Surf Destination Attributes

Surfing is a surface water sport in which an individual uses a board to ride a wave. Surfing has aroused the interest of many people (Reis, 2020), largely due to the proliferation and commercialization of images of perfect and uncrowded waves in distant and exotic places. The number of surfers has grown exponentially and surfing is an activity with global representation (Ponting and McDonald, 2013). Destinations with excellent natural conditions for surfing promote themselves as such (Reis, 2015). The evolution of the tourist market, the destination life cycle, the consequent adaptation to the demand, and the new global dynamics of tourism created the need for the renewal of tourist destinations, giving rise to 'surf destinations' (ibid.).

A surf destination is a surfing tourist space with a set of attributes that interact with each other to create a composite product. It comprises not only surf-related attractions, but the whole set of integrated goods and services, infrastructure, equipment and support services. Surf tourists are becoming an increasingly relevant tourist market segment (Reis and Jorge, 2012). Surfing attracts both tourists who practise this activity and others who feel captivated by the activity despite not taking part (Dolnicar and Fluker, 2003).

A surf destination comprises a set of strategic attributes that satisfy, encourage and motivate surf tourists to visit and to stay longer within the destination (Reis, 2020). These attributes are crucial for the competitiveness of surf destinations and determine the destination image as well as its choice by surf tourists (da Rosa et al., 2020; Reis, 2020). As depicted in the figure, these attributes can be categorized into surf-related attractions; other attractions; local surf industry; other destination elements; accessibility; and infrastructure and support equipment. These categories include both surf product-related attributes and attributes related to other destination components, listed in the table.

'Surf-related attractions' are the attributes most valued by surf tourists and wave characteristics are particularly valued (Ponting and McDonald, 2013; Reis, 2020; Reis and Jorge, 2012) – their quality, variety, consistency, quantity and their suitability for various surf levels. Aspects related to surf beaches are also significant – their variety, quality and beauty, and their suitability for surfing. The search for the perfect wave is the goal of any surfer. Lack of crowds at the destination and especially in the sea is particularly appreciated, as are isolated and unspoilt places to surf (Brochado, Stoleriu and Lupu, 2018; Sotomayor and Barbieri, 2016). No crowd in the water – 'one surfer, one wave', the surfer's ideal – is an important attribute, since the more people in the water, the less attractive the surf destination (Dolnicar and Fluker, 2003). The importance assigned to the conditions for surfing confirms the socially constructed notion of the essence of the surfing experience – the incessant search for the perfect wave (Ponting and McDonald, 2013) in undiscovered or unpopulated places (Sotomayor and Barbieri, 2016), without crowds (Dolnicar and Fluker, 2003), fulfilling the dream of visiting a place that reflects the imagination of surfing tourists (Ponting and McDonald, 2013).

Other important attractions associated with surf are the weather, surf competitions and events, and surf culture. Surf culture is important since surfing fosters a specific way of life in the surfing community, a culture widely

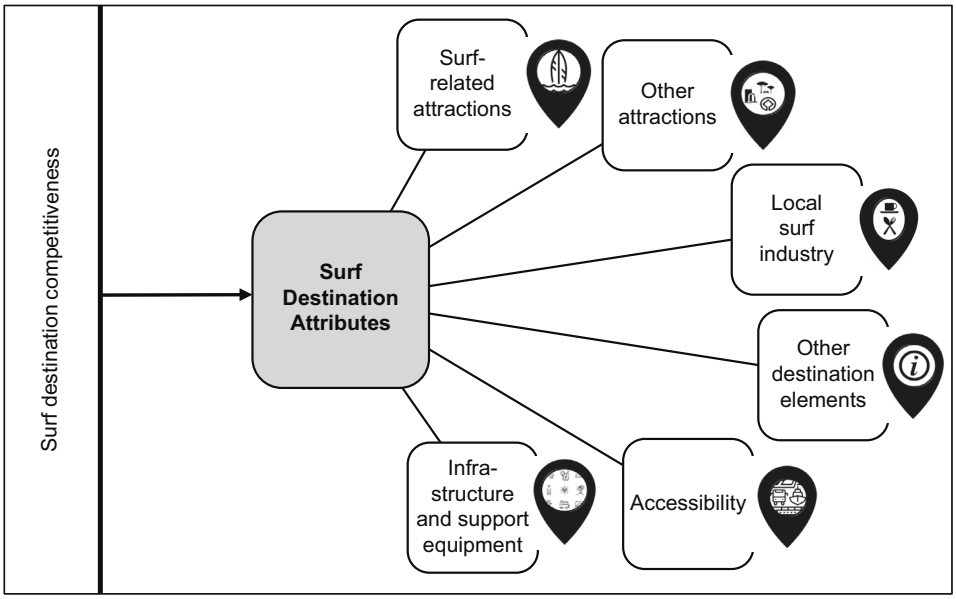
referred to by the media that is increasingly in fashion (Iliuta and Wiltshier, 2018; Reis, 2020). Attitudes towards surf are not limited to the sport, but are also manifested in clothing, food, nature and music, among other aspects. Thus, when visiting a surfing destination, tourists experience surf culture in the surrounding environment (e.g., on the beach, in the urban space, in bars and restaurants, in accommodation, in local shops) (Reis and Jorge, 2012). The experience that the surf tourist seeks in a surf destination is doing, seeing, hearing and talking about surf (ibid.).

Although surf-related attractions are the main attractions since they motivate the surf tour, 'other attractions' affect the competitiveness of a surf destination. Nightlife and recreational activities are fundamental aspects and Iliuta and Wiltshier (2018) note that spa services and wellness activities are increasingly significant in the surf tourism experience, especially when there are no conditions for surfing. Historical and cultural heritage are also important (Sotomayor and Barbieri, 2016), as they complement the tourist destination offer. Natural attractions such as mountains, valleys, forests, lakes and rivers are considered relevant for the quality of the surf experience and contribute to a positive perception of the destination image (Brochado et al., 2018).

'Local surf industry' relates to surf-related accommodation and food and beverage services (Sotomayor and Barbieri, 2016), where surf tourists can stay, eat, sleep and feel comfortable. In the scope of this kind of industry, the diversity and quality of surf schools, as well as of surf shops that offer surf-related products and activities, are also important (Brochado et al., 2018; Reis, 2020).

'Other destination elements' are also highly valued by surfers. Among these are hospitality and the atmosphere, identified as welcoming, sporty and relaxing. Surfers want to relax and enjoy their free time. The presence of likeminded, young and fun people, with opportunities for social interaction, whether with surfers, local community or other types of tourists (Sotomayor and Barbieri, 2016), is also valued in this kind of destination. Destination popularity and good reputation are also relevant attributes for surf destination image, as is a safe and healthy environment (Dolnicar and Fluker, 2003).

'Accessibility' of the surf destination as relates to infrastructure such as roads, airports and railways, but also the accessibility



Surf destination attributes model

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Surf destination categories

Categories	References
Surf-related attractions	Waves (quality, variety, consistency, quantity)
	Good conditions for surfing (uncrowded destinations, spots, waves, weather)
	Good climate
	Diversity of surf spots
	Secret spots
	Long surf season
	Surf sponsors
	Surf tours
	Surf beaches (variety, quality, beauty)
	Surfing competitions and surf events
	Surf culture and a surf-related way of life:
	environment/atmosphere/surf spirit
	surf community
	local surf culture
	presence of surfers
	surf rituals
Other attractions	Natural attractions
	Historical and cultural heritage
	Other leisure/recreational activities
	Other tourist attractions
	Nightlife
Local surf industry	Surf shops
	Surf brands
	Rental of surf-related products
	Surf schools
	Surf accommodation
	Surf food and beverages
Other destination elements	Good atmosphere (welcoming, sporty, relaxing)
	Likeminded people
	Reputation/fashion of the destination
	Opportunity to meet surfers, non-surfers and the local community
	Friendliness of the local community
	Local culture
	Safe and healthy destination
	Good value for money

Categories	References
Accessibility	Beach accessibility
	Destination accessibility
	Proximity to accommodation
	Proximity to urban centre
	Infrastructure such as roads, airports and railways
Infrastructure and support equipment	Lockers for storing personal belongings
	Beach changing rooms
	Places to wash materials
	Beach concession area (lifeguarding, sun lounger rental, food and drink, paddleboards, children's play area, etc.)
	Car parks
	Walkways

at the destination, such as from the beach to accommodation and, above all, accessibility to the beach (Brochado et al., 2018; Sotomayor and Barbieri, 2016) play an important role. However, too easy access to the beach is not always welcome – the essence of surfing is the search for the perfect wave, often in difficult-to-reach and sparsely populated places (Ponting and McDonald, 2013).

Another attribute is 'infrastructure and support equipment' at the beach, like lockers for storing personal belongings, beach changing rooms and places to wash materials, beach concession area (Reis and Jorge, 2012; Sotomayor and Barbieri, 2016), car parks (Brochado et al., 2018; Dolnicar and Fluker, 2003), and walkways designed to preserve the natural heritage, ecosystem and biodiversity. The infrastructure and support equipment can be used by surfers, but also by other tourists. These aspects ensure comfort as well fulfilling surf tourists' needs.

Surf destination attributes are critical for competitiveness. They encourage surf tourists to visit and stay longer within the destination. The fact that a surf destination has a set of surf-related attractions and, consequently, good conditions for surf, may not be sufficient to perceive a tourism destination as capable of providing memorable and unforgettable surf experiences. All competitiveness attributes require monitoring and evaluation towards good surf destination management. These six distinct categories of attributes signal those key areas in which destinations need to focus particular attention when searching for strategic ideas and solutions. Surf destination attributes can help define appropriate and competitive strategies, which can naturally contribute to the affirmation of the surf destination as an excellent place for a real surf experience. Surf destinations must therefore create conditions to satisfy the needs and interests of surf tourists so that the experience can be positive and, consequently, they will revisit and/or recommend it.

PATRÍCIA MARIA REIS AND MARIA JOÃO CARNEIRO

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