

Scientific Narratives on Creative Tourism: A Theoretical Framework



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Abstract In the last decade, the literature on creative tourism has grown tremendously, in effective number of studies and consequently citations, becoming an emerging, relevant, and increasingly complex topic in contemporary tourism literature. This scientific advancement generates a large volume of information, opening space for different perspectives, multiple related issues, but also many consensual ideas. It is therefore essential to synthesize all this knowledge and bring clarity to the state of the art on creative tourism. Following this line of thought, the main objective of this paper is to provide a current scientific framework in this research area, from a conceptual point of view, presenting the most relevant issues, with focus on sustainability. To this end, a large body of scientific literature was analyzed through a combination of two techniques, namely content analysis and systematic literature review. These techniques were applied as a research methodology to identify keyword trends understanding its meaning and analyze the main links between creative tourism and tourism sustainability, respectively. Main results provide a critical analysis of its characteristics as well as the correlations between creative tourism and the sustainable development of tourism activity, highlighting the sustainable matrix of this new model of tourism.

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1 Introduction

Literature review is an essential feature for advancing scientific knowledge that must be built upon existing studies (Xiao & Watson, 2019). This research method is more relevant than ever, as it allows to keep up with the state of the art, at the forefront of research and evaluate the collective evidence in a particular area (Paul & Criado, 2020; Snyder, 2019). Systematic and narrative are the two main types of review articles and should be combined to provide the best information to advance scientific knowledge (Henry et al., 2018). Particularly in creative tourism, these research methods are beginning to be explored (Baixinho et al., 2020; Carvalho et al., 2019; Galvagno & Giaccone, 2019). In this sense, two techniques were considered: (1) content analysis and (2) systematic literature review.

Some studies addressing creative tourism have already adopted content analysis but for different purposes and other techniques (Cheng & Chen, 2021; Guerreiro et al., 2019; Mohammadi et al., 2019), because content analysis may be as simple or as complex as the research determines it to be (Neuendorf, 2017). Also, there are many different concepts and understandings of content analysis and its various applications in both quantitative and qualitative approaches, but Neuendorf (2017, p. 23) presents a cross-cutting aspect, applied to carry out this paper: “content analysis summarizes rather than reports all details concerning a message set”. Only a few studies focused on creative tourism combined content analysis with keyword analysis to identify its main research areas (Galvagno & Giaccone, 2019; Lima Santos et al., 2020). The aim of this research focuses on the collection, review, and analysis of scientific knowledge on creative tourism. Based on the literature that specifically addresses creative tourism, it is hoped to provide a theoretical review and critical analysis of its characteristics as well as identify the correlations between creative tourism and the sustainable development of tourism activity, highlighting the sustainable matrix of this new model of tourism.

The following section discusses the literature review from the selected articles. The Methodology chapter will address each of the techniques, considered at different stages of the research. The two final sections will discuss the results and focus on the main conclusions, emphasizing the critical scientific production on this subject.

2 Literature Review

2.1 *Creative Tourism*

Creative tourism has become popular in the last decade, for that reason its scientific study is relatively recent, and in the last five years, it has grown significantly at different levels. It is a more contemporary form of tourism that promotes endogenous and sustainable development of territories, as well as good relations between residents and tourists. The offer is characterized by small-scale local projects offering varied creative experiences but always characteristic of the destination and usually with a strong focus on cultural heritage and intangible resources. One of the most differentiating aspects is that the experiences are co-created by tourists who can develop their creative potential, knowledge of the destination and of themselves. Creative tourism has been driven in several destinations, at different stages of their life cycle, from the less explored to the more consolidated and in different environments, both urban and rural. It provides authentic tourism experiences and unique learning experiences, diversifies and specializes the destination offer without harming heritage and resources, and brings multiple benefits to the host communities (Baixinho et al., 2021; Dias et al., 2021a, b; Duxbury et al., 2020, 2021; Galvagno & Giaccone, 2019; Marques & Borba, 2017; Richards, 2016, 2019, 2020; Tan et al., 2013, 2014).

2.2 *Experience*

There are several topics that relate the term experience with creative tourism, such as the creative experience, the experience co-creation, the experience economy, the tourist experience, meaningful experiences, authentic experiences, among others. Usually, a mandatory requirement for the construction and enjoyment of a creative experience is the active/immersive participation of the visitor. Despite this association with more engaging and dynamic activities, there are several activities of a more passive character that can be converted or can contribute in some way to develop new creative experiences. This means that the capacity to create creative experiences is very large, and there are many possibilities to boost local attractions, regardless of territorial identity. From another point of view, the creative experience is the combination of personal transformation and development and rich interactions with various elements of the destination. The creative experience provides proximity and interactivity with local actors, namely residents and always reflects the identity of the territory and its community, so each experience is unique and cannot be replicated in other destinations. A creative experience can be related to different heritage and creative resources, for example cooking workshops, artistic expression workshops, and craft activities (Cabeça et al., 2019; Chen & Chou, 2019; Galvagno & Giaccone, 2019; Hung et al., 2016; Pimenta et al., 2021; Remoaldo et al., 2020a, b, c, d; Ross & Saxena, 2019; Tan et al., 2013, 2014; Somnuxpong, 2020).

2.3 Place

Place, as a geographical space (destination), is widely discussed in the literature on creative tourism. It is directly related to this type of tourism, since the identity and characteristics of the place are the main instrument for the creation of creative experiences, defining the type of creative offer provided to the tourist demand. There is a consensual idea in the studies analyzed: This typology has the capacity to develop and boost different geographical, economic, and social contexts. The discussion, among authors, focuses, generally by opposition, the potential of creative tourism in rural and urban places. There is empirical evidence that points to a greater deployment in urban spaces, with more population and tourists, more infrastructure, and a greater diversity of creative resources. On the other hand, the association of creative tourism to enhance the development of more peripheral areas is also perceptible. Portugal has presented, in the last years, some successful cases in low density territories, being the national CREATOUR project frequently mentioned (Bakas & Duxbury, 2018; Dias et al., 2021a, b; Duxbury et al., 2021; Gato et al., 2020; Kostopoulou, 2013; Lavranos et al., 2020; Li & Kovacs, 2022; Nieuwland & Lavanga, 2021; Remoaldo et al., 2020a, b, c, d; Richards, 2019, 2020).

2.4 Involvement

Involvement is a term that cannot be separated from creative tourism. The concept and operationalization of creative tourism require a participative and committed involvement of all stakeholders in the development of creative tourism in destinations. Moreover, the involvement that “creative tourists” assume with experiences, destination, and its resident community is one of the most mentioned aspects among the various studies. Unlike in other types of tourism, where tourists assume a more passive and sometimes disinterested attitude in their tourism consumption, thus, the importance of involvement lies not only in the attitude of tourist demand, which is more committed to sustainability and the positive impacts it generates, but also in the collaborative attitude of operators and “creative entrepreneurs” who build the creative tourism offer (Cabeça et al., 2019; Cruz et al., 2019; Galvagno & Giaccone, 2019; Gato et al., 2020; Marques & Borba, 2017; Marujo et al., 2021; Remoaldo et al., 2020a, b, c, d; Richards, 2016; Tan et al., 2013; Sarantou et al., 2021).

2.5 Motivation

Motivation is a common term in tourism literature, starting with the push and pull factors that lead tourists to choose one destination over another. Particularly in creative tourism, the motivations of tourist demand still have little expression in

the literature, but there are clear and relatively consensual points: The motivation of creative tourists is essentially intellectual and relational. Among the different motivations, the following stand out: interacting with cultures different from their own, learning a skill, acquiring knowledge, enjoying unique and authentic experiences, and interacting with local people. These motivations are distinct from other tourism practices, where the tourist mainly seeks to relax or rest in a perspective of escaping from routine. “Creative tourists” are intrinsically creative and sensitive to the creative industries (Chen & Chou, 2019; Choi et al., 2020; Duxbury et al., 2020; Remoaldo et al., 2020a, b, c, d; Tan et al., 2013, 2014).

2.6 Creativity

In the literature reviewed, there is a wide range of words linked to creativity (in no specific order): creative destination; creative industries, creative cities; creative development; creative experiences; creative potential and creative economy, among others. Creativity is usually related to “creative experiences” that appeal to tourists’ individual creativity or to their self-expression. From another point of view, it is possible to understand that creativity allows developing new tourism products and transforming/innovating existing ones, without the need for major investments, and for that reason creativity can diversify and regenerate the offer of destinations relatively quickly and easily, meeting the interests and expectations of more contemporary tourists and the needs of destinations. Furthermore, several studies link creativity to territorial development and particularly to tourism destination development. All this brings numerous advantages for the tourism industry, mainly in terms of sustainability. (Bastenegar & Hassani, 2018; Cheng & Chen, 2021; Galvagno & Giaccone, 2019; Mareque et al., 2021; Remoaldo et al., 2020a, b, c, d; Richards, 2020; Ross & Saxena, 2019; Tan et al., 2013, 2014; Sarantou et al., 2021).

2.7 Satisfaction

Satisfaction, as a pleasant feeling, is mainly understood as a positive consequence or a positive evaluation of tourism consumption, the same happens in creative tourism, for example after the realization of one or more creative experiences in any destination. In other words, satisfaction is linked to the individual perception of the tourist in relation to the destination or to some activity/experience that he/she has experienced. On the other hand, satisfaction can also be linked to the tourists’ expectations and intentions considering a particular experience or destination, which means that the tourist can face that experience with a preconceived idea, this can occur for different reasons. Therefore, knowing the motivations of tourism demand is essential to achieve satisfaction. When the tourist gets satisfaction, this leads to positive behavioral intentions, which may translate into a higher frequency of consumption

and good feedback, among other aspects that lead to attachment and loyalty to the destination, making it competitive. These indicators translate the results of a positive experience (Chen & Chou, 2019; Cheng & Chen, 2021; Choi et al., 2020; Remoaldo et al., 2020).

2.8 *Model*

In creative tourism literature, the word “Model” is generally associated with the construction of processes and systems. It can be a way of organizing, developing, implementing, or evaluating something in tourism demand and supply and can be confined to a particular destination, or not, if it is more conceptual. The findings of Tan et al. (2013) suggest that the combination of external interactions and inner reflections builds the model of the creative experience. It was also possible to perceive that the implementation/exploitation of creative tourism in territories must have its own development model and not adapted from another place or another reality. The models of creative tourism, when applied to a particular destination, should reflect its identity and character and should be structured with all actors and stakeholders in that destination, contemplating an appropriate approach to the community, local identity, the business fabric, and resources, considering the capacity and objectives of each destination (Chen & Chou, 2019; Wang et al., 2020; Dias et al., 2021a, b; Duxbury et al., 2021; Henche et al., 2020; Mohammadi et al., 2019; Remoaldo et al., 2020a, b, c, d; Richards, 2019; Tan et al., 2013).

2.9 *Co-creation*

Co-creation is central to the understanding of creative tourism and is one of the most differentiating elements in relation to other typologies of tourism. Co-creation is mainly related to the sharing of decisions and interactions provided by creative practices that presuppose more meaningful and symbolic tourism experiences. Co-creation is adopted through specific procedures and instruments in creative destinations and is especially desired by creative tourists. As positive impacts or consequences of co-creation, the following aspects stand out: the inclusion and emancipation of the local community (builder and promoter of their territory), the empowerment of visitors to co-create value in their experience (co-creators of the experience), the development of new tourism products, and the regeneration of existing ones, essential for the promotion and competitiveness of destinations (Bertella & Rinaldi, 2021; Dias et al., 2021a, 2021b; Galvagno & Giaccone, 2019; Marques & Borba, 2017; Carvalho et al., 2021; Mohammadi et al., 2019; Richards, 2020; Ross & Saxena, 2019).

2.10 Industries

The word “industries” emerge in many of the studies on creative tourism, mainly in the context of “creative industries”, understood as creative classes or clusters that enable the development of creative projects and initiatives, generating innovation, development, and territorial attractiveness. They include artistic and cultural manifestations in the most varied forms. Traditionally, they are found in large cities and metropolitan areas, where there are significant resources and dynamics that help them flourish. However, some studies also show that these creative industries have become more relevant in less globalized places, areas with less social and economic density, but with high creative potential and with technology at their disposal, serving as a strategy to attract investment to those places. In this context, creative tourism takes advantage of all the synergies created by these industries that bring attractiveness and competitiveness to destinations (Bastenegro et al., 2018; Chan et al., 2022; Kostopoulou, 2013; Remoaldo et al., 2020; Richards, 2019, 2020; Chen et al., 2021).

3 Methodology

To expose the methodology followed, Table 1 presents the different stages of the research, the objectives, and the research questions for each of them.

3.1 Content Analysis: Procedures and Results

As the first approach, to provide an overview of the main themes that guide this paper, a content analysis was explicitly applied to analyze keyword trends in the literature on creative tourism. This research technique is one of the most important in the social sciences (Krippendorff, 2018). Keywords can be understood as the

Table 1 Summary of design methodology

Stages of research	Objectives	Questions
1. Content analysis	Identify the keyword trends in the literature and understand its significance in the context of creative tourism	What are the most frequent keywords in the study of creative tourism and their relevance in this field of research?
2. Systematic review	Analyze the main links between creative tourism and tourism sustainability	What observations and findings are evidenced about the sustainable identity of creative tourism? What are the most and least consensual aspects in the literature?

Source Authors

synthesized representation of several ideas from a document (Xiao & Watson, 2019), and this analysis can be instrumental in identifying research themes in a particular area of knowledge (Karimi Takalo et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021; Zhong et al., 2021). According to Tu et al. (2021), keyword analysis has been used for document categorization, summarization, indexing, and clustering. Many visualization methods are proposed to support this analysis. For McAllister et al. (2021), the VOSviewer maps are best suited for identifying networked keywords. They can help researchers know what to look for in the literature and understand current lines of research and what other lines or topics should be considered in the future. VOSviewer software is also widespread in bibliometric and literature review articles (Cavalcante et al., 2021; McAllister et al., 2021). In this sense, this analysis was conducted through Web of Science (WoS), one of the most reliable databases (Pranckutė, 2021), with the combination of VOSviewer software to create a visual map of the keywords. The following term was identified in WoS—“creative tourism”, in line with the methodologies used in similar research that define the best set of terms/keywords to cover a large portion of publications regarding the research topic (Habibi et al., 2021; Rama et al., 2018; Yu et al., 2020). The data collection process took place on June 25, 2022, and allowed the identification of sixty-eight publications (Table 2).

As the objective of this bibliographical research was to collect a comprehensive and representative sample of studies on creative tourism, the filtering process in WoS was limited to a more generic search term “creative tourism”, but exactly the focus of the present paper. The title was identified because it presents the whole idea/problem of each research, it is the most representative sentence of its problematic (Pereira et al., 2011; Bahadoran et al., 2019) more than another field. In addition, two filters were applied: theoretical and empirical studies published in articles and only articles written in English, which resulted in a collection of sixty-eight (68) publications. At this point, due to the satisfactory number of publications to achieve this first stage of the research, no additional filtering field was used. Just from the analysis of this bibliographical collection, it is possible to draw some interesting conclusions that highlight the recent interest in this topic and most of the studies that cover the

Table 2 Literature selection and filtering procedures in WoS

Search criteria literature on Creative Tourism	Selection of the (international) database Web of Science
Topic “creative tourism”	(without any refine/filter of results) = = 238 publications
↓Filter Selection ↓	
Title “creative tourism” = 129 publications	Title refers to the title of a journal article, proceedings paper, book, or book chapter. The use of inverted commas allows the search for the union of two words
Document type: only Articles = 76 Languages: only English = 68	Result = 68 articles Export RIS (reference software)

Source Authors

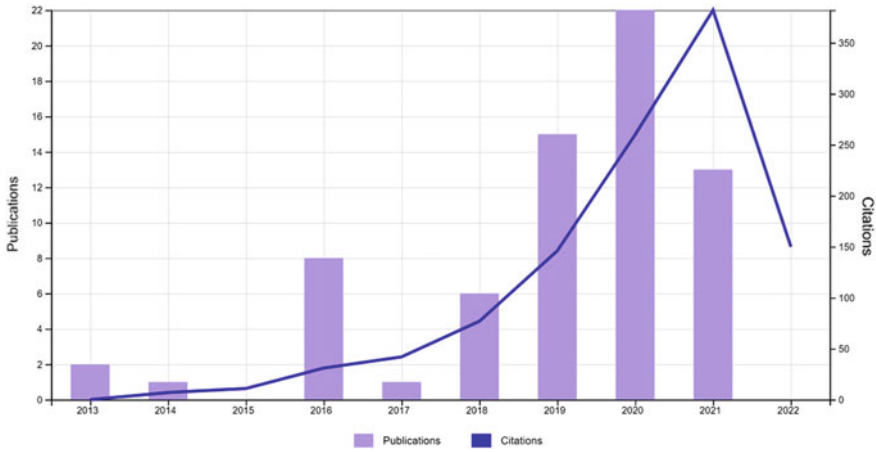


Fig. 1 Times cited and publications over time. *Source* Authors, WoS report

literature on creative tourism highlight this aspect of a certain novelty. International scientific literature about creative tourism still has little expression in quantitative terms, and this is visible when compared with the volume of literature from other types of tourism, such as cultural tourism, which, according to several authors, has driven this new form of tourism. Figure 1 illustrates this growth.

Figure 1 shows the number of articles present in WoS in the time period 2013 to 2021 and the number of citations in each year. The bars identify the number of articles and the line the citations. This corresponds to (2013–2); (2014–1); (2016–8); (2017–1); (2018–6); (2019–15); (2020–22); (2021–13) = N 68. The year with the highest number of citations was 2021, being clear that the number of citations is much higher than the number of articles, with thirteen (13) articles and three hundred and eighty-two (382) citations. Another analysis that WoS allows is the identification of journals, referred to as “publication titles”. Figure 2 identifies the top ten of these journals considering the number of articles in the collection, in a logic of the journal relevance/importance. In the total of thirty-eight (38) scientific journals identified in this WoS collection, the ten that stand out for having the highest number of publications are Sustainability; Current Issues in Tourism; Journal of Hospitality Tourism Research; Tourism Management Studies; Annals of Tourism Research; Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research; Tourism Geographies; Journal of Travel Tourism Marketing; Journal of Sustainable Tourism; and Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change. Sustainability journal is ranked first, with seven articles. This evidence suggests that many of the studies have a strong link to sustainability—a subject that will be discussed further, given their important connections with creative tourism. After these brief reviews of the selected literature, the analysis of its keywords follows, to specifically answer the first research question: *What are the most frequent keywords in the study of creative tourism and what is their relevance in this field of research?*

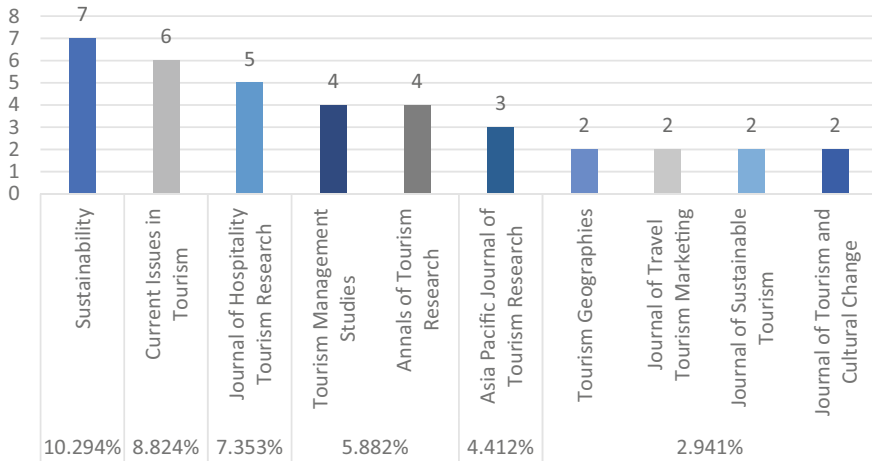
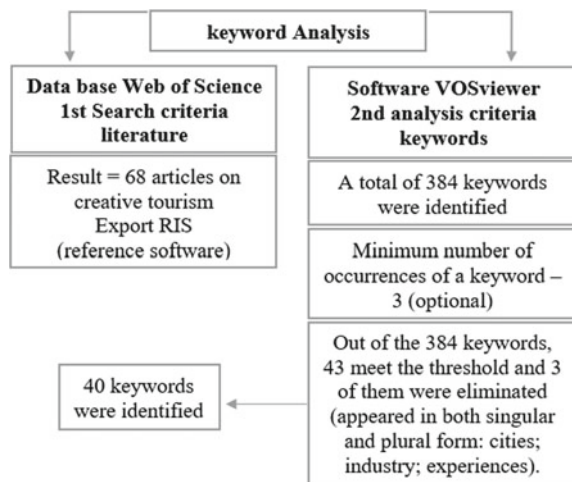


Fig. 2 Ten most relevant journals where the 68 articles were published. *Source* Authros, based on WoS report

For this purpose, the set of 68 publications was loaded into a bibliographic references software (specifically ZOTERO) in order to build a database that could be associated with the VOSviewer software. Figure 3 summarizes the use of WoS and VOSviewer as a combination for content analysis.

Before analyzing the keyword co-occurrence, as described in Figure, a filtering procedure was used in order to extract the most relevant keywords (Faust, 2018; Feng & Law, 2021). This procedure should include (1) converting plurals into a singular form; (2) removing hyphens; (3) converting to lowercase; (4) avoidance of abbreviations; (5) removing redundant words (Feng & Law, 2021). The visual

Fig. 3 Combination of WoS and VOSviewer for keyword analysis. *Source* Authors



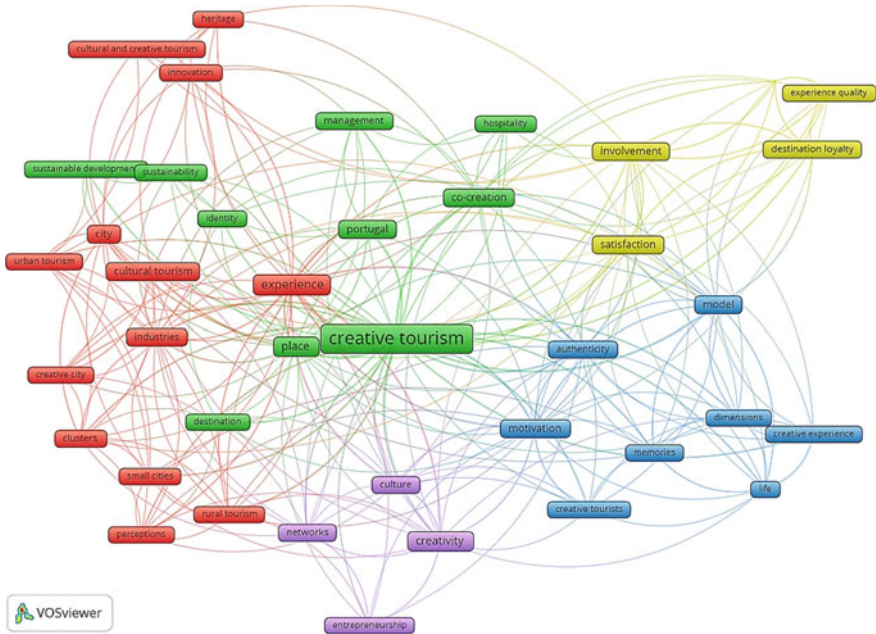


Fig. 4 Visual map concerning the keywords obtained. *Source* Authors, from VOSviewer

map of the keywords can be seen in Fig. 4. The size of the label and an item’s box are determined by their weight, which indicates the frequency of keywords’ occurrence. The lines between items represent links between keywords; they represent a connection/relationship between them. In this case, the lines represent co-occurrence links, connecting keywords that appear together. Therefore, in general, the closer the keywords are located, the stronger their relatedness is. The color of an item determines the cluster it belongs to. A cluster is a set of closely related nodes. Each node in the network is assigned to exactly one cluster.

According to the software analysis, each keyword appearing on this map has been identified at least three times in the bibliographic collection. It is clearly observed that the label that stands out the most is creative tourism, in the center of the network. In this case, VOSviewer identified five clusters, as identified in Table 3, which simultaneously presents each of the forty keywords. This network of keywords shows that different themes and particular issues have been considered over the last few years regarding this research area.

These ten representative dimensions of the literature on creative tourism, namely experience; place; involvement; motivation; creativity; satisfaction; model; co-creation; and industries, are briefly discussed below, due to their apparent relevance in this field of research. This examination will make it possible to answer the question: *What is the relevance of these terms in this field of research?* To carry out this examination, all Titles, Abstracts, and Keywords of the documents were carefully

Table 3 Keywords identification in each cluster

Clusters	Items	Keywords
1 (red)	13	City; Clusters; Creative city; Cultural and creative tourism; Cultural tourism; Experience; Heritage; Industries; Innovation; Perceptions; Rural tourism; Small cities; Urban tourism
2 (green)	10	Co-creation; Creative tourism; Destination; Hospitality; Identity; Management; Place; Portugal; Sustainability; Sustainable development
3 (blue)	8	Authenticity; Creative experience; Creative tourists; Dimensions; Life; Memories; Model; Motivation
4 (yellow)	5	Destination loyalty; Experience quality; Involvement, Perceived value*; Satisfaction
5 (purple)	4	Creativity; Culture; Entrepreneurship; Networks

N = 40 keywords

Source Authors, report from VOSviewer

*Perceived value is the only word not identified in the illustration because VOSviewer selects the terms that are considered most relevant on the network, but it is listed among the forty keywords identified, belonging to cluster 4 (yellow). The words sustainability and sustainable development are in bold because they are directly related to the next stage of the research, which aims to analyze the main links between creative tourism and tourism sustainability. Although none of them belong to the top 10, just the fact that they appear in this network of keywords is more than relevant for the purpose of this research

read. Simultaneously, each word was searched in the 68 documents, which proved to be a very useful mechanism to determine the relevant presence or not. Based on this, the documents were selected for full reading in each of the dimensions.

The exploration of these ten terms, the understanding of their meaning and their context within creative tourism, made it possible to understand, in summary form, several important and widely considered aspects among the different authors of the WoS collection (identified in the present paper). An interesting observation in light of these more general reflections is the notion of sustainability among them, which is sometimes explicit. Therefore, to better understand the main links between creative tourism and tourism sustainability, the second stage of the research focuses on the sustainable narratives of creative tourism.

4 Systematic Review: Procedures and Results

Based on these considerations related to the sustainable identity of creative tourism, this second stage of the research aims to answer the question: *What observations and findings are evidenced about the sustainable identity of creative tourism? What are the most and least consensual aspects among the literature?* In order to answer these questions, a systematic review was conducted to identify and understand the literature evidence on links between creative tourism and tourism sustainability. The main feature of this research technique is that it provides a clear explanation of

the data collection process, making the research transparent (Henry et al., 2018; Xiao & Watson, 2019). This is achieved through specific mechanisms, such as a clear explanation of inclusion and exclusion criteria and keywords used for searches (Pahlevan-Sharif et al., 2019), as identified for the present analysis, summarizing the best evidence on a specific question (Henry et al., 2018). There are many studies in tourism that, through systematic review, analyze the most relevant fields and aspects of already existing studies and their evidence concerning their research topic (Lima Santos et al., 2020; Pessot et al., 2021; Tölkes, 2018). The present analysis focusing on the sustainable aspects of creative tourism was supported by the visual map retrieved from VOSviewer, presented before (see Fig. 5) which clearly shows the word “sustainable development” and sustainability, grouped in the same cluster. Figure 5 emphasizes more clearly the relationships established from these two words, with others on the map.

Through Fig. 5, it is possible to identify the links that the map established from the keyword “sustainable development”, namely creative tourism; city; urban tourism; cultural tourism; sustainability; and identity. Also, it is possible to identify the links

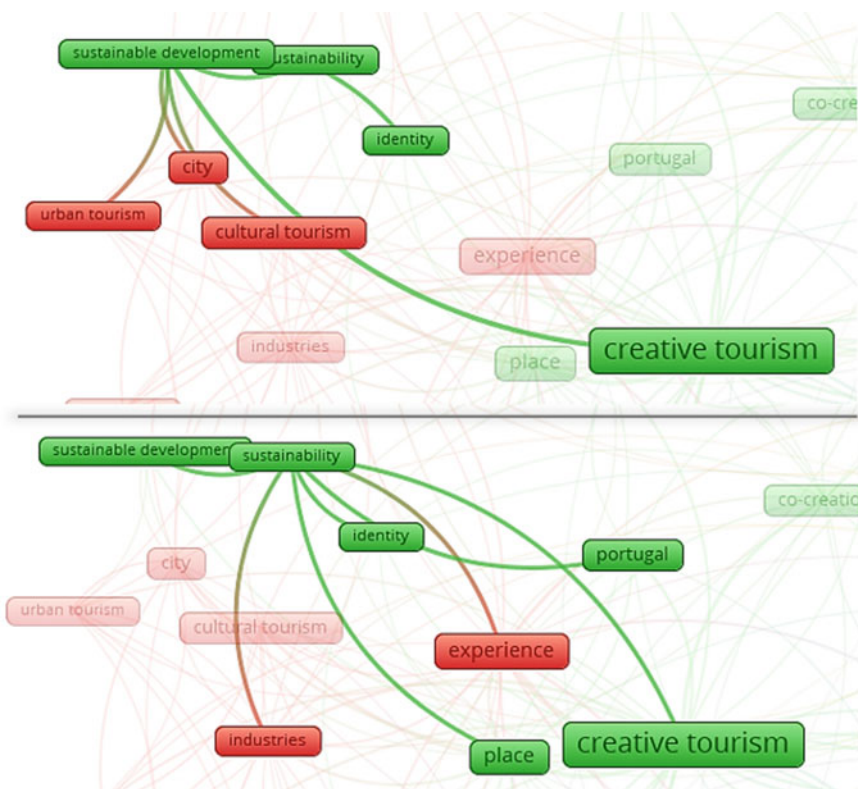


Fig. 5. Connections between sustainable development, sustainability, and creative tourism. *Source* Authors’ combination, from VOSviewer

Table 4 Ten most significant keywords of the collection

Keywords (Top Ten)	Ocurrences	Links	Total link strenght
Creative tourism	50	38	140
Experience	15	25	55
Place	9	23	38
Involvement	7	20	35
Motivation	7	21	34
Creativity	10	18	33
Satisfaction	6	20	33
Model	6	17	29
Co-creation	7	20	28
Industries	5	18	26

Source Authors, from VOSviewer

that the map established from the keyword “sustainability”, namely creative tourism; experience; place; industries; Portugal; identity; and sustainable development. There are substantial differences, which are expected to be further clarified with the systematic review of some important articles that address several reflections regarding sustainability in creative tourism.

This section was designed to synthesize the available scientific evidence between creative tourism and sustainability, from the same sixty-eight studies previously identified on the Web of Science (first stage of the research). Although all these publications were found with the term “creative tourism” which is the main theme of the present paper, not all of them associate with the same depth the issue of sustainability, focusing on other aspects, also relevant. This is also clear in the identification of the top ten keywords, which do not include sustainability (see Table 4). For this reason, it was necessary to develop a strategy to identify which publications would best answer the second research question, that is, to identify the articles that gathered the most and best information on sustainability in the context of creative tourism. To this end, an inclusion and exclusion criterion was applied to the collection of the sixty-eight WoS publications, as recommended for all systematic reviews (Table 5).

Table 5 Inclusion and exclusion criteria for systematic review

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Abstracts and keywords available; Include (somehow) the term sustainable in the keywords; Document with total open access; All kinds of methodology, theoretical, and empirical	Abstracts and keywords unavailable; Do not include (in any way) the term sustainable in the keywords; Document with total close access
Eight (8) publications	Sixty (60) publications

Source Authors

In this follow-up, the term sustainability (in different combinations) was checked in the keywords of the sixty-eight publications, and, in addition, all titles and abstracts were read to confirm the actual relation of the studies to sustainability. After this filtering, eight articles were identified for this review, while the majority, sixty articles, were disregarded for not presenting the defined requirements. As a result of this procedure, one article was identified with the keyword “sustainable governance”; another with “sustainable tourism”; and a third with “sustainable creative tourism”. Two articles were also identified with the keyword “sustainability” and three with “sustainable development”, resulting in a total of five keywords linking creative tourism and sustainability (Table 6). Once the articles were identified, each was analyzed to understand the focus of their research and find important links between creative tourism and tourism sustainability. To this end, the content of these articles was carefully analyzed, with particular focus on their abstract, results, and conclusions, summarizing each of the eight articles.

All these articles, at different moments of their research, make several considerations about sustainability. These considerations are based on the literature review of each study, but also on the findings and conclusions of their own research. Therefore, different dimensions of sustainability are highlighted, namely social, economic, cultural, and, although less prominent, environmental. Their reading and analysis of these eight articles allowed the identification of some authors’ considerations which contribute to the general and specific understanding of mentioned sustainability perspectives.

5 Discussion and Conclusions

Creative tourism is the result of the combination of several aspects: cultural tourism practices, creative potential of places and people, active participation, and economic experience. In general, experience is understood as the tourism product/service of creative tourism, i.e., the activity offered to the visitor during their trip or stay in a particular destination. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that creative tourism is often mentioned as a new (sustainable) model of tourism activity, which involves different dimensions and variables from other tourism typologies. Each place should develop, from its resources and potentialities, its creative offer, which will be exclusive, therefore unique, and competitive against other destinations. As a typology based on co-creation, sharing, and network building, tourists’ involvement gains significance for the success of creative destinations. Co-creation can go beyond the relationship between visitors and residents, involving all actors of a visit in a network perspective for more sustainable practices. The values, interests, expectations, and self-knowledge of each individual interact with their motivations, producing different types of experiences. As creative tourism does not necessarily rely on material heritage and other tangible resources (with known limitations), its approaches to local culture and resources bring numerous possibilities for the regeneration of heritage and simultaneously its enhancement, exploitation, and protection (Cabeça et al.,

Table 6 Articles analyzed for systematic literature review

References and journal	Article keywords	Research description and their considerations regarding sustainability
<p>Henche et al., (2020) <i>Sustainability</i></p>	<p>Historic city centers; cultural and creative tourism; urban tourism; sustainable governance; social networks; Barrio de las Letras</p>	<p>“A Sustainable Management Model for Cultural Creative Tourism Ecosystems” Presents a sustainable management model for urban centers, specifically a historic center of Madrid (Spain), which aims to assist the creation of a competitive cultural/creative/historic tourism ecosystem, able to preserve the sustainability of the local social and commercial fabric; highlights the importance of collaborative networks between the different stakeholders, public and private sector, associations of small businesses, cultural organizations, hotel industry, and commerce. This model comprises a sustainable governance that integrates the inhabitants of these spaces, attending to their permanence and well-being</p>
<p>Gato et al., (2020) <i>Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research</i></p>	<p>Creative tourism; placemaking strategies; peripheral areas; Portugal; sustainability; case study</p>	<p>“Creative Tourism as Boosting Tool for Placemaking Strategies in Peripheral Areas: Insights from Portugal” Emphasizes the potential of creative tourism to foster peripheral areas, specifically in Portugal, and discusses how creative tourism experiences can be mobilized by placemaking strategies in these areas to achieve sustainable development, enhancing community resilience, driven by pressing needs for economic development, livelihood diversification, and control over future outcomes</p>
<p>Duxbury et al., (2021) <i>Sustainability</i></p>	<p>Creative tourism; local/regional development; Portugal; sustainable tourism; cultural heritage; regenerative tourism</p>	<p>“Creative Tourism Development Models towards Sustainable and Regenerative Tourism” Based on the CREATOUR project in Portugal, it understands creative tourism as regenerative tourism that focuses on microscale regeneration initiatives, on “giving back” and contributing to the proactive regeneration of communities, cultures, heritage, and places. Among the five creative tourism models identified, their influences on community dynamics and development can be summarized in three aspects: (1) reinforcing distinctive elements of local identity, (2) instigating flows and connections between the locale and the external, and (3) serving as platforms for local collaboration, exchange, and development</p>

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Table 6 (continued)

References and journal	Article keywords	Research description and their considerations regarding sustainability
<p>Guerreiro et al., (2019) <i>Journal of Spatial and Organizational Dynamics</i></p>	<p>Cultural tourism; creative tourism; sustainable development; celebrations</p>	<p>“<i>Cultural and creative tourism: the case of ‘Celebrations’ in the Algarve Region</i>” Relates culture, creativity, tourism, and sustainable development in a region/destination traditionally linked with “sun and sea” tourism, the Algarve (Portugal). Cultural and creative tourism are identified as having great potential to diversify and add value to its existing tourism products in the region. Three types of local celebrations (festivals; fairs, and events) are identified as interesting for creating cultural products and creative experiences in different municipalities. These celebrations have a high focus on local intangible cultural heritage, playing an important role in diversifying tourism products and enhancing the region’s sustainable development</p>
<p>Baixinho et al., (2021) <i>Land</i></p>	<p>Sustainable creative tourism; conceptual framework; islands; cultural landscapes; guidelines; policy recommendations</p>	<p>“<i>Islands as Sustainable Creative Tourism: A Conceptual Framework and Guidelines for Best Practices</i>” Highlights the importance of creative tourism (sustainable creative tourism—suggested concept) following a set of international principles and policy recommendations (e.g., by the OECD, UNESCO, UNWTO, EU) aimed at promoting sustainable tourism development strategies with more holistic and integrated approaches that consider the economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions. Minimizing possible negative impacts that creative tourism can also originate in different destinations, being necessary to apply appropriate indicators and tools for monitoring tourism sustainability in territories with this type of offer</p>

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Table 6 (continued)

References and Journal	Article keywords	Research description and their considerations regarding sustainability
<p>Bertella and Rinaldi (2021) <i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i></p>	<p>Collaboration; sustainable development; community of practice (CoP); non-governmental development organization (NGDO)</p>	<p>“<i>Learning communities and co-creative tourism practices in NGDO projects</i>” This study considers collaboration as a co-creative practice for learning about tourism and sustainable development. Collaborative practices are driven by projects run by non-governmental development organizations (NGDOs), which facilitate the emergence and/or strengthening of local learning communities. The results suggested that NGDO projects can contribute to creating the conditions in which learning communities can emerge and grow as “chains” that evolve over time, promoting constant local innovation. Some factors emerged as particularly important for projects that aim to foster collaborative relationships that extend beyond the limited time horizon of the projects: the identification and involvement of partners/stakeholders that share the same vision; synergies with other projects and sectors; the use of participatory approaches, work methods, and artifacts that promote a sense of empowerment and enhance continuity in the efforts of the local people toward sustainability</p>
<p>Nieuwland and Lavanga (2021) <i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i></p>	<p>Creative entrepreneurship; sustainable development; creative placemaking; creative tourism; urban tourism</p>	<p>“<i>The consequences of being ‘the Capital of Cool’: Creative entrepreneurs and the sustainable development of creative tourism in the urban context of Rotterdam</i>” Analyzes creative insertion in tourism and reflects on the role of creative entrepreneurs in sustainable tourism development, as agents of insertion in sustainable urban tourism creative placemaking can offer an alternative perspective to help mitigate gentrification processes that displaces local residents and businesses. The study found that creative tourism in an urban context, without paying attention to inclusivity, equality, and gentrification effects, does not lead to more sustainable development of urban tourism</p>

(continued)

Table 6 (continued)

References and journal	Article keywords	Research description and their considerations regarding sustainability
Choi et al. (2020) <i>Sustainability</i>	Museums; special events; late opening; visitors' motivations; sustainability ; creative tourism attractions	<p>“<i>The Urban Museum as a Creative Tourism Attraction: London Museum Lates Visitor Motivation</i>”</p> <p>Applied in Museum Lates in London and aims to discover and analyze its visitors' motivations to participate in evening events focused on sustainable behaviors. Contributing to a greater understanding of the relationships between visitor groups and museums' cultural and creative tourism development. Museums as institutions of increasing cultural and creative tourism attractions, which have the capacity to contribute to different dimensions of sustainability, particularly at a cultural level. Museums are an essential attraction for visitors and play a critical role in cultural and creative tourism, providing educational programs and exhibitions highlighting the human-nature relationship and shaping people's values, attitudes, and behaviors, transcending functional displays of artifacts</p>

Source: Authors' elaboration

2019; Cruz et al., 2019; Galvagno & Giaccone, 2019; Gato et al., 2020; Marques & Borba, 2017; Marujo et al., 2021; Remoaldo et al., 2020; Richards, 2016, 2019, 2020; Rodrigues et al., 2021, 2022; Tan et al., 2013; Sarantou et al., 2021).

A total of twelve citations, deemed relevant, are presented and grouped into the three most prominent dimensions of sustainability among these eight studies (social, economic, and cultural).

5.1 Sustainable Social Dimension of Creative Tourism

“Supports the coexistence of the private and public sector and sustainable governance models that integrate the inhabitants of city centers with the economic activity generated by urban tourism... the collaboration of cultural organizations, hospitality industry and retail can promote cultural, creative, and sustainable management model of historic urban center” (Henchel et al., 2020, p. 1).

“Planned tourism placemaking often occurs as part of a deliberate approach to sustainable development and community resilience, driven by pressing needs for economic development, livelihood diversification, and control over future outcomes.” (Gato et al., 2020, p. 14).

“The importance of the community being included and invested in its ongoing success, and the commitment of decision-makers and local agents in the development of a strategy that explicitly considers and prioritizes the holistic sustainability and well-being of the local community” (Duxbury et al., 2021, p. 15).

“Issues such as gentrification and inclusiveness may be addressed early on, to make sure the city is developed for a diverse group of people and creativity is mobilized in service of social justice” (Nieuwland & Lavanga, 2021, p. 939).

5.2 Sustainable Economic Dimension of Creative Tourism

“We talk mainly about economic sustainability for the promoters and chain of partners involved in the experiences, since the other dimensions of sustainability are intrinsic to the concept of creative tourism” (Gato et al., 2020, p. 13).

“The departure point was to present creative tourism experiences as an opportunity to enable actual territorially embedded strategies in such peripheral areas, in order to strengthen sustainable development processes” (Gato et al., 2020, p. 14).

“The pillar supporting this type of tourism is sustainable development, which is understood as transferring human and financial resources from the tourism market to local communities “ (Bertella & Rinaldi, 2021, p. 645).

“We use a broad definition of the sustainable development of tourism in which we focus on the community aspect of it. This means we explore the socio-economic and socio-cultural sustainability of the destination, investigating issues such as social

and economic equality, community wellbeing and issues related to overtourism” (Nieuwland & Lavanga, 2021, p. 929).

5.3 Sustainable Cultural Dimension of Creative Tourism

“Creative tourism promises a framework for developing innovative approaches for a sustainable cultural tourism” (Duxbury et al., 2021, p. 1).

“Regenerative tourism goes beyond sustainable tourism to focus on giving back and contributing to the proactive regeneration of communities, cultures, heritage, places, landscapes, and so forth” (Duxbury et al., 2021, p. 3).

“Develop a sustainable creative tourism sector to boost tourism in small cities and rural areas as well as to contribute meaningfully to local cultural vibrancy” (Duxbury et al., 2021, p. 6).

“Distinctive elements and cultural specificities of their locales were the key components from which to build a creative and sustainable tourism for wider community benefit that would safeguard local culture and heritage” (Duxbury et al., 2021, p.15).

The success of creative tourism is largely influenced by its sustainable matrix in the tourism sector.

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