



Profiling the participants in creative tourism activities: Case studies from small and medium sized cities and rural areas from Continental Portugal

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ABSTRACT

Although cultural tourists increasingly seek to experience cultural events actively and to directly engage in creative activities, empirical knowledge about the creative tourist remains limited. This study aims to characterize the motivations and profile of creative tourists. The data was collected through a survey of participants in creative tourism activities in Portugal developed by 40 pilot institutions of the CREATOUR project during 2017 and 2018, with 814 usable questionnaires collected and validated. The questionnaire had 30 questions and marked the first time this kind of research was conducted in Portugal. The questionnaire included questions on: the composition of their travel companions, their previous participation in a creative tourism experience, reasons for visiting the destination, their characterization of the creative tourism experience, an evaluation of their creative tourism experience, and their socio-demographic profile. Using a cluster analysis to analyse the data, three clusters were found: Novelty-Seekers, Knowledge and Skills Learners, and Leisure Creative-Seekers.

1. Introduction

In the 1980s, Alvin Toffler (1980) pioneered the concept of “prosumer” to refer to a type of consumer involved in product design and in production itself. With the diffusion of the concept of prosumer – a fusion of the words “producer” and “consumer” – since that time, the consumer has become the producer of many of the products and experiences he consumes. The diffusion of this concept coincides with the emergence of a new generation of tourists, also called “qualified consumers” or “creative consumers” (Carvalho, Ferreira, & Figueira, 2016; Mihajlović & Koncul, 2016; Pappaleopore, Maitland, & Smith, 2014; Richards, 2010a; Richards & Wilson, 2006; Zhang & Yu, 2018), post-modern travellers (Carvalho et al., 2016; Jelinčić & Žuvela, 2012; O’Dell, 2007; Pappaleopore et al., 2014; Tan, Luh, & Kung, 2014) or “creative tourists” (Raymond, 2003; Smith, 2016; Tan et al., 2014; Zhang & Yu, 2018).

Regardless of the term applied, they all refer to tourists who actively create their experience in the destinations they choose. This new consumer of experiences has played an increasingly active role in the economy, leaving aside the passivity characteristic of the 1980s, to play

an essential role in market communication (Egger, Gula, & Walcher, 2016; Kotler, Kartajaya, Setiawan, & Vandercammen, 2012; Tan et al., 2014; Zhang & Yu, 2018).

For Alvin Toffler (1980), the concept of prosumer defines a type of consumer of the future, involved in the design and production of products to make them more personalized and individualized. In addition, prosumers are more informed, more educated and with an above-average level of demand. In this sense, the creative tourist can be seen as a prototype of the prosumer (Fundação de Serralves, 2008; Tan et al., 2014; Egger et al., 2016; Zhang & Yu, 2018).

There is a great diversity of definitions of creative tourists, ranging from those that refer to participants in dance art experiences or handicraft workshops, to those that include people temporarily residing in artistic residences in search of creativity. According to Richards (2011), creativity can be used to implement creative tourism as a tourist activity, which involves the active involvement of tourists in the creative activities of the places they visit, or as a backdrop for tourism, in which tourists place themselves in a chosen creative environment.

Nevertheless, despite these efforts, defining the concept of creative tourism and describing the motivations and profiles of those who

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