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Surf camp experiences

ABSTRACT

Surf camps are located in popular surf spots and provide surf classes, guided surf tours and various services such as accommodation and food. This study's main objective was to identify the principal components of surfers' overall experiences in surf camps based on the narratives shared online in social media platforms. The research focused on camps in Portugal, using quantitative (i.e. computer-based) and qualitative (i.e. narrative) content analysis methods to process Web reviews written by surf camp visitors with different nationalities. The results reveal 10 themes in descriptions of stays at surf camps: 'surf', 'instructors', 'place', 'camp', 'beach', 'staff', 'experience', 'wave',' home' and 'team'. These represent the overall surf camp experiences connected to surf lessons, natural resources of surf spots, human resources in surf camps and recommendations after experiences. This study contributes to the literature on surf tourism by addressing the need for more literature on surf camps, especially those in Portugal.

KEYWORDS Surf camp; surf tourism; Web review; experience; content analysis

Introduction

Surfing has evolved from a lifestyle and competitive sport to a popular tourism activity and growing niche of the global tourism industry, with its own specialised tour operators, travel agencies and varied services. As surfers have a high propensity to travel in search of the perfect wave and remote destinations, surf tourism has grown significantly in recent decades, including more than 161 destinations in developed and developing countries (Martin & Assenov, 2012). As most surf tourists currently prefer well-organised travel plans (Ponting, 2009), the surf tourism industry is expected to grow further with the development of market segments and specialised products such as surf schools and travel agents (Moutinho, Dionısio, & Leal, 2007).

Given the growth and complex global significance of the surf tourism industry, an increasing number of studies have concentrated on this tourism niche (Gammon, 2015; Martin & Assenov, 2012), especially after 2000. However, some aspects still need further research, such as surf tourists' overall travel behaviours and preferences (Barbieri & Soto-mayor, 2013) and the development of new market segments and specialised services.

The present study focused on the emerging Portugal surf scene. Portugal is a fast-expanding international surf destination with an annual growth rate of between 25%

and 30% in recent decades (Bicudo & Horta, 2009). It has recently hosted major surf events (SurfPortugal, 2015) and become the main surfing destination in Europe (Turismo de Portugal, 2014). The surfing industry contributes about 400 million euros to Portugal's economy, and the number of companies that organise surfing activities has grown more than 28% annually in recent years (Sequeira, 2016). Currently, 82 surf clubs and 218 surf schools are registered with the Federação Portuguesa de Surf (Portuguese Surfing Federation), and 200,000 Portuguese are surfers (Sequeira, 2016).

Nonetheless, research on surf tourism in Portugal is still limited compared to other popular surf destinations. The present study sought to expand the research on the expanding surf tourism market of Portugal, as well as offering new data on a specialised and increasingly popular product – surf camps. This study aimed at identifying the most important and/or memorable place attributes from a visitor's perspective.

A major innovation of the current research is its methodological approach, which used content analysis software to examine text data collected from popular travel websites and social platforms. The analysis of these narratives produced new insights into overall experiences of surf tourism and, in particular, surf camp experiences. This study sought to answer the following research question: Which components of Portuguese surf camp experiences have been most strongly emphasised in online reviews?

This paper is structured as follows. The first section includes a literature review in which several topics are examined including research on surfing, surf tourism and surf tourists. The methodology section describes the data collection and content analyses. The results section presents the concept map generated and a qualitative analysis of the Web reviews collected. The final section discusses the study's findings and presents conclusions.

Literature review

Surfing

This study focused on the expanding market of active sports tourism (Tassiopoulos & Haydam, 2008), in which increasing numbers of people travel to watch and/or participate in physical activities or to admire attractions associated with them (Gibson, 1998). In this context, surfing can be defined as:

> [T]he act of riding an ocean wave while standing on a surfboard … [which] broadly includes other aspects of wave riding, such as riding prone on a 'bodyboard' or simply 'bodysurfing' (using only one's body surface to plane across the wave). (Martin & Assenov, 2012, p. 257)

Surfing is amongst the most popular sports in the world (Burnett & Coffman, 2009). With the support of media and technology, surfing has become a subculture associated with a unique lifestyle (Booth, 2004; Reynolds & Hritz, 2012) that combines sports, careers, leisure and fashion (Reis & Jorge, 2012). The main motivations to surf include direct experiences of natural settings, unpredictable environments, risk and adventure, freedom of choice, a philosophy of solidarity and conviviality and surf-related fashions and lifestyles (Neto, 1995).

The increasing popularity of surfing in recent decades (Moutinho et al., 2007; O'Brien & Ponting, 2013) has stimulated the development of a multimillion-dollar industry (Dolnicar waves (Barbieri & Sotomayor, 2013; Buckley, 2002a, 2002b; Towner & Orams, 2016).

entertainment (Buckley, 2003; Moutinho et al., 2007; Phillips & House, 2009; Ponting, 2009), as well as commercial surf tourism (Buckley, 2002a, 2002b; Ponting, 2009).

The popularity of surfing has also stimulated academic research regarding the social and economic value of waves and their role in community development (Burnett & Coffman, 2009; Murphy & Bernal, 2008; Nelsen, Lazarow, Bernal, Murphy, & Pijoan, 2008; Silva & Ferreira, 2014). Studies have also examined the evolution of surfing representations through the marketing of adventures in exotic natural paradises (Canniford & Karababa, 2013). Some researchers have shown that the consumer culture and media have influenced surfing, reproducing stereotyped representations of age, gender, sexuality and localism (Comer, 2010; Evers, 2004, 2009; Waitt & Warren, 2008; Wheaton, 2017). Surfing is thus often considered a heterosexual, masculine and white sport (Comer, 2010; Waitt & Clifton, 2013; Waitt & Warren, 2008). This means that men and women, locals and foreigners and young and old individuals must permanently negotiate their place on the beach and in group affiliations, as well as their access to specialised knowledge (Evers, 2004, 2009; Nemani & Thorpe, 2016; Waitt & Clifton, 2013; Waitt & Warren, 2008; Wheaton, 2017). Comer (2010) found links between the evolution of surfing sites and their meanings to the larger processes of globalisation, localism, tourism colonisation, environmentalism and feminism.

Surf tourism

Surfing has evolved from a competitive sport into tourism activities. Surf tourism has been defined as a niche market of consumers who travel to either domestic destinations for no more than six months or to international destinations for no more than 12 months, staying at least one night – with surfing as their primary purpose of travel (Dolnicar & Fluker, 2003a, 2003b). Other definitions vary with respect to travel duration, distance or tourists' active involvement. For example, Buckley (2002a) proposes a minimum 40-kilometre distance from home, but Tourism New South Wales (2009) includes also surfing day trips. Dolnicar and Fluker (2003a) incorporate spectators and non-surfing travel companions in surf tourism, while Ponting (2009) excludes them. Martin and Assenov (2008) even remove the condition of surfing as the primary travel motivation.

Surf tourism started in the 1960s with independent self-guided travellers in search of the perfect wave (Ponting & McDonald, 2013). The media stimulated its growth into a commercial surf tourism industry (Buckley, 2002a) with specialised tour operators, destinations and services. In 2007, about 161 countries were known as surf tourism destinations (Martin & Assenov, 2012). Increasingly crowded conditions in urban developed areas has pushed surf tourism demand towards remote destinations (Dolnicar & Fluker, 2003a; Ponting, 2009), most of them in developing countries. This has led to the growth of surf tourism research on Indonesia (Buckley, 2002a, 2002b; Buckley & Ollenburg, 2013; Mach, 2009; Ponting & McDonald, 2013; Ponting, McDonald, & Wearing, 2005; Towner, 2015; Towner, 2016a, 2016b; Towner & Orams, 2016), Papua New Guinea (O'Brien & Ponting, 2013), the Maldives (Ponting, 2014; Buckley, Guitart, & Shakeel, 2017), Costa Rica (Usher & Gómez, 2016) and Mexico (Comer, 2010). Researchers have shown that attractive surf locations require specific combinations of factors such as the quality and variety of waves (Barbieri & Sotomayor, 2013; Buckley, 2002a, 2002b; Towner & Orams, 2016).

Other factors are tides, exposure to swells and wind (Bicudo & Horta, 2009), the quality of the natural environment (Barbieri & Sotomayor, 2013; Ponting, 2009) and conservation, sustainability and enhancement of both natural and cultural heritage. Further significant aspects are accessibility and infrastructure (Dolnicar & Fluker, 2003a; Reis & Jorge, 2012) and destination image. Ponting and McDonald (2013) identified four key elements emphasised in the marketing of surf tourism nirvanas: perfect waves, uncrowded conditions, cushioned adventures and pristine tropical environments. At the opposite end, crowding is a major repulsive factor (Dolnicar & Fluker, 2003a; Mach, 2009; Ponting, 2014).

Research on surf tourism started in the 1990s with studies of surf events (e.g. Breedveld, 1995) and surf travel (Poizat-Newcomb, 1999a, 1999b; Reed, 1999). This field began to grow after 2000, when several research streams materialised (Martin & Assenov, 2012. These include studies of surfers' demographics and travel behaviours (e.g. Barbieri & Sotomayor, 2013; Buckley, 2002a, 2002b; Dolnicar & Fluker, 2003a, 2003b), analyses of surf imagery and local impacts of the commodification of surfing places (Buckley, 2002a, 2002b, 2003; Ford & Brown, 2006; Ponting, 2009; Ponting et al., 2005; Tantamjarik, 2004). In the last decade, sustainability and conservation have also become hot topics. Many studies have analysed the sustainability of management plans, policies and regulations in developing countries (Buckley, 2002b; Buckley et al., 2017; Porter, Orams, & Lück, 2015; Tantamjarik, 2004). O'Brien and Ponting (2013) and Ponting et al. (2005) developed a normative framework with which to analyse the sustainability of surf tourism development.

The growing literature on the impact of surf tourism includes estimations of important economic benefits for destinations (e.g. Lazarow, Miller, & Blackwell, 2008; Murphy & Bernal, 2008; Nelsen, Pendleton, & Vaughn, 2007). The sociocultural benefits of surfing tourism, however, are often limited in developing countries (Buckley, 2002a; Ponting, 2009, 2014; Ponting et al., 2005; Ponting & McDonald, 2013). Negative impacts have also been reported, such as rising land prices and increased criminality, environmental degradation (Tantamjarik, 2004; Towner, 2016a, 2016b), crowding and foreign control (Buckley, 2002a; Buckley et al., 2017; O'Brien & Ponting, 2013; Ponting, 2009; Ponting et al., 2005; Ponting & McDonald, 2013; Towner, 2016a), as well as limited government support (Towner, 2016a).

In many popular surf break spots, crowding and competition between local and visiting surfers has generated tensions (Buckley & Ollenburg, 2013; Ford & Brown, 2006; Tantamjarik, 2004; Towner, 2016a, 2016b). These can be expressed as surf rage (Buckley, 2015a, 2015b), surf localism or surf tribalism (Moutinho et al., 2007).

Surf tourists

Previous studies have produced various demographic profiles of surf tourists with respect to their gender, education and income. Overall, this market segment is dominated by younger male tourists (Buckley, 2002a, 2002b, 2003; Dolnicar & Fluker, 2003a; Farmer, 1992) who are adventurous, educated, and wealthy (Murphy & Bernal, 2008; Williams & Soutar, 2009) and who tend to practice more than one sport (Farmer, 1992; Reynolds & Hritz, 2012; Sung, 2004). Buckley (2002b) describes surf tourists as, in general, cash rich,

Fluker (2003a) identified five main groups of surf tourists: (1) price-conscious adventurers, (2) price-conscious safety seekers, (3) luxury surfers, (4) ambivalent tourists seeking new locations and smaller crowds and (5) radical adventurers searching for waves and a lack of crowds.

The main motivations for surf travelling are the quality and variety of waves (Barbieri & Sotomayor, 2013; Dolnicar & Fluker, 2003a, 2003b; Reis & Jorge, 2012), surf culture and lifestyle experiences (Reis & Jorge, 2012) and socialisation (Reis & Jorge, 2012; Reynolds & Hritz, 2012). Different surf market segments favour distinct destination attributes (Dolnicar & Fluker, 2003a, 2003b). That is, quality accommodation and services are more important for novice surfers, while skilled surfers are more sensitive to locations' surfing appeal (Barbieri & Sotomayor, 2013). Martin and Assenov (2011) distinguish between highly experienced surfers searching for high quality waves, intermediate surfers preferring surf camps with lessons with coaching and equipment included and beginner surfers taking surf lessons in a safe environment.

Surf camps

Surf schools and camps are part of specialised services offered in surf destinations (Moutinho et al., 2007; Ponting & McDonald, 2013). These facilities initially started as surf schools' accommodations for foreign surfers, but surf camps have now become a distinctive form of lodging for both surf class customers and their partners (Bicudo & Horta, 2009). The accommodations usually are small beach front hotels or guesthouses that accommodate national and international surfers (Tantamjarik, 2004).

In Portugal, surf camps are small hotels offering surf tours and classes, located mostly in tourist and popular surf spots (Fernandes, 2014; Frank, Pintassilgo, & Pinto, 2015). These facilities are often part of a package surf tour (Buckley, 2002a), and they provide various services such as accommodation, food, surf instruction and guided trips (Tantamjarik, 2004). Their offer varies from luxury facilities to basic camps for experienced and beginner surfers (Tantamjarik, 2004) and include budget or luxury surf camps, traditional surf camps, remote surf camps, yoga and surf camps and adventure surf camps (Frank et al., 2015).

Despite the rich literature on surf tourism, only a few studies have focused on surf camps and the visitor experiences they provide. Smith's (2010) survey of Virginia Beach in the United States (US) found a correlation between participation in surf camps and increased self-worth, self-esteem and positive health behaviours. An ethnographic study of a Mexican surf camp (Comer, 2010) analysed feminine identities built by surfing and local women's perceptions of the impacts of related globalisation trends.

In Portugal, Fernandes (2014) showed that Portuguese surf camps attract mostly young western Europeans, a large share of whom are novice surfers and beginners mainly motivated by natural environment factors. These guests are further motivated by functional aspects linked to surf-related services (e.g. accommodations, cleanliness, equipment's condition and staff professionalism). In these tourists' case, functional, emotional and experiential values are directly linked to customer satisfaction, as opposed to price, novelty of activities and socialisation. Frank et al.'s (2015) survey of surf camp tourists in the Algarve highlighted their environmental awareness and willingness to pay more to

Surf camps in Portugal

In 2008, the surfing industry contributed approximately 200 million euros and 1000 to 2000 jobs to the Portuguese economy, including more than 100 surf schools and 200 surf-shops, 10 surf magazines, 20 surfboard factories and about 20 surf camps for foreign tourists (Bicudo & Horta, 2009). Portugal had around 522 documented surf spots in 2013 (Santos, 2013). However, the scientific literature on surf tourism in Portugal is still limited compared with other popular surfing destinations. Some studies in this country have focused on the social and economic value of surfing areas (Murphy & Bernal, 2008; Silva & Ferreira, 2014) for surfers and local communities (Bicudo & Horta, 2009; Silva & Ferreira, 2014). Others have analysed the competitive factors of surf tourism in Portugal (Santos, 2011), the importance of surf tourism strat- egies (Santos, 2013) or the main factors attracting surfers to surf camps (Fernandes, 2014).

Local research on surf tourists has illustrated tribal behaviours manifested through different travel patterns and various levels of fandom and associative behaviour patterns (Moutinho et al., 2007). Reis and Jorge (2012) distinguish between habitual surf tourists who prefer the Linha de Estoril, Ericeira and Peniche regions and occasional surf tourists favouring Sagres, Ericeira and Peniche. Their motivation factors are linked to natural features such as quality waves, weather conditions or diversity in surfing spots (Fernandes, 2014; Reis & Jorge, 2012), as well as entertainment, leisure, surf-related commerce and services' variety and price (Reis & Jorge, 2012). Questionnaires were used in Fernandes's (2014) study of Portuguese surf camp customers to identify their needs and satisfaction factors, as well as in Frank et al.'s (2015) research on the environmental awareness of surf tourists in the Algarve.

To summarise, despite an increasing number of studies on surf camps, some topics still merit more study, such as travel motivations and experiences in surf tourism other than surfing itself (Reynolds & Hritz, 2012). Research is needed especially on less studied destinations, and in-depth research is still scarce on specialised products such as surf camps. As most studies in this field have used surveys, interviews or participant observation, more methodological diversity is also needed. The present study thus sought to address these gaps by using a different method (i.e. content analysis) and a new data source (i.e. Web reviews) to examine visitors' experiences in Portuguese surf camps.

Methodology

Research context

Bicudo and Horta (2009) estimate about 50–70 thousand individuals surf in Portugal at least once a week, with an annual growth rate of between 25% and 30%. According to the world's top competitive surfing organisation, the World Surf League (WSL) (2017a, 2017b), Portugal is now recognised as a world-class surfing destination and strategic location for competitive surfing events. On the WSL's website alone, a search for 'Portugal' produces 5318 results (WSL, 2017a).

The most recent highpoint was in 2014 when this country hosted five WSL events: the first stage of the World Tour in Peniche, the first stage of the Women's World Tour in

source in studies of consumer experiences has increased in several areas of tourism

of Surfing Professionals' World Juniors in Ericeira (SurfPortugal, 2015). According to the Bloom Consulting Country Brand Ranking for 2014, Portugal was the most Internet-researched country for surfing opportunities between June 2013 and June 2014 (Tadeia, 2014).

After these successes, Turismo de Portugal (2014) invested 200,000 euros in filming *The McNamara Surf Trip* documentary to attract even more surf tourists. This series of videos are available online, helping to promote Portugal as a tourist destination from the perspective of surfers and seeking to increase the importance of surf and make this country the main surfing destination in Europe and one of the best in the world (Turismo de Portugal, 2014).

Currently, 82 surf clubs and 218 surf schools are registered with the Federação Portuguesa de Surf (Portuguese Surfing Federation), while 92 male surfers and 33 female surfers participate in the MEO Surfing League's top Portuguese surf competition (Federação Portuguesa de Surf, 2017). According to Portugal's Associação Nacional de Surfistas (National Surfers Association), about 200,000 Portuguese surf (Sequeira, 2016).

The surfing industry contributes an estimated 400 million euros to Portugal's economy, according to the Associação Nacional de Surfistas. The number of companies listed in the Registo Nacional dos Agentes de Animação Turistica (National Register of Tourist Entertainment Agents) that organise surfing activities has grown more than 28% annually in recent years (Sequeira, 2016).

After the first WSL competition in Peniche in 2009, more people became interested in learning how to surf and in renting equipment. In two years, the number of surf schools and camps doubled, and the number of customers increased about 20%. Stays in hotels in the area also increased about 1.5% (Lusa, 2012). The Portuguese coast, in general, is a perfect place for the expansion of surf camp businesses (Bicudo & Horta, 2009).

Five important surfing regions of Portugal were selected for the present study. The first three are Ericeira, which has the most concentrated stretch of waves in Europe (Turismo de Portugal, 2014), and Caparica and Cascais, which have easier waves for beginners (Turismo de Portugal, 2014). The others are Carcavelos, which is in the Cascais urban surf region (Turismo de Portugal, 2014), and Peniche, which is famous for its supertubes and known as the 'Wave Capital'.

Data collection

Traditional marketing research methods of studying consumer experiences such as surveys have certain limitations. These include poor response rates, information that cannot be further explored by researchers (Zhang & Cole, 2016) and high fieldwork costs when targeting consumers in different geographical locations. With the rise of Web 2.0 sites and review forums, customers can now easily disseminate their views and personal experiences and leave their feedback online for everyone to see (Au, Buhalis, & Law, 2014). Customers currently tend to rely on online feedback when making their choices (Au et al., 2014).

Online user-generated content in the form of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is a particularly appropriate source of accessible, reliable, credible and readily available information for both consumers and researchers (Lu & Stepchenkova, 2012). Its use as a data source in studies of consumer experiences has increased in several areas of tourism

research. One important aspect of studies examining the contents of Web travel reviews is identifying the travel service attributes that determine customer satisfaction, in order to guide travel product design and management (Lupu, Brochado, & Stoleriu, 2017; Zhang & Cole, 2016). Zhang and Cole (2016, p. 16) observe that 'eWOM has thus been recognised as a natural setting for the study of travellers' lived experiences'.

The present study followed this line of research, collecting 50 Web reviews of three schools in each of the five surf areas selected (i.e. Caparica, Cascais, Carcavelos, Peniche and Ericeira), which were written in English and posted either on Facebook or TripAdvisor. The objective was to identify the main dimensions of surf camp experiences. The number of Web reviews written in English up to the end of 2016 for each school ranged from 26 to 169, and the total number of reviews of the 15 schools was 1070. An interesting finding is the high level of satisfaction expressed in these reviews since, overall, 95% rated their experience as very good (4) or excellent (5). The 15 schools individually received highly positive ratings ranging from 76% to 100% of their guests. The final sample included 667 reviews from TripAdvisor and 77 reviews from the Facebook pages of 3 surf schools (i.e. 23, 26 and 34 reviews, respectively) added to complement the TripAdvisor reviews. The last 50 Web reviews written about each school (i.e. 15 surf camps) were selected.

The following variables were collected and input into an Excel file: the title, review text, quantitative rating, date and month of the post and the reviewer's nationality, gender and type of traveller (i.e. singles, families or friends). The quantitative ratings include the follow- ing categories: 1 = Terrible, 2 = Poor, 3 = Average, 4 = Very Good and 5 = Excellent. The average overall satisfaction rating of all reviews published in English for the 15 schools under analysis is 4.70 out of 5 (standard deviation = 0.20), ranging from 4.3 to 5.0.

Social media platforms encourage users to share their experiences, so their opinions can significantly influence purchase decisions made by other travellers about tourist destinations (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008). As previous studies have done (Brochado, Troilo, & Shah, 2017; Lupu et al., 2017; Pearce & Wu, 2016), only English reviews were gathered for analysis in the present research. English is the most frequently used language in Web reviews. In total, the 750 reviews added up to 58,347 words.

An analysis of these Web reviews showed that the sample comprised around 60% males and 40% females. These surfers came from 41 different countries. The majority were from Europe, followed by the US and Australia (5% each). In Europe, the main countries were the United Kingdom (27%), Germany (12%), Portugal (9%), the Netherlands (4%), France (4%) and Switzerland (4%).

Data content analysis

Leximancer was used because this software conducts unsupervised analyses of natural language texts provided in a digital format. Leximancer offers quantitative procedures based on Bayesian statistical theory, which can be employed to do content analyses of fragmented pieces of evidence. The algorithms applied use nonlinear dynamics and machine learning (Wu, Wall, & Pearce, 2014). Other powerful quantitative content analysis approaches summarise tourists' experiences by identifying the largest word occurrences and their co-occurrence by means of factor analyses, such as CAPTAC and Wordle (e.g. Zhang & Cole, 2016). Leximancer, however, provides an inductive identification of

Table 1. Use of Leximancer to identify main dimensions of consumer experiences.

Reference	Research Context	Sample	Main themes
Wu et al. (2014)	Silk Market (China)	149 reviews	Renminbi, buy, fake, bargaining, fun and price (6)
Kazeminia et al. (2015)	Seniors' narratives	517 narratives	Insurance, travel, family, hotels, cruise, use, time, forum, stay and large (10)
Pearce and Wu (2015)	Impression Liu Sanjie (China)	350 reviews	Seats, people, light, impressive, fantastic and performance (6)
Pearce and Wu (2016)	Paronella Park (Australia)	167 reviews	Expensive, tour, garden, story and experience (5)
Rodrigues et al. (2017)	Medical tourism	603 reviews	Treatment, cost, service, happy, staff, recommend and questions (7)
Brochado et al. (2017)	Airbnb (Portugal, India and US)	1776 reviews	Stay, host, place, location, apartment, room and city (7)
Lupu et al. (2017)	Dracula's castle (Romania)	1827 reviews	Trip, Dracula's castle, experience, tourist, visit, Dracula, castle, souvenirs, inside, outside and stairs (11)

Cretchley, 2015). This software has recently been used in research in a variety of tourism contexts (see Table 1).

The most important units in Leximancer's semantic pattern extraction process are words, concepts and themes. This software offers both conceptual and relational analyses, measuring not only the presence of defined concepts in texts but also the ways in which the concepts are interrelated. The analysis process begins by automatically identifying words that appear most frequently in texts. These words are called 'concept seeds' as they represent the starting point of the concepts' definition, with more terms being added to the definition through a learning process. The purpose of concept learning is to discover clusters of words that travel together throughout texts (i.e. concepts). These words are weighted according to their frequency of occur- rence in sentences that include the concepts compared with the frequency of the words' occurrence elsewhere.

In addition to identifying concepts in texts, Leximancer determines the frequency of co-occurrence between concepts, which it then uses to generate a concept map. Concepts that settle near one another in the map space appear frequently together, often in the same segments of text. Once Leximancer has carried out the learning process and developed a list of concepts contained in the texts – including the concepts' relationship to each other – the information is presented via the concept map. Concepts are clustered into higher-level themes that aid interpretation and are shown as coloured circles on this map. As in Brochado et al. (2017) and Lupu et al.'s (2017) research, the results of the present study's narrative (i.e. qualitative) analyses indicate which source files (i.e. Web reviews) contain particular topics (Tkaczynski et al., 2015). As the guests' overall satisfaction with the 15 surf camps was extremely high, the reviews presented for each facility also highlight positive experiences.

Results

In order to answer the present study's research question, a concept map was generated that exhibits the most common themes and concepts derived from the Web reviews in the sample, as well as the frequency of these units' occurrence and co-occurrence. This map shows concepts – represented by nodes – that are grouped into themes –

The analyses identified 10 themes, as well as their connectivity rates, which indicate the degree to which each theme is connected to the other concepts in the map, ranging from 20% to 100%. The connectivity rate refers to a theme's internal items being mentioned together a specific percentage of times (Pearce & Wu, 2016). Therefore, themes can be ranked by their level of importance based on their connectivity rate. The main themes are as follows, by order of importance: 'surf' (connectivity rate of 100%; 683 reviews), 'instructors' (82%; 598), 'place' (79%; 537), 'camp' (64%; 468), 'beach' (54%; 383), 'staff' (49%; 352), 'experience' (41%; 306), 'wave' (38%; 288), 'home' (30%; 155) and 'team' (20%; 73) (see Figure 1 below).

The themes of surf, instructor and team are linked with sports lessons.

Fig... Surf Camp stay
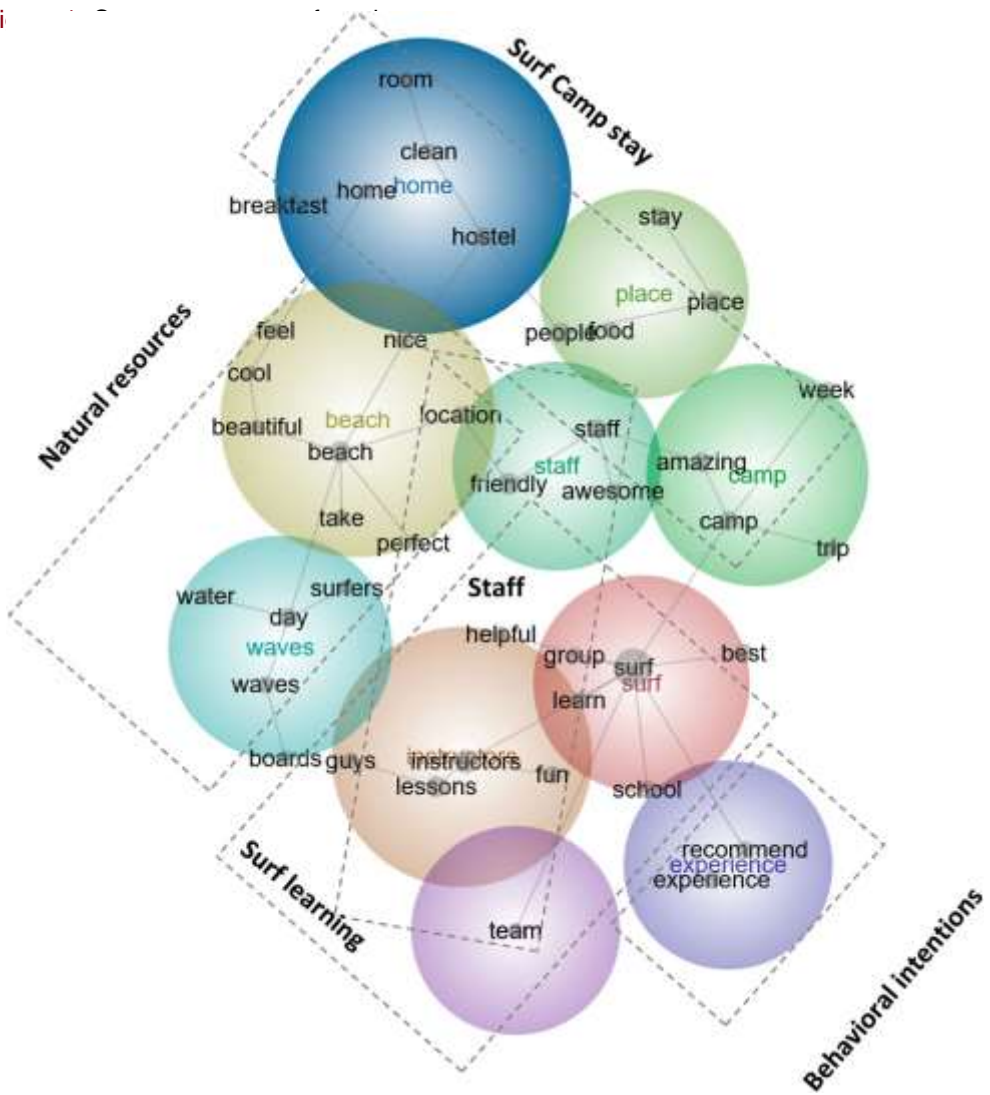
The themes of staff, instructor and team are associated with human resources and interactions during surf camp experiences. The theme of experience is connected with recommendations in the post-purchase phase.

Surf

The surf theme includes the concepts 'surf' (count: 888, relevance: 100%), 'best (surf school)' (189, 21%), 'school' (166, 19%), 'learning (experiences)' (93, 10%) and 'group' (64, 07%). This is the most prominent theme, and it is linked with surf schools and surfing lessons in group classes at surf camps. The reviews also highlight that surf schools offer lessons for guests with different levels of surfing experience. After each review excerpt below, the area in Portugal, gender, nationality and traveller type – whenever these data are available – are noted in parentheses.

One surf camp visitor shared, 'Th[is is th]e best surf school :) [and t]he best place to try and … learn surfing. [It is a t]op quality surf school [and the] best spot on Ericeira [beach] to learn [to] surf' (Ericeira, male, Portuguese, friends). Another surfer wrote, '[These are a g]reat group of people to learn surf [with]. … Praia do Infante is fantastic' (Carcavelos, Danish). According to another visitor, the surf camp has a '[k]ind and welcom- ing crew[. This is the] best place to stay in Baleal, learn to surf, party and meet people. [This s]urf school is very good[, providing] easy learning [experiences], transport and great teachers for any level surfing' (Peniche, male, French). An additional visitor wrote, 'There are lessons for every level of surfing. [I d]efinitely would go there again!!!' (Ericeira, male, Swiss). A final reviewer stated, 'I strongly recommend [this place] … , either for beginners (adults or children) or for someone looking to improve his/her surf skills' (Carcavelos, male, US).

Instructors

The instructor theme encompasses the following concepts: 'instructor' (339, 38%), 'lesson' (244, 27%), 'fun' (145, 16%), 'guy' (123, 14%) and 'helpfulness' (86, 10%). This second theme includes narratives that highlight the role of instructors, lessons and their positive characteristics, such as being fun and helpful.

According to a surf student, 'The actual surf lessons where really well organised [and] great fun and all the instructors were helpful, great fun and enthusiastic!' (Ericeira). Another visitor wrote, 'Thanks to these guys, surfing is now my new favourite thing. It was my first experience and I absolutely loved it[;] the instructors made lessons as useful as [they were] enjoyable and fun' (Carcavelos, female, Russian). Another surfer felt that '[t]he teachers are extremely helpful, caring and fun. The lessons are personal and all of us managed to stand on our boards after the first class' (Cascais, female, Portuguese, family).

Place

The place theme includes the concepts of 'place' (273, 31%), 'people' (195, 22%), 'stay' (182, 20%) and 'food' (92, 10%). Surf camp visitors recalled the place where they stayed,

A visitor shared, 'I warn you now, you'll never want to leave this place[: g]reat people, great food [and] great surf' (Ericeira, male, British). Another visitor wrote:

[I found g]reat people, great food [and] great surf! I stayed at the Rapture Camp in Ericeira for two weeks in mid-April, after having previously stayed at … their Bali camps during previous years[,] as well as a couple of other surf camps around the world. (Ericeira, female, Swedish, couple)

A surfer attached positive emotions to the place where he stayed:

[This was my b]est Surfcamp [sic] ever. [I] absolutely loved my stay at Gota d'Agua surf camp[. I]t was only supposed to be for 2 nights and i [sic] ended up staying for a week. Ricardo and the crew are awesome! I have stayed at a lot [sic] of places and this has been my favourite so far. If your [sic] looking for a nice relaxing place to stay or to learn how to surf in a beautiful place with the best people, i [sic] highly recommend Gota d'Agua! (Caparica, female, German, couple)

Camp

The camp theme includes the concepts of 'camp' (196, 22%), 'amazement' (173, 19%), 'week' (172, 19%) and 'trip' (85, 10%). Surfers recalled their surf camps, which they frequently said were amazing. A surfer wrote:

[The] weather [was] amazing, [the] camp [was] amazing [and the] lessons [were] amazing. … The main reason you will have a great trip is the Rapture family[;] I felt part of it from day one. … [I c]ame to Maximum with the Uni surf club and [I] had the most amazing week ever at a surf camp! (Ericeira, male, Ukrainian, single)

Another surfer felt that '[t]he good and peaceful vibe during the lessons but also in the camp made my trip complete' (Cascais, male, Dutch). According to a different visitor, '[This was a]n amazing week at a great surf camp! My girlfriend and I recently spent a week learning to surf … [at] Baleal Surfcamp and had an amazing time there' (Peniche, male, British, couple).

Beach

The beach theme encompasses the concepts of 'beach' (249, 28%), 'niceness' (175, 20%), 'location' (105, 12%), 'feeling' (83, 9%), 'perfection' (75, 8%), 'beauty' (70, 8%), '(breath)taking' (50, 6%) and 'coolness' (52, 6%). A visitor wrote, 'T[his is] … the perfect location. Ericeira itself is already so beautiful and to have your camp in front of the beach … [makes it] even more [so]' (Ericeira, female, single). Another visitor reported, 'Guincho and Carcavelos are beautiful beaches and the surrounding nature is breathtaking. If you've ever wanted to try surfing but never dared – just do it' (Cascais, female, Swedish).

My son has surfed since he was 5 years old and he absolutely loves it! Guincho is one of the most beautiful beaches in the world and after the surf you can chill and enjoy lunch at Bar Guincho[, which] … has great burgers and salads. Surf[ing] … is also a fun activity for groups – super fun[, which is an] incentive [to join in]! (Cascais, female, family)

Staff

The staff theme has the concepts of 'friendliness' (250, 28%), 'staff' (162, 18%) and friends).

awesome staff (most of them surfers [who give off] really good vibes and [are] friendly)' (Ericeira, German, single). A visitor reported, '[I h]ad such an amazing week here, and it would not have been the same without the lovely and friendly staff, who were all great!' (Peniche, female, British, friends). Still another reviewer said, 'What made it an awesome stay was how friendly the staff were[;] Max the manager couldn't do enough for … [us]' (Ericeira, female, friends).

Experience

The experience theme includes the concepts of 'experience' (156, 18%) and 'recommendation' (165, 19%). This theme is linked with the post-purchase phase of surf camp experiences. A typical review reads, '[This was an a]mazing experience! [This is h]ighly recommended!' Another visitor wrote, '[This is a g]reat place, [with] great stuff[, offering a] … great experience! [This is h]ighly recommended!'

Wave

The wave theme has the concepts of 'wave' (193, 22%), 'day' (118, 13%), 'board' (103, 11%), 'surfer' (101, 10%) and 'water' (83, 8%). A surf traveller shared, 'On our second day we had really large waves due to bad weather and Gabby gave great safety instructions on how to handle our boards in the water' (Cascais, friends, British). Another surfer wrote, 'Alex has a staff of experienced surfers from all over the world (judging from their accents) who get into the water with you and direct you to good waves and [they] are all-around super encouraging' (Cascais, female, American, couple). A third surf student reported:

> To manage to stand on the board was much tougher than I could ever imagine but with instructors like the ones at Ericeira Surf Camp anything is possible! They helped us fight through really tuff [sic] waves, they were always in the water with us and their lips turned blue just so that WE [sic] could catch good waves! (Ericeira, female, friends)

Home

The theme home includes the concepts of 'home' (169, 18%), 'hostel' (155, 17%), 'cleaning' (87, 10%), 'room' (80, 9%) and 'breakfast' (38, 4%). This theme is linked with the accommodations at surf camps. A guest shared, 'The second star is for the hostel[,] which ha[s] really nice … clean rooms, a cosy living room with a big TV and good wi-fi. I also liked the breakfast (cereal, bread, coffee and fruit)' (Ericeira, female, Danish, couple). Another surf camp visitor wrote:

> The outer space is as good as the hostel itself[. T]he hot water showers, the big summer dining space and the garden terrace were the main highlights. T[here was also a t]asty breakfast featuring some morning essentials, impeccable cleaning and really comfortable beds (Caparica, female, Portuguese, friends).

A different reviewer stated, 'Rooms are cleaned every other day and [they] are fairly well maintained. We had a double occupancy room in one of the beach houses, but spent most of the time with the other surfers in the hostel' (Peniche, male, Canadian, friends).

Team

The Leximancer analysis further identified the theme and concept of 'team' (103, 10%). A typical review reads as follows, 'David and his team are great instructors and provide really good equipment. I would definitely recommend booking with this school if your [sic] surfing in the area' (Cascais, male, British). A different surfer wrote, 'Ricardo and his team are great hosts' (Caparica, German). Still another reported, '[They are such a] … helpful and professional team!!! [The camp has a g]reat atmosphere of freedom and joy. The place is full of great people from all over the world. [I d]efinitely will come back soon!!!' (Peniche, female, German, couple).

Discussion and conclusions

More than 1500 square kilometres long, the Portuguese coast boasts high quality waves that are suitable for different type of surfers – from beginners to experienced surfers (Bicudo & Horta, 2009). The present research focused on the significance of surf tourism in five areas of Portugal (i.e. Cascais, Caparica, Carcavelos, Peniche and Ericeira) in order to identify the main dimensions of surf camp experiences based on visitors' narratives in online reviews. The results are of potential value to the literature in this field because they contribute to a better understanding of experiences of specialised services in surf camps in an understudied country – Portugal.

The results also demonstrate the usefulness of conducting context analyses of Web reviews as an alternative to traditional survey methods (Zhang & Cole, 2016). Online visitor reviews provide substantial insights into guests' experiences in surf camps, thereby facilitating the identification of the most significant dimensions of surf camp experiences.

The present content analysis of online visitor reviews revealed the existence of 10 themes: surf, instructor, place, camp, beach, staff, experience, wave, home and team. The themes of surf, instructor and team specifically describe surf learning experiences offered by surf camps. As this research focused on surf travellers with organised travel plans, these themes add to previous studies' findings on surf tourism.

The results confirm the importance of key natural assets of Portuguese surf camps. Beaches, waves and water were mentioned by most reviewers, in association with positive aesthetic and practical attributes (e.g. beautiful, nice and perfect features). These themes' weight in terms of connectivity and frequency shows that surfing is at the centre of guests' narratives and camp experiences.

As many studies have shown before, waves are also a key destination attribute that surf tourists look for in general (Buckley, 2002a, 2002b; Reis & Jorge, 2012; Towner & Orams, 2016). Waves are especially important to experienced surfers, who are primarily attracted by the quality and variety of waves (Dolnicar & Fluker, 2003a, 2003b). The beach is also central to surfing culture, and this feature is connected to the quality of natural environments, which is another aspect that has been directly linked to surf destinations' appeal (Barbieri & Sotomayor, 2013; Fernandes, 2014).

However, these themes' lower weighting in the concept map shows that waves and natural environment are not the most important destination attributes associated with friends).

and social aspects (e.g. instructors, schools, lessons and fun activities). Less importance given to waves has been associated with novice and beginner surfers in previous studies (Barbieri & Sotomayor, 2013; Dolnicar & Fluker, 2003a, 2003b). The present finding could also indicate the dominance of social and educational interests among surf camp visitors, thus confirming and expanding on Fernandes's (2014) findings for other Portuguese surf camps.

The current results reveal the existence of three themes in descriptions of surf camp stays: home, place and camp. These underline the significant role of the camps' visitor facilities, which was also reported in previous studies of Portuguese surf camps (Fernandes, 2014) and events (Reis & Jorge, 2012), as well as for other countries (Dolnicar & Fluker, 2003a). In addition, reviewers particularly emphasise functional aspects such as breakfast and food. These dimensions of surf camp stays reflect recent developments in the global surfing industry, which is increasingly seeking to offer packaged experiences and provide the necessary infrastructure for these, including lodging (Barbieri & Sotomayor, 2013). This could also be a special feature of surf camps, which appear in this case to attract the price-conscious safety seekers identified by Dolnicar and Fluker (2003a, 2003b). Apart from the surfing, personal safety, health factors, quality of accommodations and lodging facilities for families are all important.

Another aspect observed in the present study was that the reviews focus mainly on intangible attributes and specific experiences since about half of the reviewers in the sample wrote about their own experiences. This reinforces previous findings on surfing culture and lifestyles (Moutinho et al., 2007), which highlight a common search for adventure, thrills, freedom and a certain state of mind. Many reviewers appreciate the camps' general atmosphere (e.g. the 'surf vibe' of the Peniche camps). The concept map generated also shows the strong link between visitors' experiences and their attitudes towards surf camps. Experiences are the basis for recommendations and repeated visits, as shown by how many reviewers mentioned previous visits to the same camp.

The surfers further refer not only to the instructors who provide surf lessons but also to the camp staff. According to the reviews analysed, educational and physical experiences are the most important feature, as shown by the strongest themes of surf and instructor. This is followed in terms of significance by the social dimensions associated with primary camp attributes (i.e. people, place, friendly instructors and staff, fun instructors and surfing groups and teams). Next comes contact with nature since the beach theme is associated with the concepts of feelings, coolness, niceness and perfection, as well as visitors' overall experiences in these places (i.e. the place and home themes).

Five themes (i.e. staff, surf, instructor, team and camp) refer to educational experiences, which are mainly built around camp staff. These individuals are described as friendly, awesome, helpful or amazing, and the staff enable both educational and social experiences. The frequent occurrence of the group, team and friendliness concepts also confirms the importance of socialisation and conviviality. These aspects have already been identified as key elements of surfing culture in general (Neto, 1995) and a key travel motivation of surf tourists (Moutinho et al., 2007) – especially female surfers (Reynolds & Hritz, 2012).

However, the present findings contradict the results reported by Barbieri and Sotomayor (2013), Fernandes (2014) and Williams and Soutar (2009), who found socialisation

is less important as a motivation and satisfaction factor for surf tourists. The learning and interaction themes are closer to previous studies' findings on adventure tourists, whose experiences are based on their interactions with nature and other individuals.

To summarise, the present study's results contribute to the literature on surf tourism by addressing the need for more research on surf camps, particularly those in Portugal. This research thus identified the main components of customers' experiences in Portuguese surf camps. The value of these findings lies also in the use of a new and valuable source of research data on surf tourism, consisting of spontaneous visitor narratives that have been freely formulated in online reviews. These have a strong impact on general destination image and future visitor decisions because of the significant influence of Internet reviews on travel behaviours.

Given the fast, recent growth of Portugal as an international surf destination (Bicudo & Horta, 2009; Tadeia, 2014; Turismo de Portugal, 2014) and the increasing numbers of Portuguese surf camps being established, the present study's results have significant practical implications for the tourism industry. These findings should facilitate managerial decisions that benefit surfers since their overall experience could thus be improved. The results also can assist surf camps to position themselves better in all dimensions of their target customers' experiences, as well as helping surf destinations to improve their communication strategies.

The quality of coastal natural environments (i.e. beaches and waves) needs to be capitalised upon by surf agencies to ensure excellent surf camp experiences. Marketing messages can highlight surfing destinations' natural features, as well as the functional and emotional value of these places, namely, the quality of camps' visitor facilities and the relationships they foster. The social value of surf camp experiences underlined in reviews corresponds to the larger trend of satisfying individuals' increasing need to connect, socialise and make friends. This implies paying more attention to both professional and social qualities of camp employees.

In addition, surf camps need to improve and diversify their offer of both tangible and intangible goods (e.g. visitor facilities and educational and recreational group activities) in order to satisfy specific market segments of surf tourists – especially novice and beginner surfers. As experiences were found to be closely linked to recommendations in visitors' reviews, surf camps should deliver more complex and personalised experiences to increase their appeal to future customers. Given the large surf market in Europe (Bicudo & Horta, 2009), these strategies could have a significant impact on Portuguese surf destinations' future attractiveness and income.

Regardless of this study's useful results, it also was subject to some limitations. First, only reviews on five surf areas in Portugal were examined. Second, no consistent data were available on reviewers' profile (e.g. families, singles and friends), so no inferences can be made about whether surfers with different profiles use dissimilar narratives to describe their experiences. Last, although this research assumed that people who go to surf schools are surf tourists, the Web reviews analysed did not clearly indicate whether learning to surf was the sole purpose of these guests' trips or whether they just took surfing lessons as one part of their vacation in the area.

Thus, one possible approach that merits future research is to link the dimensions of surf camp experiences identified in this study with reviewers' demographic and psychographic profiles. Other aspects that deserve further research are theoretical dimensions of surf

camp experiences such as embodied experiences (Spinney, 2006), authentication of surf places (Lamont, 2014) or the sense of communitas that surf camps create (Chalip, 2006). Finally, as this study only presented narratives of positive experiences due to guests' high satisfaction with the surf camps in question, future studies could conduct in-depth interviews to identify critical incidents that might trigger negative reviews.

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