

Creative Tourism Experiences in Guimarães: A Twofold Analysis of Visitors' and Suppliers' Perspectives

Experiências de Turismo Criativo em Guimarães: Uma Dupla Análise de Perspectivas de Visitantes e Fornecedores

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Abstract/ Resumo

Considering its genesis and evolution, creative tourism can be seen as a development of cultural tourism, more suited to respond not only to the needs of contemporary travellers, who are seeking for more active, fulfilling and meaningful experiences, but also to the need of destinations to stand out and ensure the differentiation of their offer.

Although creative tourism is receiving increasing attention in the literature due to its rising positioning as a development strategy, studies have been focusing primarily on the supply-led perspective. Hence, more research is needed, particularly to investigate consumer views' on the creative experiences being delivered, since they have often been appointed as a value driver of today's tourism products.

Given the above, the objective of this exploratory study is to understand the perceptions of both visitors and tourism services providers.

The geographical context of this study is Guimarães, a cultural destination in the north of Portugal, classified as World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Visitors' perceptions will be col-

Atendendo à sua génese e evolução, o turismo criativo é considerado uma evolução do turismo cultural, mais apto a dar resposta, não só às necessidades dos atuais visitantes, que procuram experiências mais ativas e com maior grau de envolvimento, como também à necessidade dos destinos de se diferenciarem e assegurarem a competitividade da sua oferta.

Embora o turismo criativo tenha vindo a receber uma atenção crescente por parte do meio académico, em muito devido ao seu posicionamento privilegiado enquanto estratégia de desenvolvimento turístico, os estudos focam, fundamentalmente, a perspectiva da oferta. Importa, neste sentido, desenvolver estudos que explorem as percepções dos consumidores relativamente à disponibilidade, relevância e qualidade de experiências criativas dos destinos, uma vez que estas são frequentemente identificadas enquanto importantes indutores de valor nos produtos turísticos. Face ao exposto, o objetivo do presente estudo exploratório é compreender simultaneamente as percepções dos visitantes e dos principais agentes turísticos.

lected through a survey, based on a self-administrated questionnaire. In the case of tourism services providers, namely hotels, restaurants and leisure businesses, data will be collected through a semi-structured interview.

The findings of this study are expected to offer insights regarding the development and promotion of long-lasting creative experiences. The limited studies approaching the visitors' perspective, specifically in this kind of destinations, makes this study a contribution to the literature on creative tourism.

Keywords: Creative Tourism; Experiences; Guimarães

JEL codes: 310, Z320, L830, O210

1. INTRODUCTION

As the importance of tourism as a worldwide phenomenon increases and destinations' economies significantly benefit from its effects, competition between destinations intensifies and stakeholders seek new and innovative strategies to ensure the competitiveness of their tourism offer. Over the last decades, and given the nature of the tourism industry, prone to continuous and rapid transformations, the patterns of tourism products consumption has shifted its gaze from cultural icons, traits of cultural tourism, to the search for engaging experiences grounded in the intangible cultural capital of the destinations (Gordin & Matetskaya, 2012). Designing memorable and innovative experiences that integrate these elements becomes mandatory then, in order for destinations to attract and retain tourists (Chang, Backman & Chih Huang, 2014).

In effect, while in the past the consumption of cultural heritage in a spectator-like, passive manner was sufficient to ensure destinations' attraction power, in the current marketplace there is the need to innovate in order to ensure the satisfaction of today's consumers, with ever increasing needs and desires.

Indeed, consumers' needs became central to the development of innovative strategies.

O enquadramento geográfico do presente estudo é Guimarães, destino de turismo cultural situado no Norte de Portugal, classificado pela UNESCO como Património Mundial. As preceções dos visitantes foram analisadas tendo como base um questionário autoadministrado e, no caso das empresas turísticas, nomeadamente hotéis, restaurantes e empresas de animação turística, uma entrevista semiestruturada.

Os resultados do presente estudo visam retirar conclusões relativamente ao desenvolvimento e promoção de experiências criativas e duradouras. Atendendo à bibliografia existente relativa à perspectiva da procura, especificamente em destinos com as características de Guimarães, este estudo visa ser um contributo para a bibliografia sobre turismo criativo.

Palavras-chave: Turismo Criativo, Experiências; Guimarães

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Hence, traditional business solutions and culture-oriented tourism development strategies started being reengineered in light of new market trends, with the aim of maintaining and ensuring a greater level of differentiation of destinations and long-term success, which are directly connected to the capacity to innovate and adapt to a changing environment.

However, the ability of destinations to innovate and adapt is affected by several factors, especially globalisation. In particular, urban destinations, such as middle-sized cities, are increasingly challenged by issues such as urban regeneration, social inclusion, economic development and environmental sustainability, among others. In many cases, especially in European cities, culture and creativity have been seen as a support engine that can help cities to deal with their everyday problems and innovate (Comunian, 2011). Creative cities, a concept firstly introduced by Landry (2005, *cit. in* Comunian, 2011), has been widely approached in the literature in order to highlight the relation between creativity, innovation and culture in different cities (e.g. Florida, 2000; Stolarick & Florida, 2006; Evans, 2007). In this context, the concepts of creativity and innovation are pointed out in the literature (e.g. Teodorescu,

Stancioiu, Ravar & Botos, 2015) to highlight their potential for creative tourism.

Creative tourism, which derives from the aforementioned changes in consumption patterns, as consumers look for opportunities to actively participate in experiences, learn about their surroundings and for personal development (Richards & Wilson, 2006), has been gaining more and more attention by academics and practitioners, as it is seen as an innovative and critical option for differentiation and competitiveness in urban destinations (OECD, 2014).

However, and despite the recognition of its importance and the undeniable advances in international academic research on the creative tourism concept and its development patterns, there is a substantial lack of knowledge regarding not only the supply side, but also, and specifically, the demand side, in particular, on tourists' viewpoints concerning creative tourism experiences (Tan, Luh & Kung, 2013).

Given the above, the research questions are as follows:

How is creative tourism perceived and experienced by visitors to a mainly cultural destination? How is creative tourism generally perceived by tourism service providers in a mainly cultural destination? More specifically, is creative tourism seen as an opportunity for business and destination development? What are the expected benefits? What are the perceived relevant resources for creative tourism development? How can creative tourism be managed and governed?

Thus, the objective of this research is twofold. First, it aims at understanding both visitors' and tourism service providers' knowledge and attitudes toward creative tourism. Second, it aims to unveil main tourists' perceptions regarding their active participation in creative tourism experiences. The geographical context of the research is the municipality of Guimarães, in the northwest of Portugal, a well-known destination due to its historic and cultural background. Results draw upon a survey carried out with visitors and tourism services providers.

As for the structure of this research, the first section provides a review of significant literature on the creative tourism concept and its core pillars, along with a brief analysis of its development. Research design and methodology adopted are outlined in section three, followed by a section dedicated to providing background of the study area in order to contextualize the

research. Main results from both the questionnaire and interview are then described and discussed. The last section is intended to summarize main findings and implications and also identify main limitations of the research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Creative tourism: from cultural tourism to creative tourism experiences

In recent decades, destinations have been promoting themselves through their cultural identity (Richards & Wilson, 2007). However, culture is no longer seen as a distinctive element of destinations (Richards & Wilson, 2007) and given the massive use of culture-led development strategies, along with the application of the same development parameters and guidelines all over the globe, destinations have lost their differentiating power (Jelinčić & Žuvela, 2012). Therefore, destinations need to deliver experiences that are closely linked to the concept of creativity, capable of enhancing the attractiveness of destinations' tourism offer, as the concept of creativity itself is linked with the destinations capacity to innovate their products (Richards & Wilson, 2006; Tan, Luh & Kung, 2014; Teodorescu et al., 2015). Creativity is indeed held by suppliers as a significant option for stimulating a range of economic, cultural and social outcomes (WEF, 2016; Pivac, Blešić & Kliček, 2017). As per Richards & Marques (2018), those places that are attractive to live in are also attractive to visit. Creativity can then play an important role as a key growth resource in the process of adapting spatial, economic and cultural systems of cities to the new economy (Durmaz, Platt, & Yigitcanlar, 2009). The link between tourism development and creativity and creative industries has the potential to foster demand, stimulate innovation in tourism experiences, revitalise tourism products, add atmosphere to destinations and improve place image, by providing creative content for tourism experiences and supporting innovative approaches to tourism development (OECD, 2014).

The words culture and creativity started merging together and strategies based on delivering creative experiences as a reaction, or an extension of cultural tourism started being developed and implemented, resulting in the emergence of creative tourism (Richards & Wilson, 2006; Wurzbürger, Aageson, Pattakos & Pratt, 2010; Jelinčić & Žuvela, 2012; Chang et

al., 2014; Tan et al., 2013; Cardoso, 2014). Studies emphasise that while cultural tourism mostly focuses on exploring the cultural and historical heritage in a mostly passive manner, creative tourism has a broader scope and has more potential than traditional cultural tourism to add value and innovate products (Richards & Wilson, 2006), since the tangible cultural heritage merges together with the intangible capital. creative tourism is then seen as a more sustainable alternative to its cultural counterpart, since its focus moves away from physical resources, to which tourism can, in some situations, be harmful (Gordin & Matetskaya, 2012). In fact, creative tourism has been appointed as the next generation of cultural tourism that satisfies the higher-level need of self-actualisation with a primary focus on active skills development (Ohridska-Olson & Stanislav, 2010).

The concept of creative tourism is conceptualized by UNESCO (2006, p. 3) as the type of travel “(...) directed toward an engaged and authentic experience, with participative learning in the arts, heritage, or special character of a place, and it provides connection with those who reside in this place and create this living culture”. This concept follows Richards & Raymond’s (2000) study, which emphasised the growing supply and demand for experiences characteristic of the host destination that allow the active participation of visitors and the development of their creative potential. Also, Gordin & Matetskaya (2012, p. 57) state that “the main goal of creative tourism is experiencing things first-hand, living through new emotions, acquiring new knowledge and skills through engaging in creative activity shared with fellow tourists, and through interactions with the locals”. Culture is therefore seen throughout the literature as a source of creativity, and creative experiences as a method for using and developing cultural resources (Stojanovic, Petkovic & Mitkovic, 2012) in a more effective manner in a highly demanding contemporary market. Gordin & Matetskaya (2012, p. 58) defend in this sense that “the existence of cultural tourism supports the development of creative tourism, and many cities boast an effective combination of these kinds of tourism”.

The ultimate goal of the current broader concept of creative tourism is to let the tourist be part of and interact with the surroundings of the host destination, giving the opportunity to the tourist to become part of the creative core of a destination (Den Dekker & Tabbers, 2012).

The concept of creative tourism, nevertheless, raises some questions, namely in regard to what makes creative tourism creative, and who decides what is creative (Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration, 2018). This occurs because different places have their own definitions of creative tourism (Tan et al., 2013) and because creativity is a complex phenomenon widely believed to be inaccessible to analysis and even less so to measurement (Candy & Bilda, 2009). This seeming lack of consensus regarding the creative tourism concept can challenge the tourism production systems as well as research into the phenomenon.

It is also noteworthy that, according to the European Commission (2009), creativity is an evolving concept that can be affected by several factors which include individuals’ personal traits and unconscious psychoanalysis of the social cultural and economic context where it is being developed, cognitive skills and management processes applied to creative development.

Furthermore, as highlighted throughout the literature, current definitions of creative tourism are all supply-led, focussing solely on the perceptions of service providers. The disregard of the tourist’s viewpoint is particularly damaging since it is widely accepted that tourists are seen as co-creators of their creative experiences, whose active participation is key for the creative experiences to exist (Maitland, 2007; Tan et al., 2013). Moreover, in the few existing studies about creative tourism demand, a mismatch between the perceptions of stakeholders and tourists was unveiled, mainly due to practitioners’ lack of understanding of the needs of this type of tourists and consequent poor adjustment of their tourism offer (e.g. Lindroth, Ritalahti & Soisalon-Soininem, 2007; Gordin & Matetskaya, 2012), which can seriously compromise the success of tourism products or destinations. Tan et al. (2013, p. 154) thus defend the need for “more sophisticated analysis of creative tourism that draws on the tourist’s perspective, especially with regard to, how is it different from other types of tourism, what are the basic building blocks of creative experiences, and how do these elements interact in creative tourism systems”.

Creative experiences comprise the engagement and active involvement, as deeper and more meaningful experiences are sought by visitors. Indeed, visitors are increasingly changing their role and are actively participating and

engaging in experiences within the communities visited (Prentice & Andersen, 2007; Potts, Cunningham, Hartley & Ormerod, 2008; Raymond, 2010; Ohridska-Olson & Stanislav, 2010; Richards, 2011), while seeking more genuine experiences instead of staged ones (Binkhorst, 2007; Zacchioli, 2010; Ohridska-Olson & Stanislav, 2010; Zukin, 2010; Richards, 2011; Den Dekker & Tabbers, 2012). By interacting with the place, community and context, tourists are co-creating their own experiences, ensuring the integration of production and consumption processes (Richards & Wilson, 2006; Binkhorst, 2007; Richards, 2011). In this context, intangible elements such as the living and popular culture of the places assume a greater importance (Richards & Wilson, 2006; Maitland, 2007; Richards, 2011; OECD, 2014).

Creative experiences, then, should allow tourists to meet their desire for self development and creative expression (Prentice & Andersen, 2007; Ohridska-Olson & Stanislav, 2010; Richards, 2011; Stojanovic et al., 2012), to learn more about the local skills, expertise, traditions and unique qualities of the places they visit (Richards & Wilson, 2006, cit. in Tan et al., 2013). Creative tourism practices and experiences should consider the symbiotic relationship between the need to produce and deliver new experiences and consumer drive towards a fun and distinctive tourism supply (Pantzar & Shove, 2005, cit. in Richards, 2011). Consequently, the need for suppliers to ensure the transformative power of the experiences created is becoming more and more evident (Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute, 2006; Richards & Wilson, 2006; Prentice & Andersen, 2007; Ohridska-Olson & Stanislav, 2010; Richards, 2011; Stojanovic et al., 2012), and the capacity of creative tourism to defy conventional models of production, consumption and delivery is manifest (Prentice & Andersen, 2007).

Ohridska-Olson & Stanislav (2010) propose a creative tourism business model in which they identify the main factors that determine creative tourism supply, namely, the local tourism infrastructure, hospitality, unique local arts and crafts, unique local cultural offerings, creative industries and other types of tourism, as well as involvement, cooperation and interaction between all stakeholders in the process of creative tourism development. Furthermore, in their research on the existing and potential competitive advantages of St. Petersburg as a creative tourism destination, Gordin & Matetskaya (2012)

identified key factors which influence the rise of this type of tourism in St. Petersburg, such as its existing cultural heritage (included on UNESCO's list of cultural and historical heritage), the cities' fame as a tourism brand and incentives given to creative industries, and the current evolution of the market which calls for new and creative experiences. This can be understood as a reinforcement of (i) the importance of cultural resources, (ii) the link to creative industries, as well as (iii) the role played by the market, linking together the suppliers and tourists, and the need for more integrated creative tourism development models.

Gordin & Matetskaya (2012, p. 59) argue that consumer behaviour determines demand for creative tourism, identifying the following as core market factors: the degree and nature of consumer participation in cultural and creative practices; cultural heritage preservation; broadening channels and formats of human interaction in society and the growth rates of cultural tourism and other forms of tourism. Other studies show that from a demand-side perspective, many tourists desire small, intimate and personal experiences (Maisel, 2009 cit. in Tan et al., 2014). Thus, the main demand factors which should then be pondered by suppliers are: participation in culture, innovation, cultural heritage preservation, authenticity, human interaction and cultural immersion (Ohridska-Olson & Stanislav, 2010).

In spite of the consensus that consumer needs should be the starting point of any creative development strategies, most studies on creative tourism have focused on the supply-side perspective, with few concentrating on the tourists' perspective. Despite the few existing studies, Tan et al. (2014, 2016) developed significant research on the perceptions, motivations and characteristics of creative tourists, including a taxonomy of creative tourists that identifies five distinct types: the novelty seekers, knowledge and skills learners, those who are aware of travel partners' growth, those who are aware of green issues and the relax and leisure type.

2.2. Creative tourism development

The development of creative tourism experiences requires of tourism suppliers the capacity to mobilize and include experiential elements in their offer, as well as embedding creativity in the destination so tourists visit the place where creativity is produced (OECD, 2014). Also,

there is the need to capitalize on tourism demand, rooting their offer in consumers' needs and desires, which will make their products unique and invaluable (Tan et al., 2014), and it is thus suggested throughout the literature that the competitiveness of tourism operators is nowadays grounded in their capacity to move away from traditional forms of delivering the service and creatively satisfying consumers' individual needs (e.g. Teodorescu et al., 2015).

The development of adequate policy frameworks for the interconnected growth of tourism and the creative industries is, however, a relatively new and complex process (OECD, 2014). The world Economic Forum (WEF) (2016) identifies as core factors the role of the government in creating conditions for creative economies to flourish, and the role of entrepreneurs who inspire and train other creative entrepreneurs, creating a multiplier effect. In addition, and according to WEF (2016), policy-makers, when aiming at developing creative economies, should consider factors such as local strengths, with the goal of bringing communities and ideas closer together, through the proximity with the academic community and cultural centres and also the power of place since creative economies are established where people want to live due to location and amenities. Another factor to be considered is the use of digital technology, given that it allows for new and innovative ventures to be rapidly launched and maintained.

A major difficulty for suppliers regarding creative tourism development is to ponder on whether to implement incremental or disruptive innovation strategies, which can lead to short-term and long-term wins, respectively (Caniëls & Rietzschel, 2015). This is because disruptive innovation is often costlier and riskier and therefore frequently disregarded by organizations which implement safer options regardless of current market development patterns. It is worthy of note that, while cultural tourism is often funded by the public sector, which possesses the cultural physical assets, creative tourism is often stimulated by the private sector (Sano, 2016), which is mostly oriented towards making profit in short amounts of time.

However, both public and private sectors should have important responsibilities in creative tourism development (OECD, 2014), whereas the public sector is responsible for the creation of an enabling environment and the private sector is responsible for their own self-promotion, coordination and networking between

themselves towards the resolution of common problems (UNESCO, 2006). Richards & Marques (2012) also emphasize the importance of creating these networks, especially when considering the lack of formal policies on creative tourism.

In an even broader analysis, besides the public and private sectors, local communities also have an important role in the development of creative tourism, because they are the natural 'owners' of most of the resources used (e.g.: cultural, natural and social heritage,) and they must guarantee the control of the management process, in order to prevent the deterioration of those assets (DASTA, 2018) and to optimize their own benefits and the tourist experience.

3. METHODOLOGY

Drawing from the previous sections, while relevant research has been written on creative tourism (e.g. Richards & Wilson, 2006; Maitland, 2007, Binkhorst, 2007) and creative cities (e.g. Comunian, 2011), more research is still needed, particularly focusing on perceptions of demand (Tan et al., 2013; Chang & Backman, 2016). However, a more detailed understanding of creative tourism would need to consider not only the demand perspective, but also the supply side. These two perspectives are critical to expand knowledge on creative tourism, which is, in turn, important for the development and promotion of more active, fulfilling and meaningful creative experiences. Suppliers need to root their offer in consumers' needs and desires in order to make their products distinguishable (Tan et al., 2014). As such, this paper aims at understanding both visitors' and tourism service providers' knowledge and attitudes toward creative tourism and experiences, as well unveiling the main perceptions of on creative tourism and also regarding their active participation in creative tourism experiences. Empirical data was gathered by means of a survey through the use of a self-administered questionnaire applied to visitors, and by a semi-structured interview, administered to tourism service providers.

The questionnaire was based on a literature review on creative tourism, particularly focusing on the concept, experiences, activities, and pillars of (e.g. Richards & Wilson, 2006; Richards, 2011; Stojanovic *et al.*, 2012; Tan *et al.*, 2013). Three main sections were included: characterization of the visit, visitors' perceptions and experiences on creative tourism, and visi-

tors' profile. The questionnaire was pre-tested with the aim of testing the clarity, ambiguity and comprehensibility of the questions. The pre-test was conducted in a different city, Viana do Castelo, also in the Minho region, in the northwest of the country. This city is strongly associated with its cultural characteristics and resources, such as folklore, handicrafts, building heritage, popular festivals, pilgrimages, fairs, and a gastronomic variety of regional food (ADRIL, 2012; Sampaio, 1994). Because of these features, Viana do Castelo is one of the main destinations chosen by visitors when visiting the north of Portugal (Marques, 2011). With regard to the visitor profile, in his study dated of 2011, Marques stated that from the visitors to Guimarães interviewed, 11% included Viana do Castelo in their visit to the region.

Viana de Castelo is a city where a local initiative is being branded, named Viana Criativa (Creative Viana) (Fernandes & Rachão, 2014) that highlighted the local know-how and creative skills for the provision of creative tourism experiences. Given its main characteristics, initiatives and experiences provided, Viana was considered adequate for the application of the pre-test.

After a few minor changes as a result of the pre-test, a Portuguese version of the questionnaire was obtained and then translated into English. Special attention was paid by researchers in order to avoid the possible danger of lost meanings and incorrect interpretations (Efendioglu & Yip, 2004). Also, and in order to ensure accuracy, the questionnaire was checked by a bilingual, experienced researcher and academic. The questionnaires were implemented in the historic centre of Guimarães and in other main tourist attractions. Questionnaires were applied in the last two weeks of May 2018. The sample was obtained using volunteer sampling technique, which is a convenience and non-probability sampling method (Teddlie & Yu, 2007; Byrd, Canziani, Hsieh, Debbage & Sonmez, 2016). A sampling of 140 questionnaires was obtained. Descriptive statistics were conducted using SPSS Version 24.0. Frequency analysis was used to describe the characteristics of tourists' demographics, perceptions and experiences in relation to creative tourism. In order to better understand the features of different users, chi-square tests were employed (with a significance level of 0.05) to determine, for example, if significant differences existed between Portuguese and international respondents' answers,

regarding whether they would or would not like to participate in creative activities in the future. However, when the test was run and assumptions were not met, results are not presented. In addition, Mann-Whitney tests were conducted to test significant differences in relation to respondents' motivations to visit Guimarães and their overall satisfaction with the visit, as well as to the importance of the availability of creative tourism experiences for their decision to visit a particular city/tourist destination in the future. When significant differences were found (based on a significance level of 0.05), results are presented with the information about the effect size.

Although the reduced number of questionnaires can be considered a limitation of this exploratory study, the results obtained are still relevant to identify key aspects based on the demand perspective, which could be explored in more detail in further research. The limitations of the study are explained in greater detail in the final section of the paper (conclusions).

In addition, perceptions of local tourism service providers were collected through semi-structured interviews, conducted between the 15th May and the 12th of June, 2018. The themes addressed in the interviews were concerned with the main research aim and research questions mentioned previously. In addressing these themes, it was expected that responses would identify their perceptions on creative tourism. Respondents were selected through a convenience sampling method. A total of 10 interviews were held with managers of tourism-related businesses, namely providers of tourism accommodation services ($n = 6$), tourism entertainment services ($n = 1$) which promote their offer as creative tourism experiences, food and beverage ($n = 2$) and tour operating services ($n = 1$), all located in Guimarães. The interviews lasted an average of 45 minutes each and were transcribed and analysed manually, in a systematic and objective way, based on a matrix. This matrix encompassed the following topics: familiarity with creative tourism concept; creative tourism as an opportunity for business and destination development and expected benefits; relevant resources to creative tourism development, creative tourism management and governance; and perceived changes in tourism demand and in creative tourism demand (in the last three years). This form of content analysis was based on Krippendorff's (2004) framework and was considered adequate as the answers to

the interview questions were used to answer the research questions. Respondents' answers were coded in numbers ranging from one to ten, for instance, Respondent 1 was coded R1, Respondent 2, R2 and so forth.

4. THE GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT: GUIMARÃES

The municipality of Guimarães is located in Vale do Ave (NUTS III), in the northwest of Portugal, covering an area of 241 km², with a total of 153 995 inhabitants in 2016 (INE, 2016). The resident population was 162 572 inhabitants in 2006 (INE, 2006), which represents a drop in population of 5.3% in the last decade.

Analysing the economic structure of the municipality, it can be said that despite the difficulties that industries in general are facing, textile and clothing industries still have a critical role in the local economy, contributing greatly to exports and employment. Tourism is also gaining increasing importance to the local economy and employment, given the growing number of tourists visiting the region and the number of businesses that have been created in the last decade.¹

In fact, in the past, the decline of some industrial activities was reflected in local hotels, with a reduction not only in occupancy rates but also in the level of average expenses per guest.

This decline led, in the late 1990s, to the municipality promoting a strategy of tourism development supported by urban regeneration, which had its main recognition in the classification of its Historic Centre as a Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2001 and the hosting of the European Capital of Culture in 2012. The city also committed to the implementation of cultural and sporting structures capable of providing spaces and conditions for the presentation of a broad annual programme of activities.¹

The hosting, in 2004, of a few European Cup Football matches provided major national and international visibility. It also had the merit of preparing the city for hosting large events with greater amounts of visitors.

The opening in 2005 of the Guimarães Multipurpose Pavilion, able to host major cultural, sporting and conference events, and the opening in 2006 of the Centro Cultural Vila Flor, with two auditoriums, conference rooms and a large exhibition area, projects developed for European Capital of Culture 2012, also reinforced the position of the municipality in the national context in the area of cultural and urban tourism.

These public investments and the new dynamics imprinted on the city's tourism was reflected in the installed hotel capacity, which registered positive development between 2013 and 2017, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. capacity of accommodation and number of establishments in Guimarães 2013 to 2017

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Accommodation Capacity	1707	1824	1983	1924	2289
Establishments	23	26	33	30	39

Source: National Statistics Institute (2013 to 2017)

The indicators of tourism activity show a positive evolution between 2013 and 2017, with an increase of 34.1% in the accommodation capacity and of 69.6% in the number of existing establishments. It is notable that there was a significant investment in the hotel sector, mainly within the four-star category.

In recent years, demand for Guimarães has registered a positive evolution. There is sustained and continuous growth, both in the

number of overnight stays and in the number of guests (Table 2). The number of overnight stays shows a positive evolution of 74.7% between the years 2013 and 2017. For the same period, the number of guests also shows an increase of 67.8%. Guimarães also shows a strong capacity to attract international markets which continues to grow, representing 49.6% of international guests in 2017 (Table 2).

¹ <https://www.cm-guimaraes.pt> accessed 22nd April 2018

Table 2. Evolution of the number of overnight stays, number of guests and % of international guests in Guimarães from 2013 to 2017

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number of nights	178429	108987	222534	256531	311737
Number of guests	110558	129441	141946	156270	185554
International guests (%)	41.9%	42.0%	43.2%	47.1%	49.6%

Source: National Statistics Institute (2013 to 2017)

With regard to the visitor profile, in his study dated of 2011, Marques stated that visitors to Guimarães were aged between 26 and 65, with special focus on the age group between 26 and 45. Also, most visitors had higher education and were married. The visit to Guimarães was part of a broader visit to the region. Visitors choose the destination because it is a World Heritage Site, highlighting the gastronomy and wines and also cultural activities as other reasons for their visit. Visitors appreciate local hospitality and leave with the intention of recommending a visit to family or friends. Previous studies indicate that visitors to Guimarães have cultural interests, but are also willing to participate in activities/experiences, which can be considered as a positive predictor for the development of creative tourism-related experiences.

In regard to the creative tourism supply, one can argue that Guimarães possesses the necessary historical heritage, built tourism infrastructures, cultural dynamics and identity. There is a significant number of stakeholders in the municipality who could focus on developing and promoting this type of tourism, such as tourism leisure companies and local tour operators, along with a growing number of businesses, such as restaurants and accommodation facilities, that could potentially organise experiences to complement and enhance their offer, even though that would not be their core business.

The Guimarães Tourism website, www.guimaraesturismo.com, has an area designated as Experiences on its home page. Exploring this item, it can be observed that some of the references are related to facilities such as the cable car, and others are suggested places to visit by theme, medieval bridges, Castro Culture or the Historic Centre. One can also find specific references to promoters and businesses that offer integrated programmes to the public, which may align with the definition of creative tourism.

In order to shed light to the existing offer that is related to creative tourism experiences, examples are provided here. One promoter offers rickshaw and walking tours in the area of the historic centre. Two promoters are focused on bike-related experiences: one provides traditional MTB bike tours and the other provides bike tours and bike rental services. The offers go from traditional bike tours, to combinations of bike tours with historical heritage, sports activities and health and beauty treatment / SPA experiences. There are also two promoters that offer a game experience that can be classified as escape games. These are experiences where the participants are challenged to solve a series of puzzles and riddles using clues, hints, and strategy to complete the objectives at hand. Players are given a set time limit to unveil the secret plot which is hidden within the rooms. The Breakout Guimarães Escape Game has the future and space missions as the main theme. The other promoter offers a problem-solving experience. In Guimarães one promoter can also be found offering an exploring experience close to the concept of a treasure hunt, "the artifact" – Guimarães outdoor mystery. This game consists of a combination of historical, heritage and cultural exploration mainly located in the historic centre area, related to an artifact of D. Afonso Henriques, the first Portuguese King who is generally accepted as having been born in Guimarães. The game includes visits to places of interest and tasting of local traditional pastries.

In the national tourism register² (Turismo de Portugal, 2018), there are in fact 16 tourism entertainment companies registered in Guimarães which focus on cultural touring (8), nature and adventure activities (9) and activities related to water tourism (6). Activities include developing thematic routes and other heritage discovery routes, museum visits, bicycle and Segway tours, boat rental and water tours, and activities

² National Tourism Register managed by Tourism Portugal, the National Tourism Authority, which comprehends a register of all tourism businesses by typology.

such as obstacle courses, nature observation activities, hiking, canyoning and similar outdoor activities. These are relatively typical experiences offered in many destinations, and therefore represent a lower differentiating power for destinations.

In addition to the above mentioned, four of the companies offer activities directed towards discovering ethnographic heritage and popular and traditional games, but only one of those specializes in more creative programmes such wine and gastronomic activities, pottery and traditional embroidery workshops, storytelling and other agricultural, pastoral, artisanal and similar activities. Only one leisure business promotes itself as offering creative tourism activities.

Some businesses such as restaurants, accommodation and housing units also offer wine tasting, cooking experiences, and organic farming workshops. However, in all these cases, they are non-regular offers that require prior booking and a minimum number of participants, which poses challenges to marketing initiatives.

Given the above, the creative offer is considered scarce, and it seems that there is still a greater dependence on cultural tourism programmes with a lesser degree of activation amongst tourists, and their involvement with the community. Further sections of this paper will focus on the perceptions of tourists and service providers regarding the creative tourism supply in Guimarães.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1. Demographics of the respondents

This section provides a description of the profile of the respondents. A total of 140 visitors participated in the study. The general demographic profile is presented in Table 3. As shown in the results, 80% of the respondents were international visitors. For the purpose of the study, any individuals who lived in the municipality were considered residents and were therefore excluded from the study. Of the international visitors, 35.7% (n = 40) were from Brazil, followed by Spain (n = 21; 18.8%), and by France (n = 14; 12.5%). These results are in line with the overall statistics of international visitors to Portugal, where the three countries mentioned are traditionally among the most significant source markets (INE, 2018).

In total, 49% of the respondents were female and 50.7% were male. On average, the

respondents were 48 years old (standard deviation: 13.7). Most of the respondents had higher education degrees and had an income higher than 501 euros/month.

According to Richards (2009), cultural tourists are usually associated with high levels of education as well as high incomes, which is one of the reasons why this form of tourism is of particular interest to destinations, not only due to its direct economic effects, but also because the tourist receipts generated by cultural tourism consumption can be reinvested in the preservation and revitalization of cultural assets, which is crucial in a period where local and national governments are dealing with strong financial restrictions. When considering specifically the case of creative tourists, and according to the Creative Tourism Network (n.d.), these type of tourists usually allocate a substantial part of their budget for the fulfilment of creative tourism activities/experiences, which can also be of significant interest to the destination providers who seek to deliver innovative products and increase their revenues.

5.2. Characterisation of the visit (to Guimarães)

The majority of the respondents (75.7% in total; n = 140) were visiting Guimarães for the first time. Those who had visited the destination before had visited 3 times on average (n = 29; standard deviation: 2.4). As shown in Table 4, most of the respondents were visiting the destination with family (n = 74; 52.9% in total) and with friends (n = 43; 30.7% in total).

Visitors' main motivations were investigated by asking respondents to rate the importance of ten reasons presented for visiting Guimarães (on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = no importance, 2 = not very important, 3 = neutral, 4 = important, to 5 = very important), which were generated after the literature review. The descriptive results show that historical and cultural heritage are the most important reasons for visiting the destination (see Table 5). These results are in line with previous work suggesting that Guimarães is mainly visited because of its historical and cultural context and that the majority of tourists are satisfied with their visit (Marques, 2011; Remoaldo, Cadima, Ribeiro Vareiro & Freitas Santos, 2014). Based on a Mann-Whitney test, significant differences with a small effect size were found between Portuguese (Md = 4; n = 28) and international

Table 3. Demographics of the respondents

	N	%
Nationality		
Portuguese	28	20.0
Other country	112	80.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>140</i>	<i>100</i>
Country of Origin		
Germany	9	8.0
Argentina	3	2.7
Brazil	40	35.7
Spain	21	18.8
France	14	12.5
The Netherlands	5	4.5
UK	5	4.5
Other	15	13.4
<i>Total</i>	<i>112</i>	<i>100</i>
Gender		
Female	69	49.3
Male	71	50.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>100</i>
Age		
<= 38	36	26.7
39 - 48	40	28.6
49 - 58	29	20.7
> 59	35	25
<i>Total</i>	<i>140</i>	<i>100</i>
Mean (48 years) Standard Deviation: 13.7		
Educational Background		
Primary school	4	2.9
Secondary school	14	10.0
Vocational education	6	4.3
Bachelor's degree	3	2.1
Graduation Degree	37	26.4
Postgraduate studies	12	8.6
Master's degree	25	17.9
PhD	6	4.3
Post doctorate	4	2.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>111</i>	<i>100</i>
Income (monthly)		
< 500	1	0.7
501-1000	31	22.1
1001-1500	40	28.6
1501-2000	29	20.7
>2000	39	27.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>140</i>	<i>100</i>

visitors (Md = 3; n = 99) with regard to when their motivation is 'To visit a World Heritage City' ($U = 1006.5$, $z = -2.267$, $p = 0.023$, $r = 0.2$). The results show that this motivation was considered as 'important' for 82.6% and 'very important' for 75% of international visitors. The degree of satisfaction in relation to the visit was also evaluated. Overall, the respondents were very satisfied, as shown by the high rate of

4.5 (standard deviation = 0.91) on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = very dissatisfied, 2 = dissatisfied, 3 = neutral, 4 = satisfied, to 5 = satisfied). There were no significant differences between the degree of satisfaction of the visit between Portuguese (Md = 5, n = 27) and international visitors (Md = 5, n = 105), $U = 1302.5$, $z = -.776$, $p = .438$).

Table 4. Visiting Guimarães alone or with family or friends

	N	SD
Alone	23	16.4
With family	74	52.9
With friends	43	30.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>140</i>	<i>100</i>
Nr. of people (family) in the group: Mean: 3 (Standard Deviation: 1.6)		
Nr. of people (friends in the group: Mean: 12.9 (Standard Deviation: 17.7)		

Table 5. Motivation for the visit to Guimarães

Motivation for the visit	Mean	SD
To have a different experience	4	0.91
To learn/have contact with the historical and cultural heritage	4	0.94
To visit a World Heritage City	4	0.92
To visit historic cities	4	1.00
To learn/experience the region's gastronomy and wines	4	1.10

**SD: Standard deviation*

5.3. Visitors' perceptions and experiences about creative tourism

The majority of the respondents had not heard about creative tourism before (82% in total; n = 115). Those who had heard about creative tourism before were asked to explain and/or indicate the context. Only 4 respondents had heard about creative tourism before and they had heard about it in the context of their jobs.

Considering the objectives of the study, all respondents were asked to indicate the main idea they would associate with creative tourism, despite their previous knowledge about it. Only 15 respondents answered the question. The results suggest that respondents have vague ideas about creative tourism, considering what they associate with it and their previous participation in creative experiences. Respondents associated creative tourism with 'new experiences' (n = 3), 'interesting' (n = 5) and 'different' (n = 4), and 5 had already participated in creative tourism experiences before the current visit, namely cooking (n = 1), dancing (n = 1) and theatre (n = 1). Those who had heard about creative tourism before considered that the existence of creative tourism experiences rated its importance in their decision to visit the destination as 3.3 (on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = no importance, 2 = not very important, 3 = neutral, 4 = important, to 5 = very important).

Respondents were also asked about their intentions to participate in creative tourism experiences in the future. In total, 53% (n = 74) indicated that they would like to participate in creative experiences, and 47% (n = 66) indicated they would not like to participate in creative experiences in the future. When asked to explain the answer, 3 of the respondents who indicated 'no', stated that they had 'no interest' (n = 2) and that they 'do not know what it is' (n = 1). Those who indicated they would like to participate in creative experiences, referred to 'new experiences/new knowledge' (n = 17). A chi-square test for independence (with Yates' continuity correction) indicated no significant differences between nationality and if they would, or would not like to participate in creative tourism activities in the future ($\chi^2 2.453$; d.f = 1; p = .117).

In order to better understand the respondents' perceptions, they were all asked to indicate the degree of importance (on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = no importance at all, 2 = not very important, 3 = neutral, 4 = important, to 5 = very important) that several aspects (that emerged from the literature) could have, in their motivation to participate in creative tourism activities, in the future. None of the aspects identified emerged as particularly important for respondents to participate in creative tourism experiences. Nevertheless, the aspects with higher

mean were: 'Relax/leisure' (mean=3.5; Sd=0.91), 'Fun' (mean=3.5; Sd=0.87), 'Entertainment' (mean=3.4; Sd=0.97), 'Preservation of local traditions' (mean=3.4; Sd=0.91), 'Learning' (mean=3.4; Sd=0.86), and 'Contact with local traditional activities' (mean=3.3; Sd=0.079). These results might suggest that either respondents are not very interested in participating in different activities with the aspects identified, or that they do not identify with the motives for creative tourism activities at all.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the importance of the availability of creative tourism experiences in their decision to visit a particular city/tourist destination in the future (on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = no importance, 2 = not very important, 3 = neutral, 4 = important, to 5 = very important). On average, respondents rated it as 3.2 (SD = 1.16). Significant differences with small size effect were found between Portuguese (Md = 4, n = 17) and international visitors (Md = 3, n = 58) with regard to the importance of the availability of creative tourism experiences in their decision to visit a particular city/tourist destination in the future ($U = 339.000$, $z = -2.026$, $p = 0.043$, $r = 0.2$). The frequency results show that the availability of creative tourism experiences is important for 74% of respondents' decision to visit a particular city/tourist destination in the future.

Finally, and in order to provide further insights into the respondents' perceptions, they were asked to indicate their level of interest regarding the following creative tourism activity areas that also emerged from the literature (on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = not interesting at all, 2 = not very interesting, 3 = neutral, 4 = interesting, to 5 = very interesting). The results show that the respondents did not show much interest in the activities presented, even though one can identify traditional gastronomy (mean = 3.7) and wines (mean = 3.7) as the activities that had more interest shown.

Overall, these findings show visitors' lack of awareness or interest in participating in creative tourism activities, despite the recognition in the literature that visitors are increasingly changing their role and actively participating in experiences while looking for deeper and more meaningful, and engaging experiences (Ohridska-Olson & Stanislav, 2010; Richards, 2011). Also, it is evidenced in this study that the existence of creative activities is not particularly relevant to the respondents' decisions to visit destinations, which is important for service providers and

destinations, particularly at a time when destinations need to stand out (Richards & Marques, 2012), when it is emphasised that creative tourism has more potential than traditional cultural tourism to add value and innovate products (Richards & Wilson, 2006) and that creativity and creative tourism experiences are significant for destinations' competitiveness and capacity to innovate their products (Richards & Wilson, 2006; Tan et al., 2014; Teodorescu et al., 2015).

In addition, this study supports the idea that there is a need for further research on the tourist's perspective (Tan et al. 2013), especially in terms of what tourists mean and what they are looking for when searching for more active, fulfilling, meaningful and engaging experiences.

5.4. Tourism services providers' perceptions

A total of ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with local tourism services providers. The interviews covered the topics identified as the most relevant to the research, as described in the methodology, and the results obtained are presented and discussed in the following section.

5.4.1. Familiarity with the creative tourism concept

The results show that only half (n = 5) of the tourism services providers were somehow familiar with the concept of creative tourism. Those that were not familiar with the concept, when asked which ideas they would associate with it, mentioned 'something related to the arts', 'artistic creation' or 'tourism for artists'.

When compared with the results obtained from the demand perspective, it is worth mentioning that the majority of visitors surveyed were also not familiar with the concept of creative tourism (82% of the total, n = 115), but associate it with ideas such as 'new experiences' (n = 3), 'interesting' (n = 5) and 'different' (n = 4).

In conclusion, both perspectives (supply and demand) showed reduced familiarity with the concept of creative tourism, which is not surprising. These results are in line with some of the topics covered in the literature review section, according to which, the concept of creative tourism is far from reaching a wide and universal acceptance, even in academia, as it is considered quite complex to define what creativity

means in different destinations and from different perspectives (Candy & Bilda, 2009; Tan et al., 2013).

In the present study, it is worth mentioning the association of creative tourism with the arts which service providers made, which gains relevance when considering the respondents allusions to the 'cultural and artistic atmosphere' of Guimarães, the emergent creative industries labour market and the increased presence of 'artists' and 'creative people' in the destination. These intangible elements, namely, the 'living cultural and place atmosphere' are frequently considered by several authors (Richards & Wilson, 2006; Maitland, 2007; Richards, 2011) as relevant conditions for the development of creative tourism experiences, as the interaction between creative tourists and local communities and place are crucial to the co-creation of tourism experiences.

5.4.2. Creative tourism as an opportunity for business and destination development and expected benefits

When asked about the potential benefits of creative tourism to the destination development, all respondents agreed and pointed out advantages such as increased demand (n = 8) and touristic receipts (n = 3), diversification of tourism supply (n = 3), more employment (n = 2) and longer stays (n = 3).

Looking in particular to the potential benefits of creative tourism to their own businesses, 5 respondents considered creative tourism as an opportunity for their business, and all considered that the development of creative tourism could attract more clients (n = 10), more receipts (n = 5) and longer stays (n = 2).

All the tourism providers surveyed manifested their interest in the future development of creative tourism offer, some of them because they already positioned themselves in the creative tourism market (n = 3), but mostly due to the expected benefits, namely, increased tourism demand (n = 5), diversified offer (n = 1) and longer stays (n = 1). Those that specified the domains in which they would prefer to develop their creative tourism offer (n = 4) pointed out the opportunity to develop new products/services that are basically related to their current offer, such as: nature-based experiences (n = 2), nutrition and local products based experiences (n = 1), walking-tours and other tours (n = 2),

cooking workshops (n = 2) and wine & gastronomy-based experiences (n = 2).

The above presented results reinforce some of the ideas covered by the literature on creative tourism concerning its potential contribution towards the diversification of destinations' offer and the development of innovative tourism products (Richards & Wilson, 2006, 2007). In a time of increased competitiveness when all destinations are struggling to attract more tourists, the identification of creative tourism as an opportunity to further develop tourism in Guimarães with the aforementioned perceived benefits can be considered a positive indication about the willingness and awareness of local tourism agents on the subject.

5.4.3. Relevant resources to creative tourism development

Human resources were considered the most important resource required to develop creative tourism experiences by all respondents, including those that didn't consider creative tourism as an opportunity to develop their own business (n = 5). The most important reason pointed out by these latter stakeholders is the inadequacy of creative tourism products in relation to their own business model, although lack of facilities and human resources were also mentioned as potential constraints. Other relevant resources referred to were facilities, specialized knowledge, creativity, demand and economic profitability.

When asked specifically about their own business, 5 of the interviewed agents considered they have the required resources, such as human and material resources, and specialized knowledge. The other 5 service providers that considered not having the needed conditions indicated a lack of important prerequisites such as facilities and human resources.

All respondents considered that Guimarães has the necessary conditions to develop creative tourism. International and national recognition/market visibility was pointed out as one of the reasons why the destination could further develop its creative tourism offer.

Despite considering that Guimarães already has the necessary resources to further develop creative tourism (n = 10), some agents referred to the lack of entrepreneurship and private investment as possible constraints (n = 2). On the other hand, the diversified tourism offer, cul-

tural heritage, gastronomy, 'artistic atmosphere' of the city, the status as European Capital of Culture and the emergent creative industry labour market were highlighted as examples of favourable conditions for this development.

The role of human resources (associated with specialized knowledge) in the development of creative tourism products assumed significant relevance in the tourism services providers' answers, with some of the agents interviewed referring the importance of 'a highly motivated team', a 'creative team' or a team 'with specialized knowledge to develop creative products'.

The importance of human resources in tourism innovation processes is well covered by the literature, with some authors establishing links between creativity, innovation, good team spirit (Wilenius, 2004 cit. in Lindroth et al., 2007) and co-operative attitudes in organizations as critical to destinations development (Håkansson & Snehota, 1995 cit. in Lindroth et al., 2007). According to Amabile (1998, cit. in Zontek, 2016) "the creativity which exists in every organization is a function of three elements: expertise, creative thinking and motivation".

Although interrelated and all pillars of creative tourism development, the resources which were pointed out might need to be considered from a different perspective, a more integrated approach that includes the design model/process. That is, it should be considered if the most important resource is not, in fact, a shift from the traditional business/development model to a more creative and innovative one.

According to DASTA (2018), whereas "In traditional cultural tourism development strategies, the development process begins with an inventory of cultural resources (...) Creative tourism development begins from an inventory of local skills from all walks of life, something which requires a much more imaginative approach".

As previously mentioned, Guimarães has been traditionally marketed and perceived as a cultural tourism destination, so it is not surprising that even the service providers that show some interest in developing a creative tourism offer are still aligned with a more traditional development model, and therefore, more concentrated on traditional resources and less aware of this needed shift of thought.

This leads to the issue of management and governance, which was also covered in the

interviews, with the results being presented in the next section.

5.4.4. Creative tourism management and governance

All respondents agreed on the importance of having a 'creative tourism management organization' in order to deal with and manage common problems (n = 1), to facilitate networking and partnerships (n = 2) or even to help in the organization and commercialization of creative tourism experiences (n = 2). The required financial resources are considered as the most important constraint to the creation of such an entity (n = 1). As to the nature of the association, some of the stakeholders consider a private association the best government model (n = 6) and some of them consider that the local government should assume such competences.

Networking between companies, associations and public organizations is considered by all respondents as a positive condition for the improvement of the creative tourism market, namely, supporting communication and promotion (n = 2) and distribution (n = 2), insofar as all involved in such networking would be motivated and that this partnership could be widely spread.

According to Richards & Marques (2012, pp. 8-9), "The networks are important in the sense that they join together (glocal) partners with different interests, in this case from the tourism field, the cultural and creative industries and government. For the time being, creative tourism policies seem to be largely reactive, rather than proactive". The authors further emphasize that "some of the most developed examples of creative tourism activities are provided by creative networks aimed at linking tourists and locals" (Richards & Marques (2012, p. 3), with Creative Tourism New Zealand and Creative Tourism Barcelona being stated as two of the best examples (Richards, 2010).

5.4.5. Perceived changes in tourism demand and creative tourism demand

As relates to perceived changes in tourism demand in the last three years, opinions were divided, with half of the respondents pointing out an increase in demand for outdoor and nature-based experiences (n = 4) and gastronomic and wine related experiences (n = 2) as well as a

new, better informed tourist profile. On the other hand, the five respondents that didn't acknowledge significant changes in tourism demand referred to the constant preference for traditional gastronomy (n = 2). Similarly, only 5 tourism services providers considered the increase in creative tourism demand to be related to their own businesses and clients.

On this particular topic, in the absence of significant perceived changes in creative tourism demand, it is worth mentioning the specific case of gastronomy and wine-related experiences, referred to both from the perspective of the respondents that acknowledged some demand changes and from those that didn't. In addition, through the interviews some of the agents pointed out gastronomy and crafts as good examples of local heritage which can form the basis for a further level of development of creative tourism in Guimarães.

Although this study found that both the interviewed visitors and service providers of Guimarães, mainly a cultural tourism destination, have limited knowledge of creative tourism, previous studies (e.g. OECD, 2014) have often indicated the importance of creative tourism; therefore, it is still expedient to consider that creative tourism experiences can contribute to tourists' overall fulfilment, as well as increasing the destination's attractiveness.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Throughout the theoretical background, it was suggested that culture, creativity, and innovation are considered points which are focal to the satisfaction of demand needs and to the development of enriching and engaging experiences, capable of simultaneously enhancing destinations' attractiveness.

The present research aimed to offer insights into visitors' and service providers' perceptions about creative tourism. Although there is a growing academic focus on this type of tourism, results show that there is a low level of awareness in the marketplace concerning this phenomenon, particularly with regard to the consumers' viewpoint, since the majority of the respondents had not heard about creative tourism and had no clear ideas associated with the concept. In this sense it is not surprising that the availability of creative tourism experiences was not a key motivation to visit the city (present and future visit). Motivations associated with visiting historical and cultural heritage were in

effect rated as the main reasons for visiting the destination, while 'to have a different experience' was rated as the second main motivation. This search for new experiences reinforces the idea that visitors are increasingly looking for new experiences, which is indicative that the novelty element is important for demand and that visitors are willing to participate in creative tourism experiences. Creative tourism is intended to attract and retain tourists, to increase overall satisfaction with the destination and also to foster repeat visits.

Traditional gastronomy and wine related activities seem to emerge as some of the most relevant experiences that can also be linked to the concept of creative tourism. Both visitors and tourism service providers pointed out these type of experiences, with visitors showing their interest in participating in gastronomy and wine-related experiences, also acknowledged by the local agents as one of the most required activities at the destination.

Even though half of the service providers interviewed were also not familiar with the concept of creative tourism as a type of tourism, they associated it with artistic and cultural creation and the of the city itself. The interviewees recognize the potential to benefit from creative tourism, showing interest in developing these initiatives and experiences in the future. The existence of a qualified workforce, networks and partnerships were considered central to the successful implementation of these experiences. The increase in demand and a consequent increase in tourism receipts were some of the potential benefits that can emerge from a further development of creative tourism in Guimarães.

Although in general, respondents agree that the city has the necessary resources to implement creative tourism, and tourism could benefit from its development, taking into account the results of this research, it can be argued that the core pillars of creativity are not being successfully applied in the region.

It is in fact not surprising that both visitors and service providers do not associate Guimarães with creative tourism since the city's promotion initiatives focus mainly on its cultural offer.

Considering that the traditional and static format of Guimarães tourism' offer can, in the long-term, compromise its competitiveness, and bearing in mind the awareness towards creative tourism benefits shown by tourism providers, it can be considered that this study highlights an

opportunity for a deeper reflection on destination positioning in this matter, both by destination managers and local tourism services providers.

If creative tourism is considered a strategic option for the destination, then there is the need to improve and design innovative experiences, which constitute the core of the creative development, increasing their availability and quality. Tourism agents should act as facilitators for this purpose. Also, there is a clear need for the destination to develop communication strategies regarding creative tourism experiences.

From a practical perspective, this study has some implications for practitioners and policy makers to consider. The study has shown that there is an opportunity to stimulate the development of creative tourism experiences, specifically focusing on wine and gastronomy. This implication results not only in the willingness of visitors to experiment with something different and new, but also in the disposition of service providers to develop that kind of offer. This is also shown by the analysis of the already existing offer that is being promoted on the Guimarães tourism website as creative tourism experiences.

In addition, it can be said that Guimarães might be in a privileged position to initiate the

mentioned transition from a cultural tourism-based destination towards a creative tourism destination, by exploring its intangible elements.

Some limitations of this study must be addressed. First, the qualitative analysis may be limited due to the small number of responses and the adoption of matrix-based content analysis that aimed to obtain information to answer specific research questions. Therefore, in-depth studies are needed in the future to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the perceptions of creative tourism suppliers. Second, the fairly reduced number of questionnaires is also a concern, as it is difficult to obtain and examine a wide-ranging perspective of the demand. Also, there is some concern regarding this type of survey, namely self-selection biases and practical difficulties of surveying people. Despite these limitations, and although results cannot be generalised, this exploratory study is still able to provide useful and noteworthy insights that also result from the answer to the research questions. However, more thorough survey procedures should be implemented in future research. Also, other perspectives would need to be taken into consideration to obtain a more comprehensive view of creative tourism, in particular the views of local of community and local government.

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