DIMENSIONS OF CO-CREATIVE FOOD & WINE TOURISM EXPERIENCES – FINDINGS FROM A MULTIPLE-CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between food & wine tourism and co-creation is gaining prominence in the academic field, due to the increasing interest shown by visitors for engaging in multi-sensory, rich experiences while travelling. Considering the relevance of understanding most valued experience dimensions within each tourism context to help design memorable, immersive co-creative food & wine experiences, this article aims to identify the dimensions of food & wine tourism experiences from the perspective of visitors and supply agents. For this purpose, insights from a food tour experience in Lisbon and other gastronomic experiences in Bairrada and Dão wine regions are presented based on a qualitative approach. A netnography study, integrating the analysis of 658 visitor reviews and an interview with the tour operator, combined with a case study involving semi-structured interviews with visitors (N = 38) and supply agents (N = 6) from the above-mentioned wine regions, are key elements of this multiple case study. Content analysis was performed with QSR NVivo 12 software. Findings highlighted a convergent perception of visitors and supply agents regarding the most prominent dimensions of co-creative

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experiences identified and revealed the potential of qualitative methodologies in the promotion of in-depth knowledge, especially within exploratory research frameworks.

INTRODUCTION

Co-creation experiences in tourism have increasingly drawn attention and stimulated debate among academics and practitioners in recent years; this relatively recent term from the value co-creation literature in consumer behaviour studies has been applied to tourism, a particularly suitable experience context (Campos et al., 2015; Carvalho et al., 2023). Accordingly, co-creation may be perceived as a type of consumption experience in which consumers assume an active role (Prahalad & Rammaswammy, 2004). Understanding value creation in tourism implies the chance to embrace experiences where value is developed between tourists and others within the 'experiencescape' (e.g., the local community, supply agents or other tourists), while also interacting with local resources. Indeed, the relevance and complexity of tourism experiences, mirrored in the study of several experience dimensions, justifies continuous efforts of in-depth investigation in this domain, while investigation on the nature of co-creation in tourism, within diverse contexts, is still required (Mohammadi et al., 2021).

As an emerging special-interest tourism, food & wine experiences are undergoing increasing tourism demand. Visitors are keen to experience local food and wine products in destinations, as these are key cultural elements that may contribute to fostering cultural experiences (Kodaş, 2024; Qian et al., 2023). However, the literature remains short in addressing this topic. Specifically, for co-creation within food & wine tourism, a lack of theoretical and empirical research becomes evident, namely regarding specific dimensions of co-creation and their role for relevant experience results (e.g., loyalty and satisfaction) (Carvalho et al., 2023; Rachão et al., 2020).

According to a literature review related to co-creation within food & wine tourism, the percentage of qualitative studies in this field is below that of quantitative studies (Carvalho et al., 2023), although this particular research method appears to be especially suitable for promoting in-depth understanding of the still relatively recent phenomenon of co-creation, its conditioning factors and outcomes. Implementing qualitative research means collecting, analysing and interpreting data from real-world contexts, considering the features of a naturalistic setting and the collection of data by means of techniques that are expected to be as unobtrusive as possible

(Veal, 2017; Yin, 2011). In tourism research, qualitative studies are frequently used, either as part of mixed-methods approaches or as the main study method. This adds great value to the field, since the respective techniques (e.g., in-depth interviews, focus groups, social media analysis) permit preservation of the essence, idiosyncrasy and details of visitors' interactions, as well as perceptions, feelings, opinions and behaviours regarding the experiences they take part in (Veal, 2017), while also considering the diversity of contexts.

Inspired by the interpretative research paradigm, this paper reflects on the nature of co-creation in food & wine tourism, illustrating the debate with findings from a doctoral research project, comprising data collection by means of a) a netnography and b) interviews with both supply agents and tourists, within a multiple-case-study approach. The following research questions were defined for this study:

1. What are the distinctive elements and the most mentioned and valued dimensions of co-creation experiences in food & wine tourism?

2. What are the contributions that a qualitative study may add, namely through netnography and interviews, within a multiple case study framework?

3. What is the role of experience context for the type of co-creation in food & wine tourism experiences?

The multiple case-study presented here comprises complementary qualitative data collection methods, permitting manual and software-aided (NVivo) content analysis for categorization and understanding of patterns and relations amongst elements of analysis. It was carried out in a multiple-case framework of food & wine tourism in both urban (food tours in Lisbon) and rural contexts (the two routes in Portugal's Central Region). Results may thereby contribute to consolidation of findings regarding co-creative food & wine experiences, also considering specific contexts.

The present study firstly presents a brief introduction to co-creation of food & wine tourism, based on previous studies, and then discusses strengths and challenges of qualitative research, especially within a case-study context, focusing particularly on the methodological approaches used in previous studies. The pertinence, but also difficulties and drawbacks of qualitative approaches are illustrated based on the specific research project. The main results from this study on cocreation in food & wine tourism are presented. In the final discussion and conclusions section, insights are critically reviewed and the research questions answered. Findings and

debate add to understanding co-creation applied to food & wine tourism, with advances in conceptual, managerial and methodological scopes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Co-Creation in Food & Wine Tourism

Visitors increasingly search for authentic experiences through which they may become involved in the destination and connect to local identity in a participative way, engaging actively with local resources, products, and people. Tourists want to interact with locals and supply agents and feel part of the local community, enjoying unique local territory-based experiences (Carvalho et al., 2023). These demands may be assessed through the insights of the experience model suggested by Pine and Gilmore. In an experience-oriented economy, Pine and Gilmore (1998) refer that the combination of four realms of experience guarantee the 'sweet spot' of an experience: 'entertainment' (passive experience of environment absorption), 'education' (active and absorption experience), 'escapism' (active experience with a sense of immersion) and 'aesthetics' (passive, but immersive experience). In particular, the debate on 'value co-creation' within the service-dominant logic paradigm, suggesting the customers' active role as co-producers of value (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008), is relevant for better understanding tourism co-creation.

In the tourist experience, where the key position of visitors is recognized, co-creation emerges as a result of subjectively perceived personal experience value, triggered by visitors' interaction with the locals, supply agents, and elements of the specific experiencescape (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009; Campos et al., 2015). Campos et al. (2015, p. 23) define co-creation as 'the sum of psychological events a tourist goes through when contributing actively through physical or mental participation in activities and interacting with other subjects in the experience environment'. These authors consider the physical environment as part of the experience, stressing the importance of embracing cultural and natural resources in experience co-creation. For Minkiewicz et al. (2014, p. 31), co-creation 'involves an effort between multiple stakeholders to co-create value/an experience collaboratively'. In addition, they propose a conceptual model for value co-creation within cultural tourism, where 'engagement', 'co-production' and 'personalization' are identified as central dimensions of the experience (Minkiewicz et al., 2014). Co-production stresses consumers' active involvement in the experience; personalization comprises flexibility, adaption, and customization of the experience offer, and engagement

corresponds to consumers' cognitive, emotional and physical involvement in the experience, suggesting that managers should provide suitable contexts to promote this immersion (Minkiewicz et al., 2014).

Within many types of destination and tourism contexts, food & wine tourism should be realized as a crucial part of most tourists' experiences. Although not always being a primary motivation, the opportunity to get to know the destination through local food in an authentic, multi-sensory and pleasurable way underlines the relevance of this tourism product in the destination context (Brochado et al., 2021; Gao et al., 2022). Food & wine tourism is defined by Crespi-Vallbona and Mascarilla-Miró (2020, p. 214) as 'trips that focus on exploring and enjoying meals and beverages, typical of their destinations to experience local culture', enhancing the value of local products and the authentic traits of the territory, thereby facilitating visitors' involvement in historical and cultural features of the visited place (Brochado et al., 2021; Carvalho et al., 2021; Kodaş & Özel, 2023). As pointed out by Richards (2021), gastronomic experiences, namely cooking classes, food & wine pairing, home-dining experiences with locals, food market visits and food tours have contributed to highlighting destinations' local traits, linking 'place, identity, culture and tourism'. Hence, food & wine may foster learning experiences through which visitors have the possibility not only of tasting different flavours but also getting to know local traditions and habits (Crespi-Vallbona & Mascarilla-Miró, 2020). Moreover, other attributes are found pertinent to promote visitor satisfaction and memorability in food & wine experiences, namely regarding 'multi-sensory' experience opportunities, 'active participation', 'hedonism', 'fun' and 'emotional' immersion , 'nostalgia' (promoting the remembering of past moments), 'reflective connections' (remembering previous food tasting and travel experiences), 'local culture' (reflecting identity of territories), 'novelty' and 'food risk-taking' (newness and adventurous tasting experience), 'social interactions' and 'co-created relationships' (building social bonds) and 'authenticity' (perceived genuineness of the experience) (Rachão et al., 2021; Stone et al., 2021). Indeed, visitors search for more participative, interactive, engaging and meaningful experiences, in which diversified and new food & wine activities are required (Antón et al., 2018; Getz & Brown, 2006). Hence, co-creation may add value to the tourist experience, where tourists play a central role and may interact socially with others, while enjoying multi-sensory experiences in a physically, emotionally and cognitively engaging way (for example in food & wine pairing, well-designed wine tasting events or harvesting experiences), contributing to both deeper involvement and satisfaction (Binkhorst & Den

Dekker, 2009; Campos et al., 2015). In the domain of experiential marketing, Schmitt (1999) also suggests a framework in which combined dimensions are seen as crucial to promote appealing experiences and customer satisfaction, which is in line with the aforementioned co-creative food & wine experiences. The author stresses how important it is to 'sense' (stimulation of the five senses), 'think' (cognitive involvement), 'feel' (emotional involvement), 'relate' (social interaction) and 'act' (participation) to gain satisfaction with the experience.

In the tourism field, experience co-creation in food & wine is a relatively new and understudied research topic, as found in a recent literature review (Carvalho et al., 2023; Rachão et al, 2020). Indeed, food & wine tourism values local products and traditions, triggering authentic and memorable experiences, as fostered by creative supply agents, who have an important role in developing engaging co-creative experiences in the destination foodscape (Park et al., 2022; Richards, 2021).

Within this special interest tourism, Rachão et al. (2021) reveal social interaction as particularly relevant; it mainly takes place between tourists and the locals, to stimulate tourists' active participation and leads to satisfaction (Rachão et al., 2021). In a different setting, particularly in cooking workshops, Prayag et al. (2020) found that social interaction between chefs and participants, as well as the interaction with the physical environment and the destination ambiance, were crucial in fostering co-creation experiences for visitors. Tourists' previous knowledge of culinary practices seemed to be important in terms of their interest in co-creating experiences. In wine tourism, Gao et al. (2022) found that wine tourists highly value product-related aspects like 'wine', the 'lunch experience', 'the bottle of wine', 'chocolate' and the 'scenery', reinforcing the importance of adopting a holistic perspective on wine tourism. These authors added that experience value also results from educational aspects, contributing to visitors' involvement (Gao et al., 2022). Based on a literature review, Carvalho et al. (2023) proposed a conceptual framework of co-creation in food & wine tourism, in which interaction (social interaction between tourists, supply agents and the local community and interaction with the destination environment), active participation (being physically and mentally involved in activities), engagement (sensory, emotional and cognitive) and personalization (the pertinence of customizing the tourist experience) were perceived as key dimensions in fostering the creation of value, leading to visitors' satisfaction, loyalty and memorability.

Indeed, and as a tourism trend, co-creative food tourism experiences are increasingly in demand (Okumus, 2020; Richards, 2021), calling for more in-depth studies in this recent area. This qualitative and multi-method study aims to adding value to the literature in this particular field.

Qualitative Research on Co-Creation in Food & Wine Tourism

Despite the increase in research on experience co-creation in food & wine tourism in recent years, there is a lack of sound empirical evidence observable in the field (Carvalho et al., 2023; Okumus, 2020; Rachão et al., 2020). In an integrative literature review comprising 97 empirical studies in the field of experience co-creation and food & wine tourism, the authors Carvalho et al. (2023) notice that quantitative methods are prevalent compared to qualitative ones (49% and 43%, correspondingly) and that few studies follow mixed-methods designs (8%). Although this study shows a relatively important number of qualitative studies in the field of food & wine experiences (Carvalho et al., 2023), it is clear that more qualitative research in the specific field of co-creation experiences in this domain is needed. This is evident, when considering the nature and scope of co-creation in tourism (centred on people and their interactions) and the features of qualitative research, namely its focus on naturalistic settings, the use of unobtrusive data collection and quest for in-depth understanding of the complex phenomena under study (Veal, 2017). In particular, very few empirical studies were found systematically focusing on the dimensions of tourism co-creation in food & wine, and none which specifically refer to food tours or consider both urban and rural contexts. Accordingly, more qualitative studies are needed to better understand the specificities of this type of tourism. In line with the nature of qualitative research, the relevance of case studies lies in the importance of obtaining a holistic, in-depth understanding of certain phenomena, making them particularly suitable to a diversity of complex, context-dependent research problems within the scope of social sciences (Veal, 2017). Case studies are understood as 'a particular case or set of cases, describing or explaining the events of the case(s) (…) and may rely on quantitative or qualitative data (or both) but usually involves some field-based data' (Yin, 2011, p. 207). They contribute to identifying new, relevant insights that may inspire managerial action and theory development, specifically by sustaining research hypotheses to be validated in larger scale, quantitative studies (Creswell, 2014).

As for the presence of exploratory case studies in food & wine experience co-creation, the settings of the cases found in the literature range from wine routes and wine tourism destinations (Carvalho et al., 2021;

Cubillas et al., 2017; Kirova, 2021; Rachão et al., 2019, 2021; Thanh & Kirova, 2018), to dining in a teahouse restaurant in China (Chen, 2018). In the study of Carvalho et al. (2021), 22 semi-structured interviews were undertaken with visitors in Bairrada, a Portuguese wine region, which permitted comprehensive analysis of the perceptions visitors have of their experiences in the region. Analysing the data collected with the support of NVivo permitted the observation of the outstanding role of 'interaction' (both between the individuals and with the experiencescape) in value-creation in co-creative rural wine tourism. Similar techniques were adopted by Rachão et al. (2021), whose findings showed that tourists perceive co-creation by means of seven identified categories, namely 'social interaction, novelty, creativity, social sustainability, environmental awareness'. In these authors' study, 14 semi-structured interviews were held with visitors, and a focus group of five participants allowed for the collection of in-depth information regarding visitors' motivations and experiences in another Portuguese wine region, Vinho Verde, followed by NVivo-supported content analysis. Cubillas et al. (2017) selected semi-structured interviews to apply to winery managers (3 + 3) and visitors (17 + 10) from two local wineries in the Sonoita-Elgin Wine Region in Arizona, USA, to analyse how perceived authenticity is related to value co-creation. No reference to software was made in this study. The findings of the study suggested four core principles for authentic co-creation experiences to strengthen touristic authenticity, namely dialogue, accessibility, risk assessment, and transparency.

In the research field of co-creative food & wine experiences, netnographic studies are also identified as a useful qualitative approach, particularly interesting to enrich case-study research, for example when analysing visitors' shared and authentically lived experiences, which can potentially trigger place attachment (Souza et al., 2020), and the memorability of food experiences (Sthapit & Börk, 2020). Other netnographic studies focused on understanding the value co-creation experience in the context of cooking classes in Thailand (Qian et al., 2023) or on traditional breakfast experiences of international visitors in Istanbul (Kodaş, 2024). Netnography has also been increasingly used in research on wine experiences (for example, Kastenholz et al., 2022; Kirova, 2021; Thanh & Kirova, 2018). This technique helps reveal meaningful content that is available online, resulting from tourists' spontaneous reviews of experiences shared with other travellers and correspondingly influencing them. Netnography has become more notable in academic research since Kozinets' (2002) often-cited seminal article that provided a reflection on the requirements of systematic, rigorous and valid netnographic approaches.

Despite the high potential of netnography in terms of data diversity and quality and despite the increasing interest in the approach, there is room for more netnographic studies in hospitality and tourism academia (Gewinner, 2023).

Indeed, the growth of online community platforms, particularly those related to travel (e.g. TripAdvisor, Couchsurfing) and the increase in digital consumption justifies a systematic analysis of the enormous amount of data available online. Netnography is also simpler and requires less time and resources to collect data than traditional survey approaches (An & Alarcón, 2021; Cunha et al, 2021; Gewinner, 2023; Kozinets, 2002; Thanh & Kirova, 2018). Kozinets (2002) highlights the flexibility and usefulness of netnography as well as its unobtrusive character regarding the study of consumption patterns in online communities. This potential may be particularly meaningful for marketers, supply agents and destination management organizations (DMOs) involved in tourist experience design, permitting an in-depth understanding of the specificities of visitors' perspectives about the experiences lived and their outcomes (Gewinner, 2023). For assessing appealing and meaningful tourist experiences, analysis of visitors' discourse in online communities may thus help unveil tourists' behaviour, motivations, perceptions and attitudes, as intended with qualitative research (Veal, 2017), particularly in a domain that is not yet widely understood (An & Alarcón, 2021). Disadvantages of netnography include credibility, authenticity and trustworthiness of available content and the difficulty of generalizing findings based on reviews of an online community (Kozinets, 2002), while its usefulness as a complementary technique is increasingly acknowledged (An & Alarcón, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

Contextualization of The Multiple Case Study Approach

This paper presents a multiple-case study, the main purpose of which is to identify distinctive elements and experience co-creation dimensions of food & wine and to reflect on the pertinence, opportunities and challenges of the qualitative methodological approach in this area. This reflection is guided by current evidence obtained from a concrete project on co-creation in food & wine tourism in Portuguese urban and rural destinations. The emergence of food tour experiences in tourism justifies the selection of the first case study, where visitors had the opportunity to get to know the culture of a city by tasting its local products within an historic urban experiencescape. For this purpose, the case of a gastronomic tour enterprise in Lisbon was

chosen given its resonance in visitors' comments. The food tour experience may be considered a particularly interesting guided, yet still interactive urban food tourism experience; in it, visitors walk through a historical neighbourhood and enter diverse small, traditional restaurants, having the opportunity to engage with a unique experiencescape, aided through the intermediation of an enthusiastic local guide. Here, netnography was chosen due to the richness of content permitting an understanding of the food tour experience, as voluntarily and publicly shared by participants.

On the other hand, the case studies of the Bairrada and Dão wine regions were chosen to contrast the urban with a more rural, larger and more independently explored territorial context. The regions were chosen given their investment in wine tourism and its potential, with the tours being structured along wine routes and including rich natural and cultural heritage, apart from wineries and gastronomy. The Bairrada region is located in the Central Region of Portugal, near the Atlantic coast and between Aveiro and Coimbra. It has unique natural and cultural elements, combining diversified tourism products such as sun and sea, nature (e.g. the Buçaco Forest, with more than 400 native species), spas (e.g. Luso and Curia), culture and urban tourism (Centre of Portugal, 2023a). In the interior of this region, the Dão area presents scenically outstanding mountain ranges (Serra da Estrela, Caramulo), with hills, valleys and granitic features characterizing the landscape. Rural and nature tourism as well as health tourism (with a variety of thermal spas, e.g. São Pedro do Sul) and cultural tourism (e.g. in the city of Viseu) are important experience facets of the region (Centre of Portugal, 2023b). Both regions have different terroir characteristics and grape varieties which enhance the unique character of these wines. These specificities also add value to the distinctive wine experiences fostered in these territories, permitting an extra layer of analysis of the wine tourism context.

Triangulation of sources based on visitors' and supply agents' perspectives is additionally presented, thus permitting the analysis of the visitor experience in different settings (urban food tour versus food & wine/terroir experiences in two rural wine regions). Indeed, different cases, data sources and perspectives add depth to the research. Diversity in 'data' (from different sources), 'method' (multiple methods), and 'investigator' (different researchers involved in collection and interpretation), as well as 'theoretical triangulation' (selecting different theoretical perspectives to interpret data), contribute to a more rigorous and credible analysis of qualitative data derived from cases (Creswell, 2014; Decrop, 1999; Patton, 2002). The three different case studies presented here, within a multiple-

case research logic, also permit validation, differentiation and consolidation of results. The following subsections present detailed information regarding the methodological procedures adopted in this multiple case-study.

Data Collection and Analysis

Experiencing Food Tours – A Netnographic Approach to Food Tourism in Lisbon

For the first study, netnography was adopted as a research technique to collect relevant data and analyse visitor's experiences shared on the online platform TripAdvisor, following the steps recommended by Kozinets (2002), as presented in table 1.

Table 1. *Steps implemented in the netnography based on Kozinets' (2002) perspective*

Procedures	Additional information of the study
Entrée (defining the research question and identifying the appropriate online platforms)	**Scope of the research questions** - Identification of dimensions of co-creation experiences in tourists' comments on their participation in a gastronomic tour - Analysis of how value was co-created in the aforementioned experiences **Online platform selected** TripAdvisor
Data collection	**Experience selection** **Criteria adopted for data collection:** (i) language – all English and Portuguese reviews; (ii) time span – April 2014–June 2017; (iii) no translations. Visitor reports downloaded and organized in an Excel file;
Data analysis	Reviews manually analysed; Dimensions identified in previous studies were considered before coding; other emerging dimensions (from discourses) were added subsequently. **Coding procedure:** Two researchers were in charge of the coding tasks independently (for increasing reliability): 1. Researchers coded 30 reviews together; 2. Researchers coded remaining reviews separately; 3. Researchers identified differences in coding and arrived at a consensus on discrepant codes.

Here, evidence was sought on the presence, content and role of certain experience dimensions for value co-creation, based on post-visit reviews analysis of an urban food tour. Additionally, triangulation via an

additional method (semi-structured interview) and data source (supply agent: the food tour operator), as suggested by Decrop (1999), added important insights into the experience co-creation process.

TripAdvisor was the platform selected, one of the 'largest travel guidance platforms' (TripAdvisor, 2021), where tourists share their reviews regarding a destination's activities, restaurants or hotels. Comprising more than 934 million reviews of approximately 8 million businesses, TripAdvisor helps visitors plan their trips, operating in 43 markets and 22 languages (TripAdvisor, 2021). Besides the diversity of experiences presented on the platform, information regarding the date of the experience and visitors' origin is available (Xiang et al., 2017), making this platform most suitable for this study.

Regarding data collection, Taste of Lisboa Food Tours, a Portuguese enterprise that provides food tours in Lisbon, was chosen, given its visibility on TripAdvisor due to numerous reviews. For that purpose, all Portuguese and English reviews (without translation) from April 2014 (the beginning of the experiences) to June 2017 were selected. In all, 658 online reviews were considered, totalling 56,710 words. The comments were downloaded to an Excel spreadsheet for manual coding. For increasing credibility of online content, the perspective of the supply agent of commented experiences was added (An & Alarcón, 2021). The CEO of the gastro-cultural tours enterprise was interviewed in July 2021, via Zoom. The purpose was to find evidence of how co-creation is perceived when designing the gastronomic tours and understanding the strategies the company has adopted to address the challenges imposed to the tourism sector in the post-Covid-19 era.

As recommended by Kozinets (2002), data analysis comprised three steps. First, two independent researchers were involved to enhance the reliability of coding (intercoder reliability) and objectivity in data analysis. They started by coding 30 reviews together to reach agreement on coding discourses. Then, the researchers coded the remaining 628 reviews separately and lastly shared their final coding and identified discrepancies until a consensus was reached. The final rate of agreement was of 97%.

This data coding and analysis was done manually. The categories for coding were established based on previously identified co-creative experience dimensions resulting from the frameworks of Pine and Gilmore (1998), Minkiewicz et al. (2014) and Schmitt (1999) with some dimensions related to several models. Table 2 presents these dimensions and a brief definition.

Table 2. *Pre-established dimensions for the analysis of visitors' reviews in the netnography*

Dimensions	Meaning
Sense and aesthetics (sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch)	Stimulation of senses and visitors' immersion in the experience
Feel	Visitors' emotional and affective experiences
Think/education	Visitors' interest in learning and cognitive engagement
Relate	Fostering social interaction contexts between different stakeholders (visitors, local inhabitants, supply agents, the travelling group and tourists met in the destination)
Personalization	Customization considering visitors' preferences
Entertainment	Visitors' passive absorption
Act/co-production	Visitors' active participation
Escape/engagement	Deep involvement in the experience

Source: adapted from Carvalho et al. (2023)

Bairrada and Dão – Two Case Studies in Portuguese Wine Routes

The other two case studies were carried out in two Portuguese rural wine routes in the country's Central Region: Bairrada and Dão. In Bairrada, a convenience sample was firstly defined for the Bairrada wine route, including tourists visiting the region. They were approached by researchers in different places, namely a hotel unit and a rural hotel accommodation, as well as the official store of the Bairrada route and a winery. This took place between May 2019 and February 2020. In the case of Dão, two sampling techniques were used. On the one hand, a convenience sample was selected, with researchers addressing visitors in a winery, from August 2019 to March 2020, to then adapt to pandemic restrictions. Tourists who had visited the region over the preceding two years were hence identified on the researchers' contact lists and through social media. Additionally, a snowball sampling technique was used, which consisted of asking each interviewee to provide the contact of another person who had also visited the region over the same period of time. Interviews were held until September 2020. Therefore, the multiple-case study sample included 22 visitors to Bairrada and 16 visitors to Dão. The perspective of supply agents from both regions was also considered, which implied adopting the convenience sampling approach again. A small group of agents who provided co-creative food & wine experiences was contacted and three agents from Bairrada (a winery, a winemaker, and a travel experience company) and three from Dão (an accommodation unit, a winery & restaurant, and a wine farm) accepted to participate. In this kind of exploratory research, a significant amount of information is collected for a small number of cases (Veal, 2017). The sample size of exploratory studies

fits into what the literature suggests as appropriate for qualitative studies, ranging from 1 to 25 cases (Fusch & Ness, 2015), allowing in-depth analysis of more detailed data per case, i.e. a somewhat in-depth focus on the phenomena of interest (McGinley et al., 2021; Yin, 2011).

As for data collection tools, scripts of two interviews (considering agents and tourists) were created as well as validated by experts working on the TWINE project[2]. An in-depth, semi-structured interview is a meaningful qualitative method, through which the interviewees may express themselves authentically, based on the previously defined script (Patton, 2002; Quivy & Campenhoudt, 1998). Such interviews are usually applied to a small number of subjects (Veal, 2017) and may occur face to face, via telephone or via the internet (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2011). This tool is of particular importance in exploratory case studies, when a topic is relatively new or when there is scarce academic research about it. Furthermore, interviews are an appropriate tool to collect highly detailed data regarding individuals' perceptions, behaviours and experiences (Patton, 2002), which is the case of this project. The interviews with visitors in Bairrada were all held face to face, and in Dão only the first interview was applied in the destination. The remaining ones happened online or through the phone, which implied that the meetings had to be scheduled and the project and respective aims had to be firstly introduced to interviewees by email. Regarding the supply agents from Bairrada and Dão, all interviews (three from each region) were held between August and October 2020 via Zoom (two) and via telephone (four).

Most interviews were applied by the leading author of this article, following recommended criteria to guarantee successful data collection, namely: starting with a brief explanation of the study purpose and making reference to the length of the interview; asking the visitors' permission to record the interview and assure data anonymity; conducting the interview following the defined script, but not rigidly, e.g. not following the order of the questions if the natural discourse of the respondent follows a distinct order; promoting an atmosphere so that the interviewee could express him/herself without interruption; establishing rapport with the interviewee to foster his/ her involvement in the interview; respecting moments of pause, when the respondent reflects on a certain subject; avoiding the discussion of different points of view and respecting the interviewees'

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[2] Twine - "Co-creating Sustainable Tourism & WINe Experiences in Rural Areas" – was a 4-year research project whose analysis, based on a holistic perspective, was focused on co-creation experiences in rural wine destinations, specifically in three wine routes in the Central region of Portugal: Bairrada, Dão, and Beira Interior.

considerations; and guaranteeing an appropriate and informal environment (Quivy & Campenhoudt, 1998; Veal, 2017; Yin, 2011).

The script of the interview applied to the visitors has three sections: i) visitors' food & wine tourism experience in general; ii) visitors' experience in the region; iii) characterisation of the visitors' profile. All questions included in the script were formulated based on literature in the field and were complemented by validated self-measurement scales. The script of the interview applied to the supply agents, on the other hand, aimed at assessing the presence of dimensions of co-creation experience, namely 'participation', 'interaction', 'engagement', and 'personalization' (Carvalho et al., 2023) in the experience design.

Table 3. *Stages of the content analysis process based on the documentary corpora of the semi-structured interviews*

	Procedure	Additional information
1.	**Organizing data**	Bairrada (visitors: 484 minutes; agents: 100 minutes)
	Manual transcription of the in-depth semi-structured interviews	Dão (visitors: 951 minutes; agents: 94 minutes)
		Food tours (agent: 55 minutes)
		Total of 28 hours of audio recording
2.	**Verification of each interview**	The whole content of the interviews was revised
3.	**Files imported into data analysis software**	Each file was uploaded to NVivo
	Word documents with the interviews transcribed	
4.	**Classification of cases**	Profile characterization was added in NVivo
5.	**Tree nodes defined**	Themes and categories created before the coding process, considering the script of the interview
6.	**Development of coding process**	Coding of the interviews and clarification of possibly overlapping categories and codes (punctually discussing with the co-authors); categories identified inductively;
7.	**Repetition of the coding process**	Recoding process within a time span of two months
8.	**Data analysis and interpretation according to the coding process**	Identification of indicators, word cloud creation (word frequencies) and interpretation of data

Content analysis was the technique used for data analysis and table 3 provides a description of the procedures implemented within that scope, supported by the qualitative analysis software NVivo 12. As for the initial organization of data, the in-depth interviews were transcribed manually and verbatim, and the transcribed content was then revised. All files were then imported to NVivo, and the characteristics of the visitors' profile were added (classification of cases). Initial deductive coding was implemented, according to pre-established themes and categories alluded to in the interview script. Categories related to the co-creation experience dimensions emerged inductively. The documentary corpus was then coded, and this process was repeated within a time frame of two months,

considering the guidelines to assure the criterion of stability (Krippendorff, 2004), and the purpose of guaranteeing uniformity and consistency of the process.

RESULTS

A Multiple-Case Study on Co-Creation Experiences in Food & Wine Tourism

According to the data resulting from the content analysis of 658 visitor reviews regarding post-visit perceptions of the Lisbon food tour experiences, the deductively pre-established categories of analysis were complemented by two categories that emerged from data analysis (inductive approach): one category may be also considered an experience dimension (authenticity) and the other referred to a frequently reported and relevant experience outcome ('loyalty', by means of revisit intention and recommendation). Amongst the categories related to experience dimensions (figure 1), 'aesthetic/sense' (reflecting mostly 'taste' and 'sight') (623 references), 'feel' (443 references), and 'think/education' (426 references) stood out, followed by 'relate' (212 references), 'authenticity' (199 references), and 'personalization' (111 references). These findings suggest that tourists' perceptions of co-creation in the food tours were mostly marked by the multisensory and emotional character of the experiences, while enhancing cognitive immersion and learning experiences resulting from visitors' interaction with different parts of the experiencescape. The emergence of 'authenticity' as a new category of analysis showed its pertinence to visitors in this context, suggesting the importance of fostering genuine experiences that highlight the uniqueness of local features.

Categories 'entertainment', 'escape/engagement' and 'act/co-production' were not so notable in the visitors' discourse, despite their theoretical and sometimes empirical relevance as tourist experience dimensions (Campos et al., 2015; Rachão et al., 2020; Thanh & Kirova, 2018). As for the categories reflecting outcomes of the experience within the scope of 'loyalty', visitors referred more often to attitudinal loyalty, frequently recommending the experience (364 references), in comparison with behavioural loyalty – 'revisit intention' (55 references).
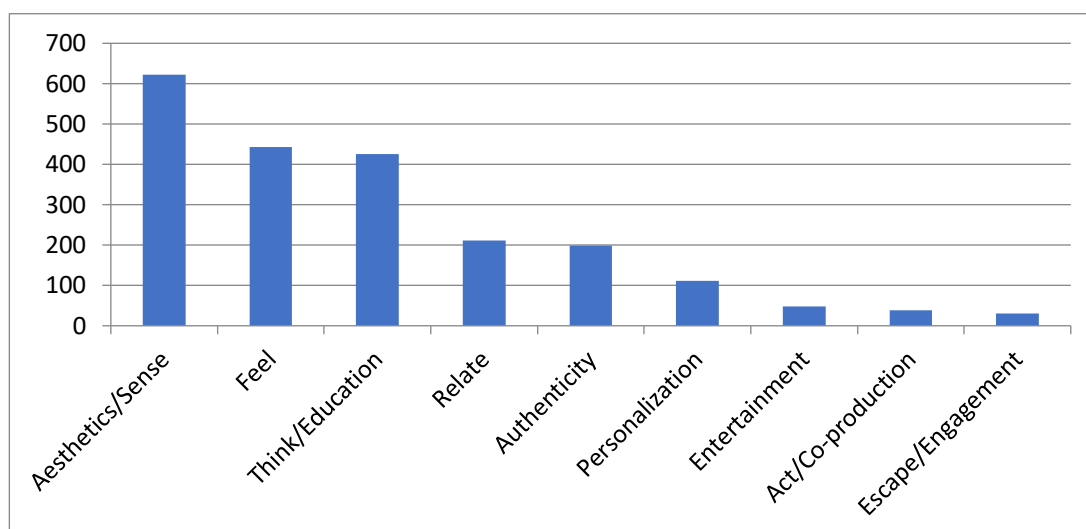
Figure 1. *Frequency of visitors' references to aspects of co-creation dimensions in the tourist experience*

The data resulting from the interview with the food tour operator confirmed the prevalence of 'interaction', 'engagement', 'active participation' and 'personalization' in the shape of food tour experiences, since, according to the agent, they may help in the attempt to foster value co-creation with clients and stakeholders. Based on the details provided by the operator, stimulating tourists' active communication with other tourists, the hosts, and the local community is key to promoting social interaction, strengthening the bonds between the parties involved, and contributing to tourists' engagement in the experience. This was evident in the visitors' discourse, since the category 'relate' was the fourth most referred to. Besides this, fostering aesthetic (enjoying the neighbourhoods and their atmosphere) and sensorial (tasting food products and wine) experiences as well as facilitating activities where entertainment and cognitive involvement is stimulated (edutainment), apparently also promoted visitors' engagement. These dimensions – 'aesthetics/sense', 'relate', 'think/education', and 'feel' – emerged in the visitors' discourse. For the agent, 'personalization' also stands out, being implemented when the host adapts the narrative to the travel group as well as when designing the food tour details, by respecting visitors' food preferences based on their cultural habits and needs. Visitors acknowledge and value such adaptations, although they may be less aware of the agent's efforts, since 'personalization' ranks sixth in number of referrals from visitors' discourse.

As for the Bairrada and Dão case studies, the richness of the data resulting from content analysis of the discourse in the interviews become

clear through the diversity of indicators identified within the scope of the categories of analysis elicited by the questions of the script, particularly within the sections 'Food & wine experiences in general' and 'Food & wine experiences in Bairrada and Dão' (see Appendix 1). The categories that emerged from the analysis coincided with the co-creation experience dimensions active participation, interaction, engagement, personalization, aesthetics, and authenticity and are listed in Appendix 2.

Regarding visitors' motivation for travelling to wine regions, aspects like gastronomy, wine and elements related to regional cultural and natural features were identified in their discourse (both from Bairrada and Dão), which coincided with their expectations when travelling to both regions. In addition, visitors from Bairrada also highlighted cycling, which was linked to the particular travel programme of these international visitors, and having the chance to enjoy their stay in a historic hotel as specific expectations.

In their description of outstanding experiences, visitors from both regions referred to specific experiences they participated in, namely wine and culinary workshops as well as visiting wine and gastronomic fairs (in the case of Dão) or wineries, engaging in wine tasting or food & wine pairing events, and immersive wine grape harvesting (in both regions). Besides this, aspects related to enjoying nature and the landscape, visiting museums, and having a sense of relaxation and escape were also mentioned by visitors from both regions. Tourists who travelled to Bairrada added the gastronomy and wine of the region, the possibility of cycling, having close contact with nature and discovering the region and learning about it as well as the hospitality of the local people and the chance to be immersed in the 1930s atmosphere of the hotel they stayed in. Visitors from Dão highlighted the fact that they enjoyed having contact with authentic local products and the atmosphere of the wine fairs for their genuine character, especially due to the contact with residents and producers as well as being in a rural environment, where they could enjoy the local traditions.

When trying to identify visitors' perceptions of aspects connected to the identified dimensions previously presented, it became clear that it was within the scope of the category 'outstanding elements in the experience', particularly when referring to specific activities they participated in, that respondents presented most detail. This reveals their multifaceted immersion in the experience, and the suitability of interviews for capturing corresponding perceptions and reflections with rich detail, and an emotional tone that a structured questionnaire (typically with Likert scales)

may not be able to assess, apart from many other issues possibly limiting questionnaire-based survey approaches (Cunha et al, 2021). In open-ended questions, the respondent presents what is 'at the front of his/her mind', rather than indicating a rating of dozens of scale items that may not always be read carefully, especially in longer questionnaires. From visitors' discourse, 'interaction' was the most prominent dimension, revealing how valuable contact with the local wine makers and staff was to respondents, which was evident in both wine regions. Aspects related to 'active participation' were also notable in most experiences tourists referred to (e.g., cooking, wine tasting, walking in the vineyards, and harvesting), followed by others connected to 'engagement' (cognitive and emotional). Details indicating the presence of 'personalization' were less evident, although still found in the sample, for example in wine tastings and workshops, particularly regarding the fact that visitors had private experiences and enjoyed being given closer attention by the staff. The analysis of the visitors' reviews also facilitated the identification of an additional co-creative experience dimension, namely the sensorial involvement, stressing the importance of interaction with the physical experiencescape. The detail and variety of the indicators presented under the category 'sensory experience' (Appendix 1) highlight the key role of senses in fostering visitors' engagement and immersion in food & wine tourism, which once again confirms the suitability of in-depth interviews to unveil interviewees' most prominent feelings and reflections.

Based on the visitor data collected, the in-depth interviews with supply agents also helped understand how co-creation is considered (and conditioned) in the experience design, as exemplified next. According to the supply agents of both regions, the experience dimensions 'interaction', 'active participation', 'engagement', and 'personalization' are all considered when designing the food & wine co-creation experiences they provide. Appendix 3 depicts the indicators resulting from the analysis of these agents' discourse within the scope of each category, corresponding to the dimensions in focus. As for 'active participation', the agents highlighted the role of promoting activities that require tourists' co-production (e.g., learning how to open wine bottles or cooking and preparing home-made bread, cheese and jams, as well as giving tourists the chance to participate in harvesting). This stands clearly out in the case of food & wine experiences, even regarding the stimulation of aspects related to other dimensions, such as 'interaction' and 'engagement'. As for this matter, the details provided by visitors (referred to above) show their appreciation for being co-constructors of their experiences and for the feelings resulting

from such deep involvement (e.g., a sense of escape in the vineyards, and the sense of authenticity when contacting with the locals at harvesting). 'Interaction', according to the agents, is fostered by means of establishing an informal and welcoming atmosphere, where tourists feel at ease to ask questions and clarify doubts, and by promoting contact between tourists and the local staff. In line with this, visitors provided insights into how they enjoyed the contact and learning with the winemaker, the staff and the local community. As stated by the agents, triggering visitors' emotional arousal when designing food & wine experiences is of fundamental importance in fostering visitors' engagement in the experience and its memorability (e.g., giving visitors the chance to interact with the experiencescape, with the authenticity of the wineries and with the local people involved in the harvesting and wine-making process). The agents also highlighted the pertinence of promoting 'personalization' by means of facilitating customized experiences for small groups and of adapting their offer to particular preferences and needs of the demand, which was also positively perceived by tourists. However, 'personalization' referrals were more common amongst supply agents than visitors who may be less aware of the importance of this dimension, while suppliers consider the dimension when designing experiences in a professional manner, to meet visitors' needs and preferences.

Insights from The Cross-Case Studies

Similar results from both urban and rural food & wine tourism contexts lead to the conclusion that the main co-creation dimensions suggested in theory were apparently generally relevant. Figure 2 shows the most common dimensions identified in the three different case studies, as well as the differences that stood out in these studies.

In more detail, human interaction seemed to be quite significant in all experience contexts, not only contributing to a relaxing atmosphere that fostered empathetic relationships between visitors and the staff (the tour guide in the food tours and the local wineries' staff and the winemaker in the wine regions), but also adding value in educational and cognitive terms. In Dão, visitors also had contact with residents in wine and gastronomic fairs, which was valued for the authenticity they felt when in contact with locals. Particularly in the case of Bairrada, interaction with the destination environment was stressed by visitors whose main motivation was cycling in the region, as well as for those who wanted to explore the natural setting of this territory through hiking, which was clearly valued, complementing gastronomic experiences in this territory.
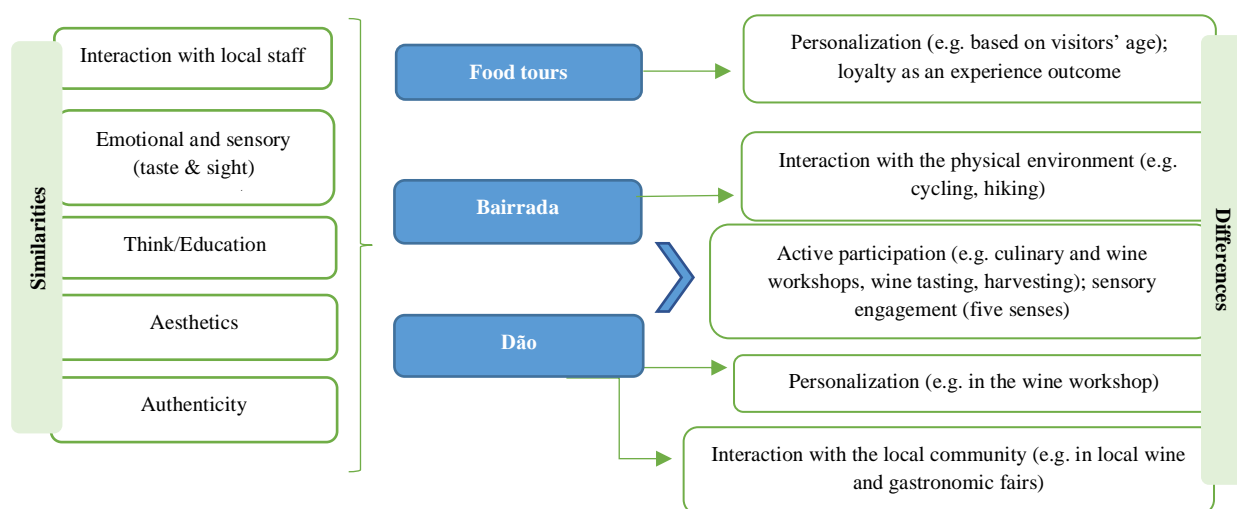
356

Figure 2. *Similarities and differences identified in the multiple-case study regarding visitors' perspectives*

Authenticity was also identified as a relevant dimension in all analysed contexts. This dimension emerged in all case studies, reinforcing visitors' appreciation for genuineness when co-creating value in these experiences.

Different aspects between both studies were also identified. The emergence of loyalty as an experience outcome was found only in the food tours case study. Furthermore, although personalization was identified as pertinent by visitors in all destination contexts, elements related to this dimension seemed to be less evident in their discourse in the case of Bairrada. Despite the fact that sensory engagement was the highlight in this case study (mainly in terms of taste and vision), this dimension stood out in visitors' discourse regarding their co-creation experience in the wine regions, involving all five senses, which corroborated its importance to visitors' deep involvement and its memorability. Active participation seems to be also more relevant in the food & wine activities provided in the wine routes, mainly in wine and culinary workshops and in the harvesting experiences in which visitors participated. Hence, the emphasis found in visitors' discourse on 'sensorial aspects', 'authenticity' and elements regarding the 'active participation' is noteworthy, suggesting the outstanding character of these experience dimensions in co-created food & wine tourism, however with distinct concrete elements depending on the physical but also social experience context.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

According to the literature, there are few empirical studies addressing food & wine tourism and the corresponding co-creation experience dimensions (Carvalho et al., 2023; Rachão et al., 2020). Hence, this study contributes to this debate and tries to fill this gap with additional empirical evidence taken from three case studies, in a qualitative manner. Results also show the pertinent contribution of a qualitative approach in this field, by means of a multiple-case framework addressing both hosts and guests in three different geographical settings. The research design, comprising triangulation between sources, investigators, and contexts of data collection (rural, urban, diverse regions), confirmed the outstanding role of 'interaction', 'active participation', 'engagement', 'personalization' and 'authenticity' as co-creative dimensions, in both visitors' experience perceptions and supply agents' experience design, corroborating other studies in the field (Carvalho et al., 2023; Gao et al., 2022; Minkiewicz et al., 2014; Rachão et al., 2019, 2021). With a better understanding of visitors' perspective regarding co-creative experience value, this study highlights the main features supply agents should consider when designing co-creative gastronomic experiences, in order to promote subjective involvement and memorability, as previously found in other studies (Carvalho et al., 2023; Stone et al., 2021).

Indeed, regarding the thickness of the data collected (either in visitors' reviews or in visitors and supply agents' perceptions gathered through in-depth interviews) and having conscientiously examined and systematized it via content analysis, our understanding of specificities of co-creation of food & wine experiences can be advanced. Additionally, patterns, similarities, and differences between the perspectives of the main actors co-creating such experiences were observable, adding value to the research area regarding the nature of these specific experiences. In the food tour case study, the spontaneous and open character of netnography facilitated the confirmation of patterns as to tourist experience dimensions, also highlighted by other authors (Minkiewicz et al., 2014; Schmitt, 1999), as well as the identification of an additional experience dimension (authenticity), apparently most important in food & wine tourism experiences. The emergence of this dimension reinforced the importance of clues of local identity in co-creative experiences, where visitors expect to feel part of the community (Crespi-Vallbona & Mascarilla-Miró, 2020; Williams et al., 2019). Loyalty also emerged in association with these experiences as most important experience outcome.

The analysis of visitors and supply agents' perspectives revealed that social interaction was the most prevalent dimension identified in the experiences facilitated, both in the urban context and the wine regions, suggesting the key role of human interaction with the winery/restaurant staff, the winemaker, the tour guide or with other tourists for memorable co-creative experiences. These findings corroborate the conclusions of previous studies (Antón et al., 2018; Richards, 2021) and reveal the importance of being prepared to involve opportunities for personal contact, with both training of front-office staff and development of experiencescapes and activities that promote social interaction (e.g. workshops or shared meals).

Despite being less identified in visitors' discourse, personalization seems crucial for visitor satisfaction and loyalty in the three destination contexts, particularly perceived in Dão region (e.g. personal contact in the wineries or in wine and culinary workshops) and in the food tours (e.g. adaptation to visitors' diet). As multisensory experiences, attending to visitors' different needs and desires is crucial to facilitate visitors' emotional and cognitive immersion in experiences, which should be taken into account by supply agents and DMOs when designing these experiences. Customized and differentiated experiences, targeted to distinct visitor groups, may constitute an opportunity to develop truly unique experiences, increasingly appreciated by demanding and experienced visitors who seek new, outstanding and meaningful discoveries in their trips.

The study findings also corroborate the position of renowned authors within the scope of social sciences (Creswell, 2014; Quivy & Campenhoudt, 1998) and leisure and tourism studies (Veal, 2017), regarding the appropriateness of qualitative research for assessing individuals' unique and distinct perceptions, ideas, motivations, needs and behaviours. The organization, structure and depth promoted by in-depth interviews was confirmed, by the immersion in recalled experiencescapes fostered by this method and the level of detail of the information correspondingly provided. These facts were germane to finding evidence of similar perceptions shared by visitors and agents from both routes as well as to identifying subtle differences that are indicative of specific features of each route (e.g., the appropriate conditions for cycling in Bairrada or the authenticity of the food & wine fairs in Dão) and context (also comparing to the urban food tour). Furthermore, data collected via interviews with visitors enabled another outstanding experience dimension to be identified, namely 'sensory engagement', suggesting the promotion of sensory experiences for enhanced visitor satisfaction (Schmitt, 1999).

The validity of these findings on experience dimensions in food & wine tourism is reinforced by the fact that they result from triangulation of sources by means of comparing the perspectives of visitors and supply agents, in both rural and urban settings. Such findings add theoretical insights to the field and contribute to remedying the lack of theoretical and qualitative empirical research identified (Carvalho et al., 2023). The depth reached through the findings confirms the suitability of this research design to help a more thorough understanding of how value is co-created in attractive, unique, and memorable food & wine experiences. However, due to its features, the qualitative research approach can only identify and thoroughly explore complex phenomena which are not yet fully understood, such as tourist experience co-creation, while not aiming at generalizing patterns or confirming causal relationships. Instead, it may contribute to the development of pertinent hypotheses to be subsequently analysed via quantitative, large-scale validation studies; the survey questionnaires used in these studies may include some of the details found in the present and other qualitative approaches on the topic, included Likert-scales to operationalize the co-creative experience dimensions in food & wine tourism identified here. However, particular challenges of such quantitative data collection and analysis must also be recognized, especially in niche tourism contexts like rural wine tourism (Cunha et al., 2021).

In managerial terms, the rich, detailed information presented, summarized in categories with indicators that emerged from real-context perceptions revealed by these qualitative studies, also adds relevant insight to destination management organizations (DMOs) and food & wine tourism business managers regarding visitors' preferences (Kodaş & Özel, 2023) emotional responses and perceptions about co-creative food & wine experiences, as also found in other studies (Carvalho et al., 2023; Rachão et al., 2021). Thereby, these findings may help DMOs and supply agents design more attractive and innovative experiences, meeting visitors' expectations and establishing the value of the features and identity of territories. Moreover, this study stresses the importance of tourism managers' adopting a holistic perspective in experience design, since cultural (historical features of the region) and natural (the mountains and the surrounding environment) elements of the destination are confirmed as crucial in co-creative food & wine experiences (Getz & Brown, 2006; Richards, 2021), thereby adding to the distinctiveness and competitiveness of destinations.

As for limitations of the study, the fact that no additional tools (e.g., focus groups, systematic participant observation) were used may be pointed out. In the case of the netnography, the fact that the reliability of the tourists' reviews could not be assessed may be a limiting factor. Considering the sample size of the netnography, complementing the analysis with a quantitative approach could have provided significant insights into the representativeness of the co-creative food tour experience dimensions based on the visitors' reviews, despite the qualitative character of the study. Future research based on qualitative empirical studies regarding co-creative gastronomic tourism may benefit from interpreting and presenting data with the support of different and also visually appealing and eventually more intuitive tools for interpretation, such as conceptual maps, matrixes or word clouds, provided by CAQDAS (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis). Topics of interest for future research would include the assessment of the impact of participation in food & wine experiences, comprising dimensions of co-creative experiences in tourist satisfaction, memorability and loyalty, trying to provide evidence for causal relations. Here, a quantitative approach, based on a well-developed questionnaire, possibly in distinct food & wine tourism contexts (rural, urban, indoors, outdoors, with more or less active participation and learning opportunities), may be worthwhile avenues of future research.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1 – *Categories of analysis and indicators resulting from visitors' discourse on experiences in the Bairrada and Dão regions*

	Categories	Indicators
Food and wine experiences - in general	Motives for travelling to wine regions	Business, gastronomy, nature and culture, region, wine
	Expectations of wine experiences when travelling	Appreciating the buildings' architecture, authenticity of the experience, cycling, enjoying new experiences, fun, gastronomy, nature enjoyment, no expectations, having a sense of peace, social contact, walking, wine, quality of advice on wine
	Wine experiences expectations when travelling to the region	Cycling, gastronomy, history and culture, hotel, nature, rural tourism, wine,
	Wine tourism definition	Architecture, food & wine, learning opportunities, memorable experience, natural and cultural destination resources, new emotions, features of the region, wine as attraction, wineries' history, wine producing process, contact with the winemaker, wine landscape, local lifestyle,
	How important is wine?	Part of daily and social life, part of professional career, a way of getting more knowledge (of wine, of the local culture), a way of having amusing experiences, the relationship with food, not important
	Wine consumption	At meals, regularly, at the weekends, in business contexts
	Importance of wine when choosing a holiday destination	Very important, complement to the trip, not important
	Offering wine	Family and friends
	Monthly spending on wine	€20–€40, €40—€60, €60—€80, €80–€100, €100–€200, €200–€300
	Culinary interests	Interest, little interest, no interest
	Search for local products	Yes
	Search for gastronomic experiences while travelling	Yes, no, would be interested
Gastronomic experiences in the regions of Bairrada and Dão	**Categories**	**Indicators**
	What attracted visitors to the region	Wine, gastronomy, social issues, the region and nature, cycling, identity, hospitality, geographical proximity, professional reasons, quality of products, friends' recommendation, spa and thermal treatments
	Most typical in the region	Wineries, grape varieties, history, nature, peace, architecture and decoration of local eateries, authenticity, sparkling wine, heritage, hospitality, the landscape, the vineyards' landscape, small cafés, local community, wine, gastronomy (suckling pig, regional desserts, codfish, *chanfana, ovos moles*), Bical grape variety, wine history, flowers, rural setting, regional wine features

What stands out in the experience	Food & wine experiences, gastronomy, wine, the hotel, nature, museums, relaxation and a sense of escapism, discovering the region, learning, the authenticity of the experiences, contact with the rural environment, cycling, hospitality
Contacts with different parties	Supply agents, residents, travel group, other tourists
Sensory experience	**Image** – Buildings' architecture, ancient buildings, colours, the shape of the environment and the vineyards, forest, the beauty of Curia Hotel, nature (the mountains), peace, rural features, the culture of sitting around the table at lunch, thermae, tranquillity, vines, the beauty of Viseu, wine, wineries, wine farms, quiet streets in rural areas, signs of lack of cleanliness in public places **Smell** – Gastronomy (grilled meat, cheese, sausages, strawberries), nature (eucalyptus trees, plants, grass, wet land), wine (wine must and associated cellar smell, the wood, the smell of Arinto, Touriga Nacional and other grape varieties) **Sound** – Nature (ducks, birds, dogs, water, the river, the rain), rural (the church bells, silence and quietness, people talking far away, tractors, low levels of sound produced by nature), wine (the cork coming out of the bottle), no elements **Taste** – Bittersweet, different flavours, food and wine pairing, fresh, hot and salty flavours, intense, spices, sweet, wine and gastronomy (suckling pig, *bairradino* dessert, sparkling wine, Baga and Bical grape varieties, strawberries, bread and regional cheese **Touch** – Barren touch, branches, linen, straw hat, glass, bottle of wine, dry land, grapes, vines, no elements
The learning experience	Wine (local wineries and local wine, regional grape varieties, wine production techniques, local producers' history and aspects related to the family businesses), gastronomy, food and wine pairing, cultural and historical traits of local products, the region, nature (landscape in the region), the authentic hospitality of the local people, safe country, social component, self-development
Overall experience satisfaction	Expectations met, expectations exceeded, no expectations
Experiencing local products	Traditional dishes (suckling pig, goatling, *ovos moles*, almond dessert, seasonal fruit, chestnuts,
Importance of gastronomy to the overall experience satisfaction	Important, not important, complement

Appendix 2 – *Emerging categories of analysis and indicators resulting from visitors' discourse in experiences in the Bairrada and Dão regions*

Categories	Indicators
Active participation	Wine workshops, culinary workshops, grape harvesting, the physical effort resulting from the harvest experience, getting to know the region, walking in the vineyards, tasting the wine, experiencing food & wine pairing, the need for more interactive activities, cycling, discovering the region
Interaction	Supply agents, staff, winemaker, knowledge transfer (guided, informative), the travel group, other tourists, the local community, the hospitality, empathy and authenticity of social contact, the linguistic barrier (between non-Portuguese speaking tourists and the locals), the physical environment (natural local resources)
Engagement	Cognitive engagement (learning about the wines, the region, the local culture, the winemaking process, food & wine pairing), emotional engagement (the feelings arising from being in the vineyards), cognitive and emotional engagement (self-reflexion, feeling immersed in the destination), other (local culture, history and authentic gastronomy)
Personalization	Having customized and private experiences, having closer attention from the staff/ winemaker during the experience
Aesthetics	Appreciating the architecture and decoration of local buildings/local eateries, the beauty of Curia Hotel, the small cafés, the beauty of the landscape
Authenticity	Of the experience, of the interaction with the staff/winemaker/ the locals/the rural environment, of the local food and wine

Appendix 3 – *Categories of analysis and indicators resulting from the supply agents' discourse in experiences in the Bairrada and Dão regions*

Categories	Indicators
Active participation	Gastronomic experiences, wine experiences, food & wine workshops, others
Interaction	Supply agents, local community, the travel group, networking, authentic experiences, storytelling
Engagement	Learning, arousal of emotions, entertainment, nostalgia, feeling like home, human proximity
Personalization	Customized experiences, details of the experiences, hospitality, nostalgia, closer attention to visitors