a validated multi-dimensional inventory of CT indicators to guide our creativity scale [20,22,24], we thoroughly revised it to be inclusive of the key characteristics of agricultural, craft beverage, and culinary experiences. The strong internal reliability we obtained in all four creative domains examined (activity, place, facilitator conduct, conscientious travel attitudes) suggests its suitability to use in the future and even to test in other forms of creative travel experiences for further validity.

5.2. Practical Implications

Study results carry salient practical implications to inform agrifood tourism destinations to position their creative offerings as differentiating factors that are not easily replicated [6,18]. Our results suggest that destinations comprising a wealth of agrifood experiences should build upon their strongest shared creative elements—mainly those gravitating around experiencing local livelihoods—when designing their offerings and marketing activities to improve their competitiveness. Results also indicate these destinations should use the visual appeal of their agrifood experiences in their promotions (e.g., cultural richness), which is fundamental to enhancing their attractiveness [18,25,41]. In doing so, it is advisable that these destinations foster collaborations across providers of other types of CT, leveraging the pulling capacity that food experiences offer [41].

Results also yield practical implications for destinations holding rich agritourism offerings and their providers, given their high level of creative elements. To devise and promote their distinction, agritourism providers should highlight the creative elements of their family's connection to the farm (e.g., storytelling that weaves in family history and traditions). They should also emphasize messages appealing to conscientious travel attitudes (e.g., enhance your farming skills, help us to preserve the farming heritage) while portraying the farm's creative attributes, local features, and the farmer–visitor interactions.

Given the importance of personalization in niche tourism offerings, especially in rural settings [41], agritourism providers should program and promote engaging activities tailored to young families, appealing to their sense of exploration and adventure (e.g., play with baby goats; try grape stomping). Presenting and programming these activities in ways that tap into their desires for meaningful and engaging experiences—especially those involving agricultural learning—can enhance their satisfaction and, in turn, encourage repeat visits and positive word of mouth [16,17,32].

Finally, salient personal attributes associated with different types of agrifood experiences should be incorporated when programming and communicating offerings to tailor offerings, which is fundamental to target niche tourists [28,41]. For example, the programming and promotion of agritourism should be appealing to young audiences, regardless of their household composition. Creative messages appealing to a highly educated market with a desire to explore the 'adventurous' agrarian context would also be suitable when offering agritourism.

5.3. Study Limitations and Insights for Future Research

The contributions of our study should be considered in view of a few limitations regarding the sample and data collection techniques. Using a non-random quota sample, although suitable to explore a new topic like ours, cautions the generalization of the study results to a broader population [38]. The combination of online data collection and hypothetical travel scenarios may not necessarily translate to actual visitors' perspectives as the scenarios may have presented some biases (e.g., too idyllic) or may have inadvertently enticed some respondents to choose one scenario over their preferred one. For example, touring the vineyards and chatting with farmers about the farm lifestyle may have reinforced the romanticized image of farming, thus enticing more affinity for creative

indicators. These limitations call for replicating this study among actual agrifood tourists, preferably while visiting a destination, to reduce recollection distortions, either augmenting or decreasing their perceived creativity. Doing so can also increase the validity of our composed scale.

We identified the extent to which creativity is perceived to be embedded in agrifood travel experiences through the four most salient indicators of CT. However, considering the infancy of this construct, we suggest future studies use qualitative methods of inquiry to unveil additional creative indicators and whether—and if so, how—they may interplay. Future studies might also seek to elucidate the high prevalence of risk-seeking personality traits among those who chose agritourism, as these might yield useful, practical information for providers. Moving forward, more research is needed to evaluate the impact of CT experiences on future travel antecedents (e.g., attitudes, intentions, emotions) and effects (e.g., destination and activity image, memories, satisfaction).

6. Conclusions

In this study, we investigated the extent to which potential tourists perceive agrifood experiences to embody various CT indicators in contrast to a popular form (beach) of tourism. Chiefly, our results indicate that CT can serve as a framework for the study and practice of agritourism and, to a lesser extent, culinary and craft beverage tourism. By identifying common (e.g., visually attractive) and distinct (e.g., meaningful interactions with locals) creative indicators across agrifood experiences, our study findings advance the incipient scholarship of CT and agrifood tourism, especially to elucidate their complex dynamics.

Such identification also offers valuable insights for destination marketers and managers to enhance their competitiveness by leveraging a diverse mix of agrifood experiences. Specifically, our findings can guide tourism stakeholders (e.g., destination managers and policymakers) in designing and promoting immersive and authentic agrifood offerings that appeal to the growing segment of travelers who value environmentally friendly and sustainable destinations while seeking meaningful experiences for personal enrichment. Doing so not only supports the diversification of destination offerings but can also foster community engagement, support local economies, and strengthen the visitor's intentions to revisit and recommend the destination.

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