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Deposited in *Repositório ISCTE-IUL*:

2024-09-09

Deposited version:

Accepted Version

Peer-review status of attached file:

Peer-reviewed

Citation for published item:

Brochado, A. & Brochado, F. (2019). What makes a glamping experience great?. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*. 10 (1), 15-27

Further information on publisher's website:

10.1108/JHTT-06-2017-0039

Publisher's copyright statement:

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What Makes a Glamping Experience Great?

Abstract

The concept of camping has changed over time, with new niche markets appealing to sustainable tourists. Glamping – short for ‘glamorous camping’ – offers a way to experience the positive aspects of camping while minimising the negatives. This paper presents the empirical findings of an exploratory study that examined tourists’ web-reviews in order to identify the expressive dimensions that describe these travellers’ experience. A content analysis of reviews provided by tourists on glamping booking websites produced a battery of concepts used to assess glamping experiences from the guests’ perspective. The analysis identified eleven themes: experience, hotel, learn, host, camping, nature, food, ingredients, different, eco and yoga. The results reveal that, when quality of experience is evaluated through user-generated content, two attributes appear to be involved – functional elements offered by service providers and consumers’ emotional elements.

Keywords: User-generated content; content analysis; experience; glamping; sustainable tourism.

Introduction

The rapid growth and interest in ecotourism over the past 20 years (Ban & Ramsaran, 2016) can be explained by changes in education, environmental attitudes and the mass media. Individuals also seek novelty by enjoying scenery and nature and seeking new places or experiences (Chan & Baum, 2007; Wight, 1996). Ecotourists are a distinct group of visitors who look for natural learning experiences in pristine environments (Khan, 2003). They are sensitive to environmentally friendly conservation efforts that seek to preserve natural resources, and these tourists show an interest in, and appreciation for, local customs and conditions. Ecotourists are also attracted to more active and participatory learning experiences and are more interested in learning than other tourists are (Lu & Stepchenkova, 2012).

Recent research into ecotourism has focused on several areas, including motivations for ecotourism (e.g. Ballantine & Eagles, 1994; Kerstetter, Hou & Lin, 2004), ecotourists' profile (e.g. Acott, La Trobe & Howard, 1998; Dolnicar, Crouch & Long, 2008), market segmentation (e.g. Ballantine & Eagles, 1994; Palacio, 1997), travel behaviour patterns (e.g. Hvenegaard, 2002), travel motivations (e.g. Meric & Hunt, 1998) and ecotourism activities (e.g. Butler, 1990; Fennell & Eagles, 1990; Wight, 1993). However, few studies have focused on visitor satisfaction with ecotourism experiences, which is essential for the long-term success of this type of product (Ban & Ramsaran, 2016).

The most popular methods of market research on customer satisfaction in a service setting, including the hospitality and tourism sector – an experience-driven activity (Hemmington, 2007) – is based on quantitative studies. These seek to test

existing scales or to develop new tools to measure customer satisfaction in different research contexts (Wu & Ko, 2013). For instance, in the context of sustainable tourism, Khan (2003) developed the ECOSERV scale and Ban and Ramsaran (2016) the ECOPERF scale.

However, recent studies have highlighted the advantages of considering web-generated content for studying customer satisfaction with their travel experiences (Zhang & Cole, 2016). In the context of ecotourism, Lu and Stepchkova's (2012) research is a prime example.

Given the technological developments offered by the Web 2.0, consumers can use several social media platforms to share their reviews and ratings of their travel experiences with the entire world. With a large amount of lodging reviews at their fingertips, consumers now base their purchase decisions on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). This is written from the customers' perspective and, thus, provides audiences with indirect, but vivid travel experiences, which are perceived as more trustworthy than companies' communications (Tkaczynski, Rundle-Thiele & Cretchley, 2015).

Due to consumers' escalating adoption of communication technologies and the availability of electronic data, researchers are increasingly employing content analysis to measure customer satisfaction expressed through material published as web reviews (Tkaczynski et al., 2015). By analysing the plethora of user-generated content, content analysis packages permit the effective identification of the main attributes of customer satisfaction, a method that offers various benefits to consumer studies (Zhang & Mao, 2012).

The present study is an exploratory investigation of the main attributes relevant to customers who are evaluating their experiences in glamping. The concept of camping

has changed over time, with new niche markets emerging. Glamping – short for ‘glamorous camping’ – is a niche market that appeals to ecotourists.

This study’s main objective was to identify the main themes and concepts in satisfied customers’ reports about their glamping experience, using content analysis of data collected from a popular travel review website. To present the results as clearly as possible, this paper is structured as follows. The next section provides a literature review regarding a sustainable perspective on service quality, the role of web-generated contents in service quality studies and a broad overview of studies in the hospitality and tourism industry. Next, the paper presents the data collection methodology and the strategy used to do a quantitative content analysis of glamping web reviews. A concept map is then presented that identifies the main dimensions of glamping experiences. The article concludes with theoretical and managerial implications, limitations and avenues for future research.

Literature Review

Sustainable Approach of Service Quality

Sustainability in tourism refers to preserving the environment and cultures of local communities, while satisfying tourists and ensuring growth in the industry (Dinan & Sargeant, 2000). In order to increase both efficiency and visitor satisfaction, managers need to know what aspects of a particular service best define the quality of their business (O’Neill, RiscintoKozub & Hyfte, 2010).

In the hospitality and tourism industry, products are consumed when and where they are produced, meaning that the environmental impacts of production are directly experienced by consumers and become part of the product package (Bastič & Gojčič, 2012). As a result, tourism practices that protect the environment translate directly into better products for customers (Buckley, 2002). At the same time, tourists, who have

recently become more concerned about the environment, are demanding environmental protection (Yusof, Rahman, Jamil & Iranmanesh, 2014) and are willing to pay additional money to enjoy environmentally sustainable destinations (Petrosillo, Zurlini, Corliano, Zaccarelli & Dadamo, 2007).

Ecotourism businesses are expanding worldwide and becoming more competitive. For any ecotourism business to position itself favourably in the global marketplace, it has to deliver high quality services that fulfil the needs and expectations of ecotourists (Khan, 2003). Since success in providing nature-based tourism is ultimately dependent upon the suitable level of both environmental quality and consumer services, ecotourism businesses need to offer balanced products with respect to quality of nature and service (O'Neill et al., 2010).

According to the literature, typical nature-based tourism experiences require high quality natural environments and supporting service infrastructures providing activities that bring tourists into contact with nature. These are important factors in visitor satisfaction (Albacete-Sáez, Fuentes-Fuentes & Lloréns-Montes, 2007; O'Neill et al., 2010). In addition, the attraction and retention of customers and generation of income also depend on excellent service (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Tian-Cole, Crompton & Willson, 2002). Thus, a key strategy for consolidating tourism is improving the quality of services offered (Albacete-Sáez et al., 2007).

Although there has been an increased interest in service quality aspects in ecotourism, few researchers have addressed this question, regardless of whether they are assessing or investigating service quality's actual dimensions (Ban & Ramsaran, 2016; Yusof et al., 2014). Previous studies on ecotourism have thus far used the five service quality dimensions of either the SERVQUAL or SERVPERF instruments (i.e. tangibles, empathy, responsiveness, assurance and reliability) (Ban & Ramsaran, 2016).

In this research context, scholars have debated the need to add the sustainability dimension to the above-mentioned five dimensions defined by Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml (1988). Researchers have already identified sustainability as a key factor in what attracts tourists to tourism destinations (Garcia-Falcon & Medina-Munoz, 1999). Given the nature of ecotourism, sustainable attributes clearly cannot be ignored when measuring any ecotourism destination's service quality and, therefore, should be included in the assessment of service quality (Yusof et al., 2014).

Khan (2003) contributed to the theoretical and methodological advancement of service quality and ecotourism literature by developing ECOSERV, a scale to measure the service quality expectations of ecotourists. The cited author's results identified six service quality dimensions: eco-tangibles, assurance, reliability, responsiveness, empathy and tangibles. Ecotourists place more emphasis on eco-tangibles (i.e. appropriate facilities and equipment) than on tangibles (i.e. employees' local attire, local entertainment and visually appealing materials). Environmental issues (e.g. respect for ecosystems' integrity) are also considered to be more important than sociocultural concerns.

The cited findings reveal that ecotourists tend to expect businesses to be environmentally friendly and prefer services provided by staff who are courteous, informative and trustworthy. In addition, physical facilities that are environmentally appropriate and equipment that minimises environmental degradation were found to be more important to these tourists.

Albacete-Sáez et al. (2007) studied the dimensions of service quality in rurally located tourism lodgings. These authors list these aspects as follows: personnel response, complementary offer, tourist relations, tangible elements and empathy.

Chan and Baum (2007) studied ecotourists' perceptions of ecotourism experiences in Sabah, Malaysia. Their findings show that ecotourists place particular emphasis on ecotourism activities related to the surrounding natural resources at local sites (i.e. wildlife viewing, riverboat cruise trips and jungle walks). In addition, they focus on the natural environment in which they are located, interactions with the site service staff, socialisation with other ecotourists and learning opportunities and information provided about wildlife and local cultures. The perception of service quality in ecotourism experiences also appears to involve both affective and/or emotional elements and functionality and/or utilitarian aspects of service experiences.

O'Neill et al. (2010) addressed the issue of visitor satisfaction with camping services, testing the use of a camping visitor satisfaction measurement instrument in this service setting (i.e. outdoor camping environments). The results include four components of service quality: (1) people or the softer and more personal people-oriented aspect of camping experiences, (2) service or the more process-oriented elements of service delivery, (3) tangible elements or the more physically-oriented aspects of camping experiences and (4) bathrooms (i.e. WC) or the issue of washroom availability and cleanliness. The four-factor structure that emerged from the cited research shows that visitors look for a balance between tangible and intangible elements. However, the notable contribution made by the tangible factors suggests that these elements are the strongest driver of satisfaction and future behavioural intentions.

Bastič and Gojčič (2012) sought to develop a scale to measure the eco-component based on the expectations of tourists sensitive to environmental concerns. The cited study's results show that guests in spas and wellness hotels expect – and have a hierarchy of expectations regarding – bio food, waste-minimisation practices, energy- and water-saving measures, use of environmentally friendly and healthy equipment and

environmentally sound practices associated with hotel staff's ecological behaviour. Tourists in spas and wellness hotels perceive an eco-label to be a sign of an environmentally friendly hotel's service quality, and these visitors are willing to pay more to obtain hotel service with an eco-component.

Yusof et al. (2014) proposed a model to measure service quality in ecotourism in developing countries, using five dimensions of the original SERVQUAL model and two additional sustainability dimensions. Service quality in ecotourism can thus be conceptualised as a seven-factor model that comprises tangible sustainability, sustainable practices, tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy – measured by a total of 27 items. The results reveal the dimensions in SERVQUAL cannot be replicated fully in the ecotourism industry and confirm the significance of sustainability dimensions (i.e. tangible sustainability and sustainable practices) in the measurement of service quality in this context.

Ban and Ramsaran (2016) explored service quality attributes of ecolodges in Australia and developed the ECOPERF model. They found additional quality attributes under each of the five SERVPERF dimensions (i.e. tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy). These include a variety of food selection, room cleanliness, comfort of beds, outdoor signage, efficient reservations, environmentally friendly staff, availability of a library, availability of tourist information facilities, availability of gift shops, convenient location, accessibility, hygienic bathrooms and toilets, local food produced with local ingredients, local and organic food and safety and security. Moreover, three quality dimensions not present in the SERVPERF model were developed based on in-depth interviews. These are (1) eco-friendly practices or using alternative, sustainable means to reduce energy and water consumption, recycling and eco-certified products and so on; (2) eco-activities or

nature-based, leisure and recreational and adventurous activities, such as bushwalking, bird-watching, climbing trees, and various other recreational and adventurous activities; and (3) eco-learning or ecological/environmental knowledge and culture.

The role of customer-generated web content in service quality studies

One of the main lines of research on the contents of web travel reviews is identifying travel service attributes as determinants of customer satisfaction, in order to guide travel design and management (Zhang & Cole, 2016). As a faster and better means of communication that transcends time and physical space, the Internet is an extremely convenient channel through which consumers give feedback on products and services (Au & Ekiz, 2009; Ekiz, Khoo-Lattimore & Memarzadeh, 2012). With the rise of Web 2.0 and review forums, customers can now easily disseminate their viewpoint and leave their feedback online for everyone to see (Au, Buhalis, & Law, 2014; Zhang, Ye, Song & Liu, 2015). Consumers are increasingly using these online public channels to post comments about their experiences with products or services and share their advice for or against using them (Ekiz et al., 2012).

The content generated by Web 2.0 users, also called user-generated content (Au et al., 2014), and, more specifically, online customer reviews and ratings can be viewed as WOM in the cyberspace (Chatterjee, 2001; Lu & Stepchenkova, 2012; Zhang & Cole, 2016). This form of eWOM is an extremely important source of information for tourists (Litvin, Goldsmith & Pan, 2008), as well as providing important social and hedonic aid to the travel community and influencing more and more travel decisions made by peer customers (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Zhang & Mao, 2012). An online review both provides information about products and services – adding user-oriented information – and serves as a recommendation – providing either a positive or a negative signal about certain products or services (Zhang et al., 2015).

As opinions posted on online platforms are mainly based on personal experiences, other consumers find this third-party perspective more convincing, credible, trustworthy and unbiased, as compared with company-generated information (Au et al., 2014; Gretzel & Yoo, 2008). Given that information sources perceived as credible lead to more positive attitudes and stimulate greater behavioural influence (Zhang & Mao, 2012), potential consumers are expected to rely increasingly on eWOM for their purchase decisions. They, therefore, are turning to online consumer reviews for product opinions and other information (Lehto et al., 2007; Zhang & Mao, 2012).

EWOM is shaping the decision-making behaviour of consumers (Au et al., 2014) and is becoming a key factor in choices of products and services. More specifically, many research studies have discovered a significant relationship between eWOM and travel behaviour (Au et al., 2014; Gretzel, Kang & Lee, 2008). This trend is particularly true in service industries, such as the hospitality sector, which are traditionally more dependent on perceived image and reputation. Customers now tend to rely on online feedback when making their choices (Au et al., 2014; Ekiz et al., 2012).

In order to assess their customers' satisfaction level and to acquire and retain loyal and profitable customers, companies need to both communicate with their customers and take notice of their feedback, be it positive or negative (Au & Ekiz, 2009; Ekiz et al., 2012). While positive online reviews could help firms acquire new customers and retain current customers, negative ones may inhibit customer acquisition (Lu & Stepchenkova, 2012). Companies, particularly in the tourism and hospitality industry, need to be aware of mistakes, problems or service failures, usually via some form of customer feedback (Ekiz et al., 2012), so feedback directly from consumers can lead to strategically important conclusions. Managers must develop strategies and

corrective actions, and feedback is thus vital for effective service recovery and improvement (Au et al., 2014; Ekiz et al., 2012).

However, the majority of dissatisfied customers in the hospitality industry choose not to voice their dissatisfaction directly to companies, using instead online platforms (Ekiz et al., 2012). This is of particular concern to companies, since negative eWOM or complaints can potentially be shared with millions of people in a second (Ekiz et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2015) and can remain on the web indefinitely. This could possibly cement the negative image of the products or services in question (Ekiz et al., 2012), thereby discouraging potential consumers from choosing that company's products or services.

The volume of online third-party complaints is increasing, with the correspondingly growing potential to have a considerable negative impact on organisations (Au et al., 2014). On the other hand, when companies are able to recover from these online complaints, this can be an opportunity to sustain good levels of consumer satisfaction.

Feedback and review forums have already had a great impact on tourism demand and supply, and many hotel companies are increasingly exploring the use of Web 2.0 (Au et al., 2014). To managers, online consumer reviews and feedback are a precious source of information that can be used to enhance customer relationship management and customer satisfaction, generating a positive online reputation and retaining customers in the hospitality industry (Au et al., 2014).

For the hospitality industry, freely accessible eWOM provides a budget- and time-efficient and, ultimately, cost-effective channel for collecting visitors' feedback. Managers can thus understand industry-wide trends through guests' voices, as well as the demands and expectations of the tourist market (Litvin et al., 2008; Zhang & Cole,

2016; Zhang & Mao, 2012). EWOM is also a valuable source for organisations seeking management information, which affects brand perceptions and customer relations (Lu & Stepchenkova, 2012; Papathanassis & Knolle, 2011). It helps companies identify their brand image, understand which attributes generate customers' purchase decisions and recognise the attributes needed to build customer loyalty (Zhang & Mao, 2012).

According to Zhang and Cole (2016, p. 16), this knowledge should guide 'businesses' future practices of service promotion and delivery'. Therefore, these online platforms hold 'great potential to become the leading marketing tools and branding enhancers in the near future' (Zhang & Mao, 2012, p. 118).

Traditional marketing research methods of studying consumer experiences, such as surveys and guest comment cards, have certain limitations, namely, poor response rates and the limitations of information that cannot be further explored by researchers. On the other hand, online user-generated content in the form of eWOM is a particularly appropriate source of accessible, reliable, credible and readily available information for both consumers and researchers (Lu & Stepchenkova, 2012).

Hence, given the relative advantages of user-generated online content over other sources of data, it has increasingly drawn the attention of both businesses and researchers (Zhang & Cole, 2016). Its use as a data source in studies of consumer experiences also has grown in several tourism areas (Lu & Stepchenkova, 2012; Zhang & Cole, 2016).

Besides expressing individuals' actual experiences and directly illustrating user-perceived quality (Zhang & Cole, 2016), online tourist-generated content, in specific, is considered to be a valuable source for tourism researchers. Hookway (2008) states, 'It provides immediately available information that is also "uncontaminated" by researchers during data creation and collection.' Zhang and Cole (2016, p. 16) report

that ‘eWOM has thus been recognised as a natural setting for the study of travellers’ lived experiences’.

Researchers have analysed web travel reviews in order to identify service attributes as determinants of customer satisfaction and to improve service design (Zhang & Cole, 2016) and management accordingly. For instance, Ekiz et al. (2012) investigated online complaints about luxury hotels. Zhang and Mao (2012) studied customers’ web reviews of major US brand hotels. Au et al. (2014) also examined online complaints about hotels, while Zhang et al. (2015) analysed tourists’ cruise satisfaction and Zhang and Cole (2016) analysed travel reviews about lodging services by individuals with mobility challenges.

In the context of sustainable tourism, Lu and Stepchenkova (2012) analysed ecotourists’ web reviews about their ecolodge experiences and identified various relationships between travel service delivery and customer satisfaction. They isolated 26 attributes of ecolodge experiences that affect ecotourists’ satisfaction with ecolodge stays. These attributes were further aggregated into seven categories, namely, ecolodge settings (i.e. ambiance, eco-friendliness, grounds/surroundings, lodge amenities, noise and other guests), nature (i.e. nature-based activities, natural attractions and weather), rooms (i.e. room/bathroom decor and layout, room amenities, room and bathroom facilities and insect problems), services (i.e. customer service, tour/tour guide service, reservation process, management policies, extra services and restaurant service), food (i.e. food quality), location (i.e. closeness to town, closeness to attractions and accessibility) and value for money (i.e. room rates, food/drink prices and other prices). These attributes were also classified as criticals, satisfiers, dissatisfiers and neutrals, depending on their influence on reported satisfaction levels.

Methodology

This paper describes an exploratory qualitative research project designed to examine ecotourists' perceptions of glamping experiences through web reviews. To this end, this section describes the data collection and methodology used to perform the necessary content analysis.

Research Context

Glamping can be regarded as a niche market in ecotourism. Ecotourism consists of travel to natural areas, which involves nature-based tourism activities and environmental conservation. Ecotourism also has been found to produce and improve the welfare of local communities as tourism destinations (Lu & Stepchenkova, 2012). More specifically, ecolodges provide accommodations for guests and offer ecotourism experiences. According to Chan and Baum (2007), guests interpret their tourism experiences as a combination of nature and the environment, simple accommodations and facilities and learning opportunities.

Glamping – short for ‘glamorous camping’ – has emerged as a global trend in outdoor vacation activities. Whether in tents, villas, huts, yurts, teepees, airstreams, treehouses, eco- and safari lodges, campervans, cabooses, barns or cabins, glamping is a way to experience the great outdoors without neglecting some of the comforts tourists enjoy. There is no tent to pitch, no sleeping bag to unroll and no fire to build. Glamping offers outdoor enthusiasts an upgrade of rest and recreation by offering high levels of service and a selection of amenities. This is a way to experience the splendour of the outdoors and to commune with nature without sacrificing comfort. Glamping properties have capitalised on a rising demand from travellers who want to experience the positive aspects of camping while minimising the negatives.

According to the website Glampinghub.com, Portugal has several glamping offers including yurts, villas, tipis, safari tents, cabins, luxury tents, campervans,

treehouses, houses, huts and domes. All these facilities focus on environmental concerns. As the number of glamping offers and the demand for this type of accommodation are growing, a reliable instrument to measure service quality from the perspective of tourists is becoming increasingly important.

Data Collection

This study used a sample of 514 textual reviews posted on TripAdvisor by guests who had stayed in seven glamping facilities from January 2011 to December 2015. These properties offer different combinations of yurts, safari tents, cabins, luxury tents and domes. The facilities are located in different regions of Portugal: 2 in the North, 1 in the Centro, 1 in Lisbon, 1 in the Alentejo and 2 in the Algarve. The data were collected and saved in a spreadsheet, including the review date, review title, review content, traveller type according to the TripAdvisor classification (i.e. families, couples, solo, business and friends) and the TripAdvisor traveller rating (i.e. excellent, very good, average, poor and terrible).

The majority of reviews were written in English (66%), 17% in Portuguese, 7% in French, 5% in German and the remaining in Italian, Dutch and Greek. All the reviews were translated into English by bilingual professionals. The majority of tourists travelled as a couple, 25% with family, 10% with friends, 7% alone and the remaining for business. The guests who wrote the reviews are quite satisfied with this type of accommodation – on a scale of 1 to 5 points, around 78% reported 5 (excellent), 15% reported 4 (very good), 2% reported 3 (average) and 5% reported 2 (poor) or 1 (terrible).

As the present study's objective was to identify the main aspects defining satisfactory glamping experiences, only positive evaluations were analysed, i.e. very good (4) and excellent (5) ratings, which had a total of 77,387 words. The data were

compiled on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, with a row for each respondent. Prior to the analysis, a spelling analysis was conducted to format all names (e.g. staff, region and glamping facility) to be able to start with a caps lock and select the option ‘merge word variants’ in Leximancer. Moreover, all names of staff members shared in the reviews were replaced by the word ‘staff’.

Analysing the Data

A content analysis was carried out (Weber, 1990) of the evaluations and comments posted by those who stayed in glamping accommodations in order to cluster content into key areas. Key moments were identified to examine the reviewers’ opinion of their stay in glamping facilities. The attributes pertinent to guests’ satisfaction and positive experiences were identified using a content analysis of the qualitative data collected from web-based reviews posted by tourists on the TripAdvisor website, more specifically those that focused on glamping accommodations located in Portugal.

TripAdvisor is the largest online travel community in the world (Lu & Stepchenkova, 2012). This website shares not only travel reviews but also quantitative evaluations and traveller type classifications.

The present study used Leximancer, a quantitative content analysis software that conducts unsupervised analyses of natural language texts in an electronic format. Leximancer offers quantitative procedures based on Bayesian statistical theory dealing with content analyses of fragmented pieces of evidence. The algorithms used employ nonlinear dynamics and machine learning (Wu, Wall & Pearce, 2014).

Other powerful methods of quantitative content analysis summarise tourists’ experiences by identifying top word occurrences and isolate cooccurrences by means of factor analyses, such as CAPTAC-Wordle (e.g. Zhang and Cole, 2016). In contrast, Leximancer provides an inductive identification of themes with minimal manual

intervention by researchers (Tkaczynski et al., 2015). This software has recently been applied in tourism contexts (e.g. Brochado, Troilo & Saha, 2017; Pearce & Wu, 2016; Tkaczynski et al., 2015; Wu et al., 2014). The most important units in the semantic pattern extraction process carried out by Leximancer are word, concept and theme.

Leximancer offers both conceptual and relational analyses, measuring not only the presence of defined concepts in the text but also ways that they are interrelated. The analysis begins with automatically identifying words that most frequently appear in the text. These words are called ‘concept seeds’ as they represent the starting point of the definition of concepts, with more terms being added to these definitions through a learning process. The purpose of concept learning is to discover clusters of words that travel together throughout the text, namely, concepts. The individual words are weighted according to their frequency of occurrence in sentences that include the concept in question as compared to the words’ frequency elsewhere.

Apart from identifying the presence of concepts in the text, Leximancer determines the frequency of cooccurrence between concepts, which is used to generate a concept map. Concepts that settle near one another in the map space appear frequently together, often in the same text segments. Once the programme has run the learning process and developed a list of concepts contained in the text, as well as their relationship to each other, the information is presented in the form of a concept map. The concepts are clustered into higher-level themes in the map. These themes aid interpretation by grouping the concepts into clusters, shown as coloured circles on the map.

In the last phase, researchers can make conceptual comparisons by highlighting divergence or convergence between groups in the data, which are defined by tags. In the present study, information about whether guests travelled alone, with family or friends

or as a couple was included in the map as tags. As in Brochado et al. (2017), the analysis proceeded by indicating which source files (i.e. web reviews) contain particular topics (Tkaczynski et al., 2015), offering a narrative (i.e. qualitative) analysis.

Results

To address the objective of the present study, a concept map was produced showing the most common themes and concepts found in the reviews, as well as the frequency of their occurrence and cooccurrences. The concept map displays the concepts – indicated by the nodes – that are grouped into themes – indicated by the larger shaded circles.

The analytical process identified 11 themes, each with a connectivity rate, which indicates the degree to which the theme is connected to the other concepts in the map, ranging from 24% to 100%. This rate refers to the internal items in the theme being mentioned together a specific percentage of times (Pearce & Wu, 2016). The most important theme is ‘experience’ with a connectivity rate of 100%, followed by ‘hotel’ (84%), ‘learn’ (81%), ‘host’ (79%), ‘camping’ (65%), ‘nature’ (63%), ‘food’ (51%), ‘ingredients’ (50%), ‘different’ (48%), ‘eco’ (24%) and ‘yoga’ (25%).

Several guests shared that staying in a glamping accommodation offered a ‘relaxing’, ‘calming’ and even ‘romantic’ ‘experience’ – the latter expressed by those travelling on honeymoons or as couples. In one example, the reviewer reported:

We had our perfect honeymoon experience. . . . On arriving we were greeted warmly and were straight away made to feel comfortable. First seeing the Chestnut Tree Yurt was wonderful. So many beautiful little romantic touches to the comfortable space. It really felt like our home for the whole stay.

In another review, a tourist wrote, ‘The programme activities were nicely structured which allowed you ample free time to read, relax or get a massage! I really miss waking up to beautiful blue skies and calming environment. . . . [T]hank you . . . [for] an

experience that was truly special!’ Another reviewer said, ‘I can’t promise that will be true for yours but it is a very calm relaxing and restful spot.’

The reviewers also shared comments about their accommodations, comparing them to a ‘hotel’, namely, the ‘perfect’ ‘view’ from the ‘room’, and highlighting the ‘privacy’. One tourist wrote, ‘It’s not a totally separate room, but it offers enough privacy for reading lights and talking whilst they’re asleep, or their own space for chilling out so it’s much better than a hotel.’

All these elements taken together are in accordance with the luxury component of the glamping niche. Moreover, some guests felt that the stay allowed them to ‘learn’ from the ‘activities’. They reported that the ‘organisation was impeccable, staff friendly, teachers at the surfing school always smiling and willing to motivate you to learn to surf’.

The ‘children’ enjoyed the ‘dogs’ that belong to the ‘owners’, a theme emphasised by those who were on holiday with their families. One reviewer wrote:

Proved a wonderful place for my children to play with other kids and explore the beautiful surroundings. I felt safe to fall asleep in the sun and let them roam. I was also struck with the exceptional hospitality and professionalism of our hosts.

Another tourist said, ‘[The hosts] were wonderful with our children [and t]houghtful to provide some toys and books, though the hammocks, dogs, hosepipe and a garden full of raspberries also provided much amusement.’

Moreover, the hosts were frequently mentioned by their guests. In this study, all the staff and accommodations’ names were removed from the analysis as they were specific to given properties. However, almost all the reviews provided a warm, lengthy reference to the ‘lovely’ staff and owners who enhanced their experience by paying

attention to every single ‘detail’. One tourist wrote, ‘I was also struck with the exceptional hospitality and professionalism of our hosts . . . [who put] care [into] each single detail.’ Still another reported, ‘This tented camp, with yurts, tipis and safari tents is wonderfully tended by the landscape gardening owner and his lovely wife, catering for our every need.’

‘Camping’ also stood out in the comments, as guests mentioned the ‘space’ and the ‘tent’. One reviewer stated, ‘This retreat glamping site is a space that is in complete harmony with its natural setting. It’s very much camping rather than glamping, so if you go with that expectation you won’t be disappointed.’

The opportunity to come into contact with the outdoors and ‘nature’ was highlighted by several guests, who recorded the ‘magical’ ‘harmony’ and beauty of the scenery, including the ‘mountains’, ‘rivers’ and ‘sky’. Indeed, one guest thought that ‘the location of the [name left out] is great – about a 20 minute drive from main towns/villages, and close to some truly beautiful and quiet river spots and mountains.’ Still another reviewer wrote, ‘The site is in a lovely wooded valley, with amazing stars at night. I stayed in the hill top tent which was spacious with a great view.’ A further tourist reported that the hosts ‘created an impressive outdoor cinema on the last night of our stay which was magical under the stars’. Another said, ‘It is an interesting experience to spend a winter night in these igloos with a panoramic view over the valley and the thousands of stars in the sky.’ A further guest wrote, ‘Unbelievable views from our cosy dome. From our bed, we could see the town below and the stars above us.’

Regarding ‘food’, the guests emphasised the ‘tasty’ meals prepared by the owners and the use of ‘fresh’ ingredients. The tourists valued the ‘organic’, ‘healthy’, ‘local’ and genuine taste and simplicity of the food prepared for meals and the detailed presentation of these. Remarks regarding gastronomy were extremely frequent in

reviews shared by those who went to glamping accommodations with friends. One guest felt that ‘the quality and variety of the meals were TOP!!, made with fresh and organic ingredients extremely well made! Simply delicious!’ Another wrote, ‘There was a kitchen area where you could cook your own food, but we fell for . . . [the hosts’] cooking from the first night. It was absolutely delicious, so fresh and healthy and creative!’ Still another reviewer said:

We were asked whether we will [sic] be staying for lunch and for dinner and with a simple ‘yes’ you are invited to dine. There is a live in chef. He goes out of his way and clearly has a passion for healthy, tasty food.

One tourist enthused, ‘The food here was fantastic! It was really simple but really tasty’.

Glamping offers a ‘different’ ‘way of life’, offering the chance to ‘escape’ and contemplate the ‘beautiful’ ‘scenery’ that contrasts with the pace of life and daily routine in cities. One guest highlighted:

This was the most perfect place to escape the stress and noise of everyday life. . . . The combination of yoga and surfing, sunshine and nature, delicious food (seriously!!) and the friendliest staff made it an all-round winner. The relaxing effects of the camp stayed with me long after I plunged back into city life. Don’t hesitate . . . GO GO GO!! That’s a beautiful place to reload.

A reviewer reported, ‘The scenery was dramatic and beautiful. A great place to wind down and enjoy life in a special place.’ Another tourist wrote, ‘This was the most perfect place to escape the stress and noise of everyday life,’ and a further visitor said, ‘A perfect place to escape your hectic life and to experience a different way-of-life.’

The guests mentioned ‘sustainable’ ‘concerns’ taken into account in the construction and maintenance of the facilities’ various spaces and equipment, which differentiates these accommodations from other types of mass tourism in which the

construction of the accommodation itself also sets apart the offer from other offers. For example, one reviewer mentioned, ‘The craftsmanship and innovations of eco-designs here are stunning and the attention to every detail of hospitality is notable.’ Moreover, the guests thanked the glamping property owners for their effort to ensure sustainability. As one person put it, ‘Thank you to our wonderful hosts who not only provided a warm and inviting place to stay but also [one compatible] with sustainable concerns. Their vision of an eco-friendly operation is interesting and inspiring and still feels like luxury!’

Finally, guests who travelled alone mentioned the opportunity to surf and do yoga. A reviewer mentioned ‘a beautiful valley place with a unique combo of yoga and surfing’. Another described the facility as an ‘[a]mazing peaceful place [and a] lovely getaway for beach lovers. You get to visit 3 different beaches and do yoga and surfing there.’ Still another reported, ‘Definitely a place I would suggest for all eco lovers, those who want to enjoy the rustic beauty and simplicity of nature – both greenery and beaches – with the rare innovative blend of yoga and surfing.’

The concept map below provides a visual representation of the narrative that summarises the main reviews.

[Figure 1 near here]

As regards the overall concept of glamping, one reviewer maintained that:

[Glamping] is the result of the evolution of social models in which we live in mutual respect, involvement and promotion of natural resources and life.

Glamping [is] a concept [of] ecological, glamorous innovation, of nature tourism, [that offers] a high quality stay, in a comfortable and sophisticated atmosphere.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, the research was done on a new and prominent niche market, glamping, that is underresearched. Second, the insights gained emphasise the advantages of using user-generated content in tourism studies instead of surveys and in-depth interviews conducted by researchers. Moreover, the results offer a better understanding of the main dimensions of glamping tourism, including a graphic representation of the main concepts of glamping experiences. Last, the findings provide a fuller understanding of how different market segments (i.e. visitors travelling alone, with families or friends and as couples) recall their experience.

The content analysis of comments made by guests who stayed in glamping units located in Portugal – representing different languages and nationalities – revealed that glamping experiences are multidimensional. The findings show that tourists fill their comments with descriptions of concepts such as experience, hotel, learn, host, camping, nature, food, ingredients, difference, eco and yoga.

These results agree with the positive expressive dimensions (Otto & Ritchie, 1996) describing ecotourism defined by Chan and Baum (2007): hedonic (e.g. nature), interactive (e.g. host), novelty (e.g. different), comfort (e.g. hotel), stimulation (e.g. learn) and personal safety (e.g. privacy). Although based on different approaches to ecotourism experiences, such as in-depth interviews (e.g. Chan & Baum, 2007) and web-generated content (i.e. the present study), the present findings yield results that are congruent with previous research.

The theme of experience matches the attribute of ambience identified by Lu and Stepchenkova (2012), with guests describing relaxing, romantic and beautiful experiences. Hotel is the second most important theme. Although, in general, ecotourists are aware of the limited resources offered by ecolodges and they have low expectations of their luxuriousness, tangibles components such as rooms or privacy

appeal to glamping tourists. According to O'Neill et al. (2010), nature and the tangible elements of nature-based tourism experiences are a top priority for most visitors.

The dimension of learn, as part of glamping experiences, is in accordance with previous studies of ecotourists, who are known to be looking for natural learning experiences (Khan, 2003). Moreover, Ban and Ramsaran (2016) and Lu and Stepchenova (2012) also highlight the role of eco-activities in enhancing guests' experiences. Chan and Baum (2007) identified stimulation (i.e. educational and informative aspects) as an important dimension of ecotourism experiences.

Interactions with owners are of utmost importance for positive glamping experiences. According to the present study's results, owners act as hosts and offer a variety of nature-based activities to their guests. Moreover, hosts prepare the food and contribute to a memorable experience. This finding is innovative in that it underlines the role of the entrepreneurs and/or owners who manage glamping facilities, instead of the staff in general.

As found in a recent study by Ban and Ramsaran (2016), an environmentally friendly staff is clearly an important service quality attribute in ecotourism. Chan and Baum (2007) maintain that positive interactions between guests and staff encompass an interactive affective/emotional dimension of ecotourism experiences. O'Neil et al. (2010) concluded that people are a relevant dimension of visitor satisfaction with camping services.

The dimension of camping fits with the concept of glamping since this concept describes large, spacious and cosy tents. Tangible factors are recognised as the strongest driver of guest satisfaction and future behavioural intentions (O'Neil et al. 2010). In this context, camping links comfortable camping experiences with nature (e.g. the sky).

Nature appears to be a common feature across glamping experiences. Appreciation for the scenery has been documented in previous studies (Lu and Stepchenova, 2012).

In addition, tasty food made with organic and local products is part of glamping experiences. This result is in accordance with Lu and Stepchenkova's (2012) research, which identified the quality of food as an important dimension of ecolodge experiences. A study by Lu and Stepchenova also revealed that ecotourists praise food's freshness and opportunities to taste local food.

The content analysis of the web reviews collected further identified ingredients as an important dimension of guests' experience. Bastič and Gojčič's (2012) results mention the bio-food component, highlighting the importance of meals made from organically produced ingredients.

The dimension of different is in agreement with a novelty emotional/affective dimension, described by Chan and Baum (2007) as associated with anything new, unique and different. Glamping also reflects the concept of escapism (Otto & Ritchie, 1996), allowing guests to experiment a different way of life.

According to the web reviews, eco-features are an important dimension of glamping experiences. This dimension confirms Bastič and Gojčič's (2012) results, which underlined the role of an efficient use of energy and water, environmentally friendly and healthy equipment and the eco-friendly behaviour of staff. In addition, Yusof et al. (2014) identified sustainable practices as an important dimension of ecotourism services.

The final dimension identified in this study is yoga and/or surf. In the context under study, these might be considered extra activities (Lu & Stepcheova, 2016) that allow guests to engage physically with facilities (Chan & Baum, 2007). Nonetheless,

the present results reveal that web reviews appear to mention both functional elements that are provided by glamping service suppliers and affective and/or emotional elements that are contributed by the tourists themselves.

Guests frequently share their experiences regarding local and organic food, sky watching from tents, ocean views and the mountain and river scenery. Comfort is also associated with relaxing in a natural environment. At the same time, guests frequently refer to tangible elements of their stay that they value, such as design, tent space and privacy. Therefore, this evidence supports the conclusion that web-generated content confirms the conceptualisation of glamping commonly found in the literature, given that guests often recall the glamorous features of their camping experience.

Web reviews clearly offer important information to managers in the tourism and hospitality sector. Understanding web reviews as a manifestation of guests' experiences can help glamping facilities' managers to identify the main attributes needed to achieve customer satisfaction. Thus, for these companies, travel reviews not only provide a cost-effective method of collecting feedback from guests but also an opportunity to discover the key attributes leading to customer satisfaction.

In addition, the present study's analysis revealed that different market segments (i.e. couples, visitors with families or friends and those travelling alone) share certain aspects of glamping experiences. Guests who travel alone recall their yoga and surf experiences. Friends value sharing experiences together and highlight food experiences. Families recall their children's opportunities to learn and play. Finally, couples look for a romantic experience with privacy. Therefore, glamping managers can offer packages that include accommodations and these targeted activities.

This study has some limitations that should be highlighted. First, only positive reviews from satisfied customers were the basis for the themes featured on the concept

map. A larger sample, including more heterogeneous responses, would allow an analysis of both positive and negative dimensions. In addition, an analysis of other shared web content, such as pictures, could provide a more in-depth interpretation of glamping experiences' main dimensions.

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List of Figure Captions

Figure 1: Concept Map of Glamping Experiences

