

Article

Discovering the Dynamics and Impact of Motorcycle Tourism: Insights into Rural Events, Cultural Interaction, and Sustainability

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Abstract

This study explores the dynamics of motorcycle tourism in rural areas and its potential contribution to sustainable and regenerative development. A bibliometric analysis of management-related publications was conducted using the Web of Science Core Collection, focusing on topics such as tourism, motivation, rurality, and motorcycling. VOSviewer software (version 1.6.20) was employed to support this analysis. Based on the literature, a theoretical framework was developed, leading to four research hypotheses that aimed to empirically examine the relationships between cultural motivation, community interaction, type of accommodation, event location, and tourist behaviour. To test these hypotheses, structured questionnaires were distributed in person during rural motorcycling events in Portugal, yielding a valid sample of 233 respondents. The data were analysed using SPSS 28 software via statistical methods to reduce dimensionality and identify latent structures, chi-square tests, and logistic regression. The results confirmed all four hypotheses, highlighting the importance of cultural motivation for return intentions, community interaction for perceived authenticity, accommodation type for destination recommendations, and event location for overall satisfaction. The study also identifies gender-related differences and reinforces the value of immersive, co-created experiences in enhancing the competitiveness of rural destinations. This theoretical contribution supports the advancement of motorcycle tourism as a sustainable niche while offering practical guidance for inclusive and regenerative tourism planning.

Keywords: motorcycle tourism; rural tourism; bibliometrics; sustainable development; cultural interaction; gender perspectives; authenticity and destination loyalty



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1. Introduction

The limited number of studies on the topic of motorcycle tourism, regardless of approach, may be attributed to several factors, including a lack of significant strategic

focus [1]. Existing research on motorcycling tends to concentrate mainly on large-scale events [2], specialised itineraries for motorcyclists [3], and motorsport competitions [4]. Little attention has been given to small-scale motorcycling events and gatherings. As noted by [5], there is a notable deficit of studies on such events in rural areas. Li reinforces this notion, stating that “Events can attract tourists and outside investment to rural communities, resulting in more employment, business opportunities, increased household income and tax revenue for local governments, improved infrastructure, restoration of heritage resources and beautification of the rural landscape” [6] (p. 3).

The aim of this article is, therefore, to address some of the gaps in the literature by shifting the focus from large-scale to small-scale motorcycling events in rural areas. An earlier study on the Moto Festa (Brazil), conducted by [7], showed that participants demonstrated little interest in exploring local tourist attractions, preferring instead to remain at the event venue. This type of gathering offers limited contribution to community development, functioning primarily as a social meeting point for motorcycle enthusiasts.

In contrast, motorcycle tourism in rural areas, particularly among groups interested in exploration, experiencing the destination, and enjoying outdoor activities, follows a different dynamic [8]. A study by Ramoa and Pires [9] confirmed that motorcyclists are motivated by goals such as interacting with residents (73.4%), visiting historical sites (61.0%), and consuming local products and services (47.7%), thus fostering cultural immersion, engagement with nature, and economic stimulation.

More broadly, this study contributes valuable insights by introducing underexplored dimensions such as gender, accommodation preferences, cultural interactions, and the motivations of motorcyclists. It also addresses issues related to seasonality and the promotion of rural areas with low tourist density.

To meet the overarching aim of this research, two research objectives (ROs) were developed:

RO1: Do motorcyclists demonstrate tendencies, motivations, and ambitions to visit rural areas, and can they act as agents of tourism development in these regions?

RO2: Do rural areas possess the necessary conditions to attract and foster the development of motorcycle tourism?

There is a growing trend marked by the emergence of travel agencies offering motorcycle tours—such as The Dream Riders Group. This study provides important insights for the creation of more personalised itineraries. The implementation of new projects aimed at attracting tourists, particularly those who engage in motorcycle tourism year-round, stands to benefit both visitors and rural communities.

2. Research Background

2.1. *Motorcycling: Beyond Travelling—A Culture of Freedom, Adventure, and Community*

The practice of motorcycling is widely recognised as a cultural phenomenon that extends beyond mere transportation; it serves as a medium of social interaction and personal expression. Motorcycling communities are characterised by a distinct lifestyle philosophy, unique social dynamics, and a sense of belonging among like-minded individuals. Once stigmatised and associated with delinquent groups, motorcyclists are now more favourably perceived in society [2,10,11]. Many riders are affiliated with motorcycle clubs, which are often tied to their place of residence or to regions with which they feel a strong sense of identity. These clubs organise events and gatherings that involve group rides, musical performances, and shared meals, fostering social cohesion.

A key component of motorcycling identity includes traditional black vests adorned with engraved symbols, as well as uniquely designed helmets that express individual and group affiliations [12–14]. Since the 1950s, motorcycle culture has experienced significant growth, becoming a prominent segment of the land transport and leisure industries. The

development of safer, more comfortable, and technologically advanced motorcycles has contributed to their increased adoption across diverse age groups and socioeconomic backgrounds [2,11–15].

Motorcycles are increasingly used for leisure rather than just for commuting. While they provide practical benefits in congested urban areas, their appeal has expanded to peripheral and rural regions, particularly those with varied topography such as mountains and open plains. These landscapes attract motorcyclists seeking scenic routes and less densely populated environments [15].

Motorcycle tourism has emerged as a specific form of travel in which the motorcycle is the primary means of transport. This includes independent travellers, club-organised group riders, sports enthusiasts, classic motorcycle riders (e.g., Harley-Davidson), and off-road adventurers. Participants may be active riders or passive passengers [15,16].

In this context, the journey often takes precedence over the destination. Enthusiasts value the sense of freedom, adrenaline, and immersive connection with the natural environment. They seek experiences that involve winding roads, new landscapes, cultural interactions, and a sense of discovery [13,17,18]. This niche of tourism—combining cultural, adventure, and sport dimensions—has gained considerable traction in recent years [11,17].

The excitement and freedom associated with motorcycling, the exploration of new destinations and cultures, and the sense of community and shared identity contribute to deeply personalised and meaningful experiences for participants [2,10,19]. These dynamics are further influenced by factors such as:

(i) Motivation and experience

The pursuit of freedom and adventure is a fundamental motivation for those who opt to travel by motorcycle. This liberty extends beyond the selection of routes, encompassing the opportunity for greater proximity to the natural environment, thereby facilitating access to locations that would otherwise be less readily accessible by an automobile. Notwithstanding the physical and psychological demands, including inclement weather and road conditions, the journey's exhilaration, the experience's authenticity, and the creation of enduring memories, the journey is found to be highly rewarding [12,15,17].

(ii) Cultural and landscape engagement

The motivation of motorcycle tourists is predicated on the desire to explore new locations and to experience routes that offer panoramic views. It is argued that such journeys, characterised by their winding nature, engender a profound sense of connection with the destinations and local communities they traverse. Popular locations for such trips include the Mae Hong Son Loop in Thailand, Route 66 in the United States, and the Alps in Europe [15,17].

(iii) Social media and community influence

The role of media and social media in influencing the motorcycle tourism culture is significant. A significant number of motorcyclists utilise various forms of documentation to record their journeys, including photographs, videos, and travelogues. These records serve a dual purpose, providing both information and inspiration to prospective travellers [12,15,17].

(iv) Logistics and planning

The planning of motorcycle trips necessitates a meticulous analysis of the route in addition to a comprehensive consideration of logistical factors. Such factors include, but are not limited to, fuel availability, lodging options, and culinary requirements. However, a proportion of travellers express a preference for spontaneous trips with minimal planning. These motorcyclists, who are most prevalent during the summer months, have been known

to travel for extended periods, traversing vast distances and utilising a diverse range of accommodation options, including hotels, campsites, and hostels. Their search for unexplored and unique places often takes them to rural areas, contributing significantly to the tourism development and economic impact of these less touristic places [2,11,12,15].

As is the case with other types of events, the motivations for participating in these types of events vary greatly. Larger events are defined as mass gatherings of motorcycle enthusiasts, where thousands of motorcyclists gather in a specific location to celebrate motorcycle culture. Events characteristically comprise a variety of activities, including, but not limited to, motorcycle parades, concerts, races, and exhibitions. The event portfolio is identified as the primary motivation for participants [20]. Regarding motorcycle gatherings in rural areas, participants are primarily looking for individual or small-group rides, allowing riders to explore multiple destinations and routes. The primary focus of this endeavour is the journey itself, encompassing the exploration of novel geographical and cultural environments and the accumulation of personal experiences throughout the expedition [21].

2.2. Motorcycle Tourism in Rural Areas: Economic Growth, Socio-Cultural Dynamics, and Environmental Considerations

Motorcycle tourism in rural areas has demonstrated a notable capacity to contribute to the development of communities and regions that face limitations in infrastructure, accessibility, and overall tourist appeal. While the economic impact of this tourism niche is considerable, it is equally important to address the accompanying socio-cultural and environmental challenges [22–24].

Economically, motorcycle tourism plays a pivotal role in revitalising less-visited rural areas by stimulating local economies, generating income through accommodation, food services, and transportation, and enhancing employment opportunities. From a socio-cultural perspective, the interaction between motorcyclists and local communities often fosters the organisation of cultural events, promotes the preservation of local traditions, and facilitates intercultural exchange.

Although environmental concerns remain—particularly in ecologically sensitive regions—there is growing awareness among motorcyclists regarding the need for environmental conservation, especially as many seek out pristine natural settings for their journeys [25–27].

Despite its potential, academic literature examining the intersection between motorcycling and tourism, particularly within rural contexts, remains limited [10,11,18,19,28,29]. Thus, there is a pressing need to better understand the motivations, experiences, and impacts associated with motorcycle tourism in rural areas.

2.3. Sustainability and Cultural Interaction in Motorcycle Tourism

The principle of sustainability has become a core pillar in the development of tourism. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization [30], sustainable tourism must fully consider its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities. Butler [31] also emphasises that sustainability requires the management of resources in a way that allows economic, social, and aesthetic needs to be met while safeguarding cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life-support systems.

In the context of motorcycle tourism, this concept requires an integrated perspective that encompasses environmental, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions. As Gronau et al. [32] point out, motorcycle tourism can follow various paths towards more sustainable models, particularly when it involves organised events, integration with local economies, and culturally sensitive route planning. However, the authors also caution

against romanticising notions of freedom and mobility without acknowledging the ecological and social pressures associated with this form of tourism.

From an ecological standpoint, the use of internal combustion motorcycles raises concerns about CO₂ emissions and landscape degradation. Practices such as illegal off-road riding and the lack of trail regulation can negatively affect fragile rural ecosystems [33,34]. However, the growing adoption of electric motorcycles and the development of environmentally guided routes indicate a gradual shift towards more sustainable practices [35].

Economically, motorcycle tourism has shown a positive impact on rural economies, generating income through accommodation, food services, events, and mechanical support. Literature highlights the role of motorcycle events in delivering sustained economic benefits, especially when local communities are actively involved [36,37].

From a socio-cultural perspective, “cultural interaction” refers to the reciprocal and dynamic engagement between visitors and host communities, including the exchange of traditions, values, and everyday practices. This interaction enhances the tourist experience and contributes to the co-creation of meaning and memory. In tourism contexts, cultural practices such as the consumption of food function as identity narratives, where belonging is negotiated and symbolic interpretations are constructed [38]. According to Richards [39], authentic encounters arise when locals are no longer passive hosts but become active protagonists in the tourist experience, thereby reinforcing cultural agency and fostering meaningful exchanges.

Sustainability in motorcycle tourism extends beyond emission reduction and includes critical social and cultural dimensions. The integration of sustainability, cultural interaction, and gender equality forms a solid theoretical framework for analysing the impact of motorcycle tourism in rural settings, thus promoting a more holistic and responsible approach to tourism development.

2.4. Gender Perspective in Motorcycle Tourism and Social Sustainability

Furthermore, gender dynamics are also central to sustainability, as tourism practices have the potential to either reinforce or challenge existing inequalities. According to the European Institute for Gender Equality [40], the term “gender perspective” refers to the systematic consideration of differences in the conditions, situations, and needs of all genders in any policy or action. In the tourism domain, this requires acknowledging that experiences, motivations, and access to opportunities may vary by gender, which are shaped by cultural, economic, and social structures.

In the context of motorcycle tourism, adopting a gender perspective enables the identification of barriers such as perceived safety risks, cultural stereotypes, inadequate infrastructure, and unequal representation in event promotion. This aligns with the broader goals of social sustainability, which prioritise equity, diversity, and inclusion. As noted by Pritchard et al. [41], a gender-sensitive approach is essential for understanding how identities are constructed and represented in tourism. The authors of this study advocate a critical analysis of power dynamics and representation, especially in traditionally male-dominated sectors such as adventure and motorcycle tourism.

Research suggests that female participation in this niche is on the rise, which is often motivated by desires for personal empowerment, autonomy, and affirmation [42]. Therefore, applying a gender perspective is vital to ensure that tourism development does not perpetuate exclusionary practices but instead fosters more equitable and representative experiences for all travellers.

Gender Dynamics in Motorcycle Tourism: Motivations and Cultural Transformations

It is important to note that behaviour is not exclusively driven by fundamental needs; some actions are prompted by external stimuli, which can occur without intrinsic motivation [43]. Among motorcycle tourists, this external influence is particularly notable, especially due to the enduring stereotype that associates motorcycling primarily with men rather than women [44,45]. Contrary to the common assumption that women's involvement in motorcycling is a recent phenomenon, historical records indicate otherwise. In 1916, the Van Buren sisters embarked on a transcontinental motorcycle journey to demonstrate women's capabilities and to advocate for their participation in the war effort, aiming to prove that women possessed skills equal to those of men (*This Day in Automotive History*, 2024).

Throughout the history of motorcycling, numerous women have played significant roles, including Clare Consuelo Sheridan, Bessie Stringfield, and Dot Robinson. These figures are widely regarded as pioneers of women's emancipation in motorcycling, having challenged dominant male power structures. As Schouten and McAlexander [45] point out, the prevailing cultural stereotype that portrays women as mere accessories figuratively "attached" to the back of male riders' bikes is a persistent issue (p. 55).

Despite progress in recent decades, the empowerment of women in motorcycling remains a crucial concern. This theme is prominent in several studies and is often cited as a key motivator for female motorcyclists. Miyake [43], in her book *The Gendered Motorcycle: Representations in Society, Media and Popular Culture* (I.B. Tauris), explores how media portrayals often depict women as passengers rather than riders, reinforcing gender stereotypes and contributing to the lower rates of motorcycle ownership among women. Many female riders are driven by motivations such as the desire for self-affirmation and equal recognition within the motorcycling community.

In contrast, male motorcyclists' motivations often align with the "lone wolf" archetype, which seeks to affirm their individuality within their peer group and to distinguish themselves from female riders. For example, Terry et al. [46], in their study on TT races, observed that such events are typically perceived as male-dominated domains.

This gender-based divergence in motivation reflects broader socio-cultural narratives that shape motorcyclists' identities and experiences, influencing their participation in motorcycle tourism. In recent years, however, perceptions of gender roles within motorcycle culture have evolved considerably. The traditional "macho" stereotype has increasingly given way to more inclusive and diverse expressions of identity. Burbano-Valente et al. [47] discuss this evolution, proposing a redefinition of male identity that moves beyond essentialist perspectives. They argue for alternative ways of being a man, emphasising introspection and authenticity over physical dominance or stereotypical masculinity. Their study suggests that by transcending the constant need to perform masculinity, men can discover more meaningful and genuine expressions of selfhood.

These motivations, often differentiated by gender, were systematised based on the literature analysed and are presented in Table 1:

Table 1. Differences in motorcycle tourism according to gender.

Male Gender	Female Gender
Adventure and Thrill-seeking	Affirmation and Breaking with Stereotypes
Connection and Companionship	Generating links with a community
Freedom and Independence	The search for the Self and Personal Growth
Technical and Mechanical Curiosity	Proximity to Nature and the Environment

Source: Prepared by the authors based on [48–53].

2.5. Revitalising Rural Tourism: Revealing the True Spirit of Motorcycle Tourism

Motorcycle gatherings are increasingly establishing themselves as a niche within the events market. In the aftermath of COVID-19, there has been a notable shift in preferences towards more spacious and liberating environments, an evolution that is particularly evident in the growing popularity of motorcycle tourism [12,15]. When addressing motivations, it is important to recognise that they can vary widely and are not universally applicable. These motivations are shaped by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, including cultural context, personal needs, and individual experiences, all of which contribute to the diverse profiles of motorcycle tourists.

Rather than focusing on isolated traits, it is essential to understand the broader profile of motorcycle tourists, who tend to exhibit common motivations and behaviours. These are predominantly characterised by a desire for social interaction, adventure, and the pursuit of novel experiences, as supported by several studies [3,24,28,54]. However, the motorcyclist segment continues to be subject to persistent stigma. This stereotype has been reinforced by media portrayals, notably Walt Becker's film *Wild Hogs* (2007), which depicted motorcyclists as "antisocial" individuals engaging in "pseudo-deviant" behaviour and acts of "terror" [55]. Such representations have shaped public perceptions, but more recent research has aimed to reveal the genuine intentions and motivations of individuals who identify as motorcyclists. As Scol [2] points out, motorcycle tourism has long been ignored or dismissed by regions and tourism professionals due to a negative perception of motorcycles and their riders (n.p.).

It is worth noting that rural areas are closely tied to traditional cultural norms, which are often characterised by deep-rooted communal behaviours [53,56–58]. Therefore, when groups of motorcyclists arrive, their reputation may initially provoke feelings of insecurity but also curiosity among residents [59]. Recent studies [14,55,60,61] have contributed to a gradual shift in perception, although further research is still needed to fully understand this tourism phenomenon and to raise awareness of the potential benefits motorcycle tourism can bring to rural communities and adventure-seeking travellers alike [24]. As Artal-Tur et al. [62] argue, tourism holds the power to transform remote areas into thriving destinations, leading to significant improvements in the local quality of life.

Motorcyclists are particularly drawn to rural areas due to their affinity with nature, as previously discussed. Exploring the countryside by motorcycle offers opportunities to enjoy scenic landscapes and green routes, which have been shown to evoke feelings of exhilaration and vitality [63]. These emotional experiences are among the primary motivations for motorcycle tourists. They are also driven by a desire for freedom and independence—core traits of this form of travel. Riding a motorcycle allows for full control over the journey: the itinerary, rest stops, chosen routes, and interactions with local populations. As Provetti describes: "the experience of being a rider is such that the rider and the machine become one entity. This is most acutely experienced when the rider is astride a motorcycle. The wheels are analogous to the legs, the handlebars to the arms, and the engine to the heart" [64] (p. 15).

In review, the appeal of motorcycle tourism lies in the unique combination of thrilling adventure, cultural immersion, and the profound sense of freedom it provides [2].

2.6. Terms That Bring Together Tourism, Motivation, Rural Areas, and Motorcycle—Clusters of Terms from the General Literature

A bibliometric analysis was conducted using VOSviewer software as a preliminary step in the research study, with the objective of exploring patterns and trends related to motorcycle tourism. VOSviewer, as defined by Van Eck and Waltman [65], is a tool designed to construct and visualise bibliometric networks. The analysis focused on literature indexed in the Clarivate

Analytics Web of Science Core Collection and Scopus databases, particularly from journals and conference proceedings.

This study employed bibliometric techniques to examine publications in the field of management, specifically addressing topics such as tourism, motivation, rural areas, and motorcycling. A minimum co-occurrence threshold of two was adopted in the VOSviewer analysis based on the total number of articles retrieved (42). This threshold was selected to ensure the inclusion of relevant terms for thematic clustering while maintaining analytical depth and data representativeness.

Clustering techniques yielded four distinct thematic groups, visualised in red, green, blue, and yellow. These colours represent the semantic proximity of the terms, as determined by their frequency and contextual co-occurrence within the literature. The clusters identified through VOSviewer constitute a qualitative methodological component of this study, offering insights into key themes and research priorities. These findings informed the design of the subsequent research stages, including questionnaire development and quantitative analysis.

Figure 1 illustrates the clusters obtained with the VOSviewer software (version 1.6.20), demonstrating the thematic organisation of the most recurrent terms in the literature analysed.

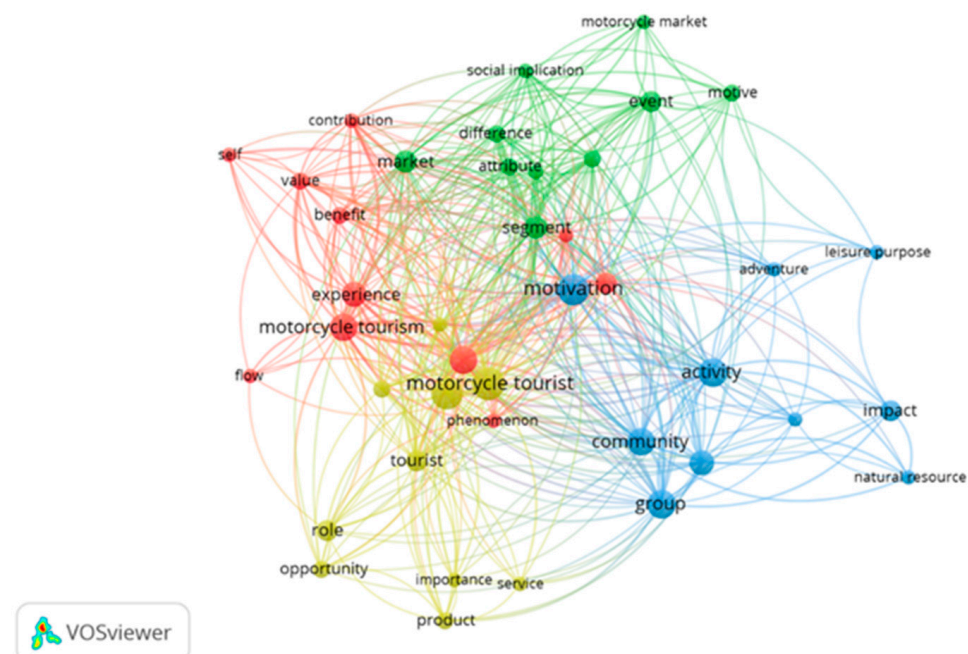


Figure 1. Clusters of terms in the general literature as identified through the VOSviewer software. Source: Own elaboration.

The yellow cluster highlights the importance of service, product quality, and opportunities. Particular emphasis is placed on incorporating elements that enhance the hospitality experience. Scherhag et al. define opportunity as “the exploration of new and unfamiliar regions and/or cultures, which is a crucial aspect of adventure motorcycle tours” [13] (p. 324). The importance of service is illustrated by the assertion that “certification as a motorcycle-friendly hotel can demonstrate competence and simplify accommodation options for motorcyclists” [13] (p. 323) and includes practical amenities such as “the provision of helmet storage, as exemplified by the Krimmler Falls in Austria” [13] (p. 325).

The blue cluster focuses on key motivational drivers among motorcyclists, including adventure, connection with nature, and social interaction. Ramoa et al. confirm these findings, noting that “the most motivating factors for motorcycling include interactions with nature and the appreciation of beauty (79.0%), adrenaline and excitement (72.9%), enjoyment of shared activities (60.0%), and overcoming challenges (50.7%)” [28] (p. 413).

These motivations play a critical role in shaping motorcyclists' destination choices and overall experience.

The green cluster emphasises the need to understand the specific characteristics of this niche market. Providing appropriate services to this demographic requires a nuanced approach. As Sykes and Kelly (2016) observe, "rural tours, state/national parks, and historic sites/churches are potentially attractive activities for motorcyclists" [24] (p. 553).

The red cluster reinforces the positive contribution of motorcycle events to rural development. As Scol points out, enthusiasts frequently extend their stays in nearby accommodation during events, thereby contributing to local tourism and facilitating exploration of the region [2] (n.p.).

The bibliometric analysis reveals four dominant thematic domains in the study of motorcycle tourism within rural contexts. The yellow cluster underscores the relevance of service quality and hospitality as essential elements of the motorcyclist experience. The blue cluster centres on motivational factors such as contact with nature, thrill seeking, and social engagement. The green cluster highlights the value of natural and cultural heritage. Lastly, the red cluster demonstrates the economic benefits of motorcycle tourism for rural development. Collectively, these themes confirm the multidimensional nature of the phenomenon, validating the variables selected for analysis in this study. Moreover, they provide a strong empirical foundation for the design of the data collection instrument and the formulation of the research hypotheses.

2.7. Harnessing the Potential: Motorcycle Tourism in Rural Areas and Its Impacts on Local Economies and Culture

The role of motorcycle tourism in rural areas, and its broader impact on the tourism industry, have been the subject of study in a variety of ways by various authors [17,24,66,67].

- (i) Economic impact: The economic impact of motorcycle tourism on rural tourism has been demonstrated to be a significant positive influence. The expenditure of motorcycle tourists on a variety of services and products, ranging from accommodation to local crafts, has been demonstrated to inject vital resources into rural economies [63,68].
- (ii) Sustainable development: The integration of local business offerings, including wineries and artisans, aligns with the sustainable development facet of motorcycle tourism. This approach has been demonstrated to support local economies whilst also helping to preserve the local culture and environment [66].
- (iii) Development of infrastructure and the formulation of strategic plans: These are of supreme importance. The necessity of investing in heritage restoration and infrastructure, in addition to the strategic positioning of motorcycle tourism within national tourism strategies, underscores the significance of infrastructure development and meticulous planning to enhance the experience of motorcyclists and provide support to local communities [17,66].
- (iv) Understanding the motivations and interests of motorcycle tourists in order to effectively attract them to a destination: It has been demonstrated that merely hosting events is insufficient to appeal to this demographic; a more profound understanding of their unique motivations and interests is necessary. This understanding is crucial to the creation of tailored experiences that meet the specific needs of motorcyclists, ensuring prolonged stays and repeat visits [24].
- (v) Cultural and community impact: The observation that motorcyclists often extend their stay beyond the duration of events and explore local areas indicates potential for greater cultural exchange and community engagement, leading to a deeper appreciation of rural lifestyles and traditions [66].

It is essential for rural destinations to understand and address the specific needs of motorcyclists in order to effectively attract and satisfy this growing segment. This requires the provision of tailored accommodation, mechanical assistance, and opportunities for cultural immersion. Such an approach not only enhances the overall tourist experience but also aligns with broader goals of economic development, cultural preservation, and sustainable tourism practices in rural areas.

This study was grounded in a comprehensive review of the literature, which informed the subsequent empirical investigation. A structured questionnaire was carefully developed to explore participants' motivations, perceived impacts, and sociodemographic profiles. Particular emphasis was placed on the role of gender and the specificities of the rural context, as detailed in the following sections.

2.8. Research Hypotheses

Considering the above theoretical framework, it is important to empirically test the relationships between the variables associated with motorcycle tourism in rural areas. The research hypotheses presented below focus on key aspects such as cultural motivation, community interaction, type of accommodation, accessibility, safety, and the perception of authenticity. Formulating these hypotheses aims to deepen our understanding of the factors influencing the behaviour and satisfaction of motorcyclists as tourists in rural destinations.

Hypothesis 1. *Cultural motivation is positively associated with motorcyclists' intention to return to the rural destination.*

This hypothesis is based on the work of Cater [12], Scherhag et al. [13] and Ramírez-Hurtado et al. [17], who emphasise the significance of cultural engagement and exploring new landscapes as motivators for returning.

Hypothesis 2. *Interaction with the local community positively influences the perception of the authenticity of the tourist experience.*

Richards [39] and Zhang et al. [63] argue that engagement with local customs and traditions enhances the authenticity of the experience, contributing to the creation of meaningful memories.

Hypothesis 3. *The type of accommodation chosen by motorcyclists is associated with their sociodemographic profile, particularly their age.*

Pritchard and Morgan [41] and Miyake [42] argue that variables such as age and gender influence tourist preferences and behaviours, such as in their accommodation choice, comfort, and travel style.

Hypothesis 4. *Perceived accessibility and road safety in rural areas are positively associated with the intention to return to the destination.*

Sukanya [66] and Sykes & Kelly [24] demonstrate that the perception of safety and ease of access is a determining factor in visitor satisfaction and loyalty in rural contexts.

In conclusion, the analysed theoretical contributions highlight the potential of motorcycle tourism to promote sustainable development in rural areas. There is a clear need to integrate environmental, cultural, social, and economic dimensions into tourism strategies to promote an inclusive and regenerative approach. These hypotheses form the basis for the methodological model presented below.

3. Methodology and Methods

The methodology of this study includes, as a first step, a bibliometric analysis using the VOSviewer software. This qualitative method was essential to identify clusters of terms frequently associated with tourism, motivation, rural areas, and motorcycles in publications indexed in the Web of Science and Scopus databases. The results of this analysis helped to guide the development of the questionnaire and the theoretical framework of the study.

To achieve the objectives of the study, a structured questionnaire with closed answers was drawn up, taking into account the five assumptions (researchable, relevant, informative, reliable, and effective) and the four steps of the conceptual model (an outline of research elements, a selection of characteristics (variables) of these elements, a description of the nature of the relationships between the variables, and the formulation of hypotheses and suppositions based on the above) suggested by [69], as well as by [70,71].

Considering the characteristics of the study, i.e., small biker events in rural areas with low tourist density and during the off-season, the questionnaire was administered between October 2022 and April 2023 to the GAMA (Grupo de Amigos Motard's de Abrantes), the participants in the Moto Churrasco event (Grupo Motard Amigos Serranos de Seia), the GMFEQ (Grupo Motard Foge com Elas de Queluz), the Bikers of Lapa (Lapa) and the regional gathering of "Os Foquins" (Moto Clube da Nazaré). The questionnaires were carried out face to face, and 233 valid responses were obtained (sample size $n = 233$), which can be considered a significant/representative size given the typology of the event and the fact that the responses were obtained face to face.

For the questions on the Likert scale, an inverted four-point classification was used, where 1 = Very important, 2 = Important, 3 = More or less important, and 4 = Not at all important.

In terms of methods, descriptive methods were used to characterise the sample and to assess the existence of relationships between some of the characteristics under study. To reduce the size of the different characteristics, an exploratory data analysis was carried out (PCA—principal component analysis, with the factors estimated on the common variance), and to assess the dimensions/variables that could influence the intention to repeat/return to the event in future editions, a binary logistic regression was applied (1—Yes; 0—No).

3.1. Analysis of the Results

Based on the type of questionnaire and the variables involved, along with the methods previously discussed, the results were analysed as follows, using the SPSS 28 version software by IBM.

3.2. Sample Profile

In terms of the characterisation of the sample profile (see Table 2), the majority of the respondents were male (68.7%), aged 44 or over (52.8%), and had a low or medium level of education (until lower secondary (112) or until upper secondary (92)), 46.4% worked in the service or agricultural industries and 55.4% intended to sleep in tents at the venue. It should be noted that the men were more than twice as numerous as the women, that only 2.6% were aged between 18 and 24, and that 24.8% had higher education or were specialists.

After quality control analysis of the data and after characterising the sample, several cross-analyses were made between different variables to assess patterns that could be established.

In this way, given that these are nominal/ordinary variables/characteristics, we used measures of the association like the coefficients phi, Cramer's V , and the contingency coefficient, which indicated that there were statistically significant relationships/associations between age and the type of accommodation in this activity ($\phi = 0.686$; Cramer's $V = 0.307$;

contingency coefficient = 0.566; all with a p -value = 0.016 (< 0.05)); between education level and the kind of participant in the activity ($\phi = 0.363$; Cramer's $V = 0.257$; contingency coefficient = 0.341; all with a p -value = 0.001 (< 0.05)); between age and the kind of participant in the activity ($\phi = 0.477$; Cramer's $V = 0.238$; contingency coefficient = 0.430; all with a p -value = 0.001 (< 0.05)); between gender and the kind of participant in the activity ($\phi = 0.760$; Cramer's $V = 0.760$; contingency coefficient = 0.605; all with a p -value = 0.001 (< 0.05)); between gender and answers to the question "When you come to this type of meeting, do you limit yourself to the event space or do you take the opportunity to get to know the region?" ($\phi = 0.175$; Cramer's $V = 0.175$; contingency coefficient = 0.173; all with a p -value = 0.028 (< 0.05)); and between the type of accommodation in this activity and the intention to come back and recommend this event ($\phi = 0.459$; Cramer's $V = 0.324$; contingency coefficient = 0.417; all with a p -value = 0.028 (< 0.05)).

Table 2. Sociodemographic data.

Characteristic	Classification	Total Sample (n = 233)	Percentage %
Gender	Female	73	31.3
	Male	160	68.7
Age	18–24	6	2.6
	25–34	29	12.4
	34–44	75	32.2
	44–54	79	33.9
	55–64	36	15.5
	Over 64 years	8	3.4
Education level	Until lower secondary	112	48.1
	Until upper secondary	92	39.5
	Higher education	29	12.4
Employment	Higher level/specialist in intellectual and technical professions	29	12.4
	Specialised technical	45	19.3
	Employee of services/trade/administrative or employee in industry or agriculture	108	46.4
	Other professional occupation	28	12.0
	Student/retired/domestic/inactive	23	9.9
	Type of accommodation in this activity	Local accommodation	20
Caravan	14	6.0	
Hostel	8	3.4	
Hotel	36	15.5	
Tent at the event venue	129	55.4	
Home family/friends	26	11.2	

Source: Own elaboration.

In this context, we can emphasise the influence that age, gender, and education level may have on some of the participants' decision-making, such as the type of accommodation or the definition of the type of participant (e.g., biker, resident, or pillion). Furthermore, the type of accommodation influences whether people intend to return to and recommend the event.

3.3. Exploratory Data Analysis

Since the model used had never been studied before, we resorted to factor analysis (exploratory data analysis; EDA) to reduce the dimensionality and to identify latent structures. This subsequently allowed us to build a binary logistic regression model for predicting future participation in the event.

Given the different scales used, we first carried out an internal consistency analysis using Cronbach's alpha [72] which, with a value of 0.841, shows an overall internal consistency. The results obtained by applying principal component analysis (Table 3 below) show that the technique applied is appropriate because the inverse correlation matrix is very close to the diagonal matrix when comparing the observed linear correlation coefficients with the partial correlation coefficients (Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin test; KMO = 0.809 (> 0.5), which is a good indicator. Marôco [73] mentioned that the correlation matrix is different from the identity matrix (Bartlett's test of sphericity; $\chi^2(78) = 1368.459$; Sig. (*p*-value) < 0.001).

Table 3. Factors and items.

Factors and Items	Loadings by Factor	Total Variance Explained (%)	Cronbach's Alpha by Factor
F ₁ —Cultural		38.466	0.877
Cultural heritage of the region	0.885		
Intangible heritage of the region	0.884		
Historical heritage	0.867		
Landscape and nature	0.653		
Contact with the culture of the region	0.548		
Knowing new places	0.506		
F ₂ —Hospitality		11.284	0.617
Socialising	0.798		
Hospitality	0.707		
Adventure	0.532		
Making new friendships	0.522		
F ₃ —Location		8.474	0.671
Programme of the event	0.832		
Location	0.830		
F ₄ —Climate		8.058	
Climate	0.843		
KMO		0.809	
Bartlett's test of sphericity	$\chi^2(78) = 1368.459$; Sig. (<i>p</i> -value) < 0.001		
Cronbach's alpha total		0.841	

Source: Own elaboration.

By using the Kaiser criterion (with eigenvalues greater than 1) and the varimax rotation method (orthogonal method), the four factors obtained are shown in Table 3; these explain a total variance of 68.3%, which can be considered good [73] given the typology of the data. Applying Cronbach's alpha [72] to each of the factors obtained, except for F₄ because it consists of only one item, the results show that they are reasonably internally consistent, which leads to the conclusion that they are useful for the regression model.

3.4. Binary Regression Model

As mentioned above, one of the aims of the study is to find out whether participants intend to take part in this type of event again in the future. For both organisational and local structures, this is a pertinent question because we can influence future decision-making at the regional level. To answer the question, we constructed a multivariable logistic regression model in which the response variable Y is a binary (or dichotomous) variable with two values (1—Yes (intend to return/repeat) and 0—No (do not intend to return/repeat)) and one set of p covariates (x_1, x_2, \dots, x_p , and $X^T = (1, x_1, x_2, \dots, x_p)$), where the model is given by the expression that defines the probability of the event of interest occurring, i.e., by:

$$\pi(x) = P(Y = 1) = \frac{\exp(\beta_0 + \sum_{i=1}^p \beta_i x_i)}{1 + \exp(\beta_0 + \sum_{i=1}^p \beta_i x_i)} \quad (1)$$

where β_i is the coefficient associated with the covariate x_i .

Because the covariates can be nominal, ordinal, or in scale, Hosmer and Lemeshow [74] recommend constructing a set of dummy or coding variables, and this work was carried out as described in Table 4. These variables are defined as follows:

$$D_{jl} = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if the individual fulfils the category } l \text{ of the covariate } j \\ 0, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad (2)$$

Table 4. Coding of the dummy variables.

Categorical Variable Codings		Parameter Coding				
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Age ($j = 1$)	18–24 (D_{11})	0	0	0	0	0
	25–34 (D_{12})	1	0	0	0	0
	35–44 (D_{13})	0	1	0	0	0
	45–54 (D_{14})	0	0	1	0	0
	55–64 (D_{15})	0	0	0	1	0
	>64 years (D_{16})	0	0	0	0	1
What type of accommodation do you use when carrying out this activity? ($j = 2$)	Local accommodation (D_{21})	0	0	0	0	0
	Caravan (D_{22})	1	0	0	0	0
	Hostel (D_{23})	0	1	0	0	0
	Hotel (D_{24})	0	0	1	0	0
	Tent at the event venue (D_{25})	0	0	0	1	0
	Home family/friends (D_{26})	0	0	0	0	1
How many times have you been to this event? ($j = 3$)	1 to 3 (D_{31})	0	0	0	-	-
	3 to 5 (D_{32})	1	0	0	-	-
	5 to 8 (D_{33})	0	1	0	-	-
	More than 8 (D_{34})	0	0	1	-	-
How often do you perform this activity yearly? ($j = 4$)	1 to 3 times (D_{41})	0	0	0	-	-
	3 to 5 times (D_{42})	1	0	0	-	-
	5 to 8 times (D_{43})	0	1	0	-	-
	More than 8 times (D_{44})	0	0	1	-	-

Source: Own elaboration.

Thus, the multivariable logistic regression model with p covariates in which the j th covariate is discrete, with k_j categories, is defined in terms of the logit function by

$$g(X) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \dots + \sum_{l=1}^{k_j-1} \beta_{jl} D_{jl} + \dots + \beta_p x_p \tag{3}$$

where D_{jl} denotes the dummy variable and β_{jl} is the coefficient, with both being associated with category l of the covariate j by rewriting (1) as follows:

$$\pi(x) = P(Y = 1) = \frac{\exp(g(X))}{1 + \exp(g(X))} \tag{4}$$

In Table 4 we show the coding used for the covariates included in the initial model.

Therefore, we included the following covariates in the initial model: gender (G), age (D_{11}), type of accommodation used when carrying out this activity (D_{21}), number of times at this event (D_{31}), yearly frequency of this activity (D_{41}), and the four factors obtained by the PCA (cultural (F_1), hospitality (F_2), location (F_3), and climate (F_4)).

Using the stepwise forward algorithm Wald in the SPSS 29.0 software, and the likelihood ratio statistic, we obtained the denominated null model (Table 5). The results allow us to conclude that the model depends only on the constant ($\beta_0 = 3.475$) that is statistically significant (Wald test = 81.972; p -value = 0.001 (<0.05)).

Table 5. Null model.

Variables in the Equation		β	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig. (p-Value)	Exp(β) (OR)
Step 0	Constant	3.475	0.384	81.972	1	0.001	32.286

Source: Own elaboration; OR—odds ratio.

Considering the independent term in the model, the algorithm reached the stopping criterion after seven interactions. In addition to the constant, the covariates included in the model were cultural (F_1) and the type of accommodation used when carrying out this activity (D_{25}) (Table 6), which can be written as

$$\pi(x) = P(Y = 1) = \frac{e^{2.259-0.941F_1+0.498D_{25}}}{1 + e^{2.259-0.941F_1+0.498D_{25}}} \tag{5}$$

Table 6. Variables in the equation with a constant.

Variables in the Equation		β	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig. (p-Value)	Exp(β) (Odds Ratio)	95% C.I. for EXP(β)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1 a	Cultural (F_1)	-1.096	0.297	13.646	1	0.001	0.334	0.187	0.598
	Constant	4.282	0.615	48.525	1	0.001	72.405		
Step 2 b	Cultural (F_1)	-0.941	0.294	10.222	1	0.001	0.390	0.219	0.695
	Type of accommodation used when carrying out this activity (D_{25})	0.498	0.242	4.230	1	0.040	1.646	1.024	2.646
	Constant	2.259	1.000	5.102	1	0.024	9.578		

Source: Own elaboration. a. Variable(s) entered in step 1: REGR factor score 1 for analysis 1. b. Variable(s) entered in step 2: type of accommodation used when carrying out this activity.

To test the adequacy of the model, we used the Hosmer and Lemeshow test [74]. In the first step, the fit was not verified (we rejected the null hypothesis; p -value = 0.008 (<0.05)), but in the second step, the model’s fit to the data was verified as the null hypothesis was not rejected (p -value = 0.337 (> 0.05)) (see Table 7).

Table 7. Model adequacy test.

Hosmer and Lemeshow Test			
Step	Chi-Square	df	Sig. (p -Value)
1	15.644	5	0.008
2	7.948	7	0.337

Source: Own elaboration.

On the other hand, to measure the adherence capacity of the model, we used the pseudo R^2 of Nagelkerke (R^2 Nag = 0.336; $-2\log$ likelihood = 43.584) and the R^2 of Cox & Snell (R^2 CS = 0.079; $-2\log$ likelihood = 43.584), which are indicators of the quality of the fit. From the values obtained, we can see that the model’s adherence is reasonable in the R^2 of Nagelkerke (explaining 33.6% of the event’s repetition) but is very low in the R^2 of Cox & Snell (only explaining 7.9% of the event’s repetition).

Considering the poor results obtained with the first model, a new model was built without the constant (β_0), as it seemed to us to be misinterpreted or insignificant in the context of the study. Under the above conditions, a new model was obtained, presented below in Table 8, in which a change can be highlighted in the number of the predictors, which consequently led to a better specification and a significant improvement in the results, although the precision of the results was poor due to the amplitude of the confidence intervals obtained for D_{21} .

Table 8. Variables in the equation without a constant.

Variables in the Equation		β	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig. (p -Value)	Exp(β) (Odds Ratio)	95% C.I. for EXP(β)	
								Lower	Upper
Final Step	Cultural (F_1)	-0.636	0.279	5.189	1	0.023	0.530	0.258	1.087
	Local accommodation (D_{21})	3.204	1.230	6.785	1	0.009	24.640	1.036	585.921
	Hostel (D_{23})	3.547	1.026	11.943	1	0.001	34.714	2.468	488.351
	Hotel (D_{24})	4.370	0.748	34.130	1	0.001	79.050	11.511	542.877

Source: Own elaboration.

As before, and from Table 8, the model can be rewritten as

$$\pi(x) = P(Y = 1) = \frac{e^{-0.636F_1 + 3.204D_{21} + 3.547D_{23} + 4.370D_{24}}}{1 + e^{-0.636F_1 + 3.204D_{21} + 3.547D_{23} + 4.370D_{24}}} \tag{6}$$

For example, all other covariates being equal, a participant with an index of 3 on the cultural scale (F_1 ranges from -1.71 to 4.37) and staying in local accommodation (1) has a 78.52% probability of repeating the event. In addition, a participant with an index of 3 (0, zero) on the cultural scale and staying in a hostel (1) has a probability of revisiting the event of 83.74%, *ceteris paribus*. Likewise, a participant with an index of 3 on the cultural scale and staying in a hotel (1), *ceteris paribus* for the other covariates, has a 92.14% chance of taking part in the event again. Therefore, it can be deduced that as the convenience/comfort of the accommodation increases, participants are more likely to return to the event in future years.

By using the Hosmer and Lemeshow test, it can be confirmed that the model fits the data (p -value = 0.062 (> 0.05); Table 9) and by using the Cox & Snell and Nagelkerke tests (Table 10), it can be confirmed that the new model explains 67.8% and 90.4%, respectively, of the intentions to return to the event.

Table 9. Model adequacy test.

Hosmer and Lemeshow Test			
Step	Chi-Square	df	Sig. (p -Value)
1	9.800	3	0.020
2	13.453	7	0.062

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 10. Coefficients of the quality of the model fit.

Model Summary			
Step	−2 Log Likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	64.705	0.670	0.893
2	59.023	0.678	0.904

Source: Own elaboration.

From the model (6), it can be concluded that the significant influences on the decision to repeat the event are the cultural aspects offered and the types of accommodation, which are understandable given the typology of the participants in terms of age. Most of them are middle-aged and are no longer willing to sleep in tents, for example, and are more orientated towards cultural aspects and to shop only if necessary.

3.5. Factors Influencing Destination Choice and Visitor Retention

The analysis of the data collected allowed us to observe that cultural heritage and historical attractions are important in the choice of destinations by motorcyclists. These results suggest an elevated interest among motorcycle tourists in destinations with significant cultural and historical heritage.

The PCA shows that the component aggregating indicators related to culture is the one with the largest weight (38.47% of the 68.30% of total variance explained). It is consequently presumed that the inclusion of local cultural elements in tourism strategies can improve visitor retention and promote longer stays. This evidence indicates that the integration of cultural elements integrated into the tourism offer need to be incorporated, for example, through the creation of themed routes or historical reconstructions.

Additionally, the logistic regression model makes it possible to verify the influence of the type of accommodation on the likelihood of return. The preference for different and comfortable accommodation options indicates that increasing the accommodation offerings can be an input factor in attracting repeat visitors.

The results obtained underline the need to adapt the tourist offer to the inclinations and expectations of motorcyclists. Improving cultural experiences and increasing the quality of accommodation can enhance the attraction capacity of destinations, promoting increased visitor retention rates. However, other factors, such as infrastructure and local involvement, also contribute to visitor retention.

4. Discussion of Findings

The present study explores the dynamics of motorcycle tourism and highlights its regenerative potential both for travellers and for the rural communities that welcome them. The results of the study indicate a distinct traveller profile, which predominantly

comprises males between the ages of 44 and 54 who exhibit a predilection for hotel and guesthouse accommodation and a keen interest in cultural experiences. These characteristics are consistent with the findings of previous studies on motorcycle tourism as a niche adventure tourism market, which indicate a growing appreciation for comfort and cultural authenticity [12,24].

A quantitative analysis was conducted, the results of which indicate statistically significant relationships between sociodemographic variables and tourist behaviour. The specific relationships identified are as follows:

- The relationship between age and preference for the type of accommodation (present study).
- The influence of educational level on participation in local activities.
- Gender disparities regarding participation in activities and exploration of the region (the following investigation).

These relationships offer a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence loyalty and satisfaction, suggesting that factors such as hospitality, local culture, and the location of the event are decisive in recommending and repeating visits. This finding is consistent with the extant literature on regenerative tourism and local development [75,76].

The "culture" factor was also highlighted as having a significant impact on the destination chosen by motorcyclists, as pointed out by Ramoa & Pires [9] and confirmed by other authors such as Ramírez-Hurtado et al. [17] and Bernardo & Abranja [77]. The cluster analysis (Figure 1) lends further support to the centrality of the terms "culture", "accommodation", and "motivation".

4.1. Confirmation of Hypotheses

Following the collection of data and the application of statistical tests, the following hypotheses were confirmed:

Hypothesis 1—Cultural motivation and the intention to return. This finding was confirmed through a significant positive Spearman correlation ($r = 0.316$; $p < 0.01$). The findings indicate that a positive cultural experience has a direct impact on the inclination to make a return visit to the destination, thereby underscoring the notion of tourism as a transformative and authentic experience [38].

Hypothesis 2—Interaction with the community and perceived authenticity. This finding is supported by a positive correlation between indicators such as "hospitality" and "contact with local culture", which is strongly associated with the perception of authenticity ($r = 0.442$; $p < 0.01$). The findings of this study serve to reinforce the notion that the co-creation of experiences with residents is of paramount importance [39,78].

Hypothesis 3—Recommendations concerning the nature of accommodation and the destination thereof. The findings of this study have been confirmed by a statistically significant association between the type of accommodation and the recommendation variable (chi-square test: $\chi^2 = 19.46$; $p = 0.003$ (< 0.01)). Cater's [12] study posits that travellers who opt for more comfortable accommodation are more likely to recommend the destination.

Hypothesis 4—Event location and destination recommendation. The findings were confirmed through the implementation of a chi-square test, which yielded a result of $\chi^2 = 19.74$ and a p -value = 0.003 (< 0.01). The findings suggest that the location of the event exerts a substantial influence on the overall evaluation and intention to recommend, thereby validating the role of infrastructure and local identity as critical factors [79,80].

The results obtained reinforce the importance of motivational, cultural, infrastructural, and sociodemographic factors in the behaviour of motorcycle tourists in rural areas. This

empirical evidence highlights the importance of rural tourism policies and strategies that prioritise authenticity, sustainability, and diverse traveller profiles.

4.2. Cultural Interaction, Motivations, and Inclusion

4.2.1. Cultural Interaction and Tourist Motivations

The data demonstrate that motorcyclists prioritise routes that are less densely populated and that offer authentic local experiences and heritage preservation. These preferences are indicative of a regenerative approach to rural tourism, with a focus on the enhancement of endogenous resources and active community participation [75,81].

4.2.2. Cultural Authenticity and the Visitor Experience

Authenticity has been identified as a core value for travellers, which is often reinforced by contact with local inhabitants and genuine cultural practices. This dimension of the tourist experience has been extensively explored by scholars such as Gilmore & Pine [82] and Ramkissoon & Uysal [38], who emphasise the significance of co-creation and the cultural narrative in enhancing visitor satisfaction.

4.2.3. Gender Perspectives and Barriers in Motorcycle Tourism

Despite the historically male-dominated nature of motorcycle tourism, the data collected indicate an increasing participation of women in this niche, which is consistent with previous findings [42,83,84]. Although gender was included as a demographic variable in the study, the uneven distribution of responses did not allow for statistically robust comparisons. Consequently, the gender dimension was not explored through inferential analysis but, rather, discussed from a theoretical and contextual perspective.

Integrating a gender perspective remains essential to understanding structural inequalities in access, safety, and representation in adventure and rural tourism [41,85]. The literature indicates that women may face distinct barriers and motivations in participating in motorcycling and other outdoor activities. Therefore, it is recommended that future research studies aim to explore these aspects in greater depth with a more balanced sample.

In summary, despite the limitations of the sample, which prevented empirical testing of gender differences, the results reinforce the theoretical relevance of an inclusive approach. Motorcycling tourism in rural areas has the potential to contribute to sustainable development, provided that it is subject to participatory, conscious, and inclusive planning.

5. Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study offers both theoretical and practical contributions for stakeholders and public policymakers. From a theoretical perspective, the findings validate the notion that variables such as age, gender, and educational attainment significantly influence participants' choices regarding accommodation type, level of event engagement, and future behavioural intentions (e.g., likelihood of return or recommendation) [86,87]. These results reinforce theoretical models that highlight the impact of sociodemographic factors on behaviours in both social and tourism contexts.

The correlation between the type of accommodation and the likelihood of returning indicates that structural preferences influence visitor satisfaction and behavioural loyalty. This contributes to the existing literature on the relationship between comfort, perceived quality of experience, and repeat visitation [12,14,77].

Moreover, the observed link between gender and levels of involvement (e.g., remaining at the event site versus exploring the surrounding region) suggests that different demographic groups interact with and commit to events in distinct ways [83–85]. This supports ongoing research on diversity and audience segmentation in event experiences.

From a practical standpoint, the findings provide valuable insights for service segmentation and personalisation. Event organisers can tailor experiences to the sociodemographic profiles of participants; for instance, by offering differentiated accommodation options or targeted activity packages based on age or gender [75,80,88]. These strategies can be integrated into loyalty initiatives, including incentives and personalised offerings that encourage return visits and positive word-of-mouth.

Furthermore, given the influence of gender on regional engagement, it is essential that organisers design inclusive campaigns and programmes aimed at increasing participation among underrepresented groups [38,85].

With respect to public policy, the results support the development of a diversified portfolio of accommodation and services tailored to different age groups, education levels, and gender identities. Policy initiatives should promote inclusivity, accessibility, and regional development in alignment with sustainability goals, thereby fostering long-term loyalty to rural destinations [75,80].

Additionally, event management strategies should account for the diversity of participant preferences and expectations to maximise the social and economic benefits of tourism activities. While this study focused on small-scale rural events, its findings may also be relevant for larger-scale urban or international motorcycle tourism contexts. The identified patterns of motivation, accommodation preferences, and demographic variation can inform strategic planning for city-based or cross-border gatherings aimed at high-value niche markets [89,90]. Future research is encouraged to conduct comparative analyses between rural and urban motorcycle events, particularly in relation to sustainability, community engagement, and visitor expectations [6,75].

In conclusion, the findings highlight the importance of aligning tourism management strategies and policy development with participant demographics to maximise satisfaction, encourage loyalty, and generate sustainable benefits for local communities.

6. Limitations and Future Research

The conclusions of this study are subject to certain limitations, which may influence their interpretation. Firstly, although the use of a structured, closed-ended questionnaire is effective for quantitative analysis, it limits the ability to capture the depth of motorcyclists' subjective experiences. This restricts the identification of unforeseen variables and nuanced motivations or behaviours [78,87].

Secondly, the data were collected exclusively at selected rural motorcycling events, which may introduce selection bias. As a result, the findings primarily reflect the preferences and profiles of those specific participants and may not be fully generalisable to the broader motorcycle tourism community, including independent travellers or those participating in urban or international events [6,90].

The lack of qualitative methodologies—such as interviews or ethnographic approaches—also limits the study's ability to interpret deeper motivational drivers, emotional engagement, and cultural meanings associated with the motorcycle tourism experience [77,88]. Future research studies are encouraged to adopt mixed-methods approaches that incorporate qualitative insights.

Although gender was included as a demographic variable, the sample composition did not allow for a robust comparative analysis between men and women. Previous studies suggest that women may experience tourism and adventure activities differently and face unique barriers and motivations [83–85]. Future studies should ensure a more balanced gender distribution to allow for a comprehensive exploration of inclusion and diversity.

In addition, while this study highlighted the importance of community interaction and perceived authenticity, it did not explore in depth the economic and environmental

impacts of motorcycle tourism. Aspects such as sustainability indicators, infrastructure resilience, and local economic contributions are vital for assessing the long-term viability of this niche tourism segment [75,76,81].

Given the relevance of the small-scale rural events examined in this study, future research should also consider comparative analyses with urban or international motorcycle events to identify common patterns and context-specific differences [89,90]. This approach could inform more inclusive and sustainable tourism planning strategies tailored to different types of events and geographic settings.

Despite these limitations, this study provides a unique and valuable contribution to understanding the dynamics of motorcycle tourism in rural areas. It serves as a useful reference for future academic research and practical application, especially in regions seeking to promote high-value, low-impact tourism markets.

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