

Tourist experiences in a wine region – the case of the Portuguese Beira Interior

DIANA CUNHA * [diicunha@gmail.com]

CATARINA GRILO ** [catarinaferreiragrilo@gmail.com]

HELENA ALVES *** [halves@ubi.pt]

ELISABETH KASTENHOLZ **** [elisabethk@ua.pt]

Abstract | Visitors' experiences as reported on social media constitute relevant data that not only represent memories and allow post-visit evaluation of the experience, but also influence third-party future experiences via the phenomenon of "word-of-mouth".

In this context, the present study aims to understand the wine tourism experiences of visitors to the specific wine region of Beira Interior in Central Portugal, as reported on TripAdvisor. A sample of 300 reviews was selected and subjected to content analysis using NVivo. Several types of experiences were considered (e.g., nature, culture, gastronomy, wine degustation), taking into account the dimensions of experience according to Schmitt's model (1999a): sense, feel, think, act, relate), emotional tonality (positive/negative) of the lived experiences, and overall satisfaction with the visit.

This territory in general elicits positive feelings in visitors, who feel satisfied and surrendered to the region's magnificent landscapes, material cultural heritage, and gastronomy. Despite being a wine destination, wine per se is not yet the protagonist of these experiences. We discuss the main implications of our results and put forth suggestions to improve this region's tourism offer in order to promote its attractiveness and further development.

Keywords | Experience tourism, territory, Beira Interior, TripAdvisor, content analysis

* **PhD in Clinical Psychology** from the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Coimbra and an **Integrated Master** in Clinical Psychology from the same University. **Research Fellowship** at FCT project 'TWINE – Co-creating sustainable Tourism & WINE Experiences in rural areas' (2018-2021). **Researcher** at GOVCOPP (Governance, Competitiveness and Public Policies).

** **PhD Student** in Communication Sciences in University of Beira Interior (Portugal), **Researcher** at LabCom in University of Beira Interior (Portugal).

*** **PhD**, Master and a degree in Management. **Associate Professor** at the Department of Management and Economics of the University of Beira Interior and **Researcher** at the Center for Studies in Business Sciences (NECE).

**** **PhD in Tourism** from the University of Aveiro (Portugal). **Associate Professor** at the Department of Economics, Management, Industrial Engineering and Tourism - DEGEIT) University of Aveiro (Portugal). **Full Researcher** of the Governance, Competitiveness and Public Policies Research Unit -GOVCOPP), University of Aveiro (Portugal).

1. Introduction

Rural wine tourism has been attracting growing interest in recent years, both from tourism markets and wine producers (De Uña-Álvarez & Villarino-Pérez, 2019; Hall et al., 2000), and even from academia (Cunha et al., 2020).

Sometimes also referred to as "*terroir* tourism", rural wine tourism (Holland et al., 2014) has clear potential to provide diverse tourism experiences that despite being focused on wine are not exhausted in this product and allow a broad exploration of wine-growing territories (Holland et al., 2014; Kastenholz et al., 2021).

Thus, wine tourism refers to the act of traveling with the purpose of visiting, getting acquainted with and experiencing wineries and wine-producing regions, as well as exploring the relationship of wine with local culture and lifestyle (Western Australian Tourism Commission, 2000). Rural wine tourism also has the potential to stimulate the sale and promotion of a region's wines and other endogenous products (Bruwer, 2003), thus creating significant multiplier effects on the local economy and constituting a valuable rural development tool (Gómez et al., 2019).

In this sense, relevant knowledge gained about the visitors' profiles, their travel behavior, their most sought for experiences and how they live them, as well as their satisfaction levels, is critically crucial information to develop strategies to further these destinations' competitiveness by maximizing their commercial potential (Miguéns et al., 2008).

A relatively informal but still quite valid and increasingly popular (Van, 1986) way to amass these data is by analyzing reviews posted by visitors on social networks. As reported on social media, visitors' experiences constitute relevant data, because they not only represent memories and allow post-visit evaluation of the experience, but also influence third-party future experiences via the phenomenon of "word of mouth" (Toral et al., 2018).

Following this framework, this study aims to characterize the wine tourism experience in the Portuguese region of Beira Interior — recently boosted by the *Beira Interior Route* — by analyzing visitors' reviews posted on TripAdvisor, which is one of the most used travel information platforms worldwide (Miguéns et al., 2008).

This analysis considers different types of experiences (e.g., nature-, culture-, gastronomy- and wine-related experiences), the dimensions of experience proposed by Schmitt (1999a), emotional tonality of the lived experiences, and their impact on visitor recommendation, as further detailed in the methodology section.

Next, wine tourism, tourist experience, and social network analysis are theoretically contextualized. Subsequently, the empirical study is presented by describing the case of the Beira Interior region, explaining the methodological procedures adopted and detailing the main results. The article concludes with theoretical reflections on rural wine tourism experiences and a discussion of the implications for both managing and marketing of the destination under study.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1. Wine tourism

Wine tourism can be understood as "special interest tourism", typically motivated by a particular interest in wine via on-site tasting or experiencing the atmosphere and the multiple facets of a wine-producing region (Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002; Hall & Mitchell, 2002). Wine tourism originally involved trips primarily motivated by and focused on wine-tasting and wine-purchasing events, often based in wineries and aimed at gaining knowledge about wine-production processes (Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002; Hall & Mitchell, 2002).

However, the perspective on wine tourism has

become increasingly more comprehensive, focusing now not only on wine, but also on the entire vitivinicultural *terroir*, its multifaceted aspects as a “tourist *terroir*” by recognizing the wide variety of experiences that it can foster — nature, history, gastronomy, among others (De Uña-Álvarez & Villarino-Pérez, 2019; Hall & Mitchell, 2002; Holland et al., 2014). This “*terroir* tourism” offers a valuable opportunity to provide richer, more engaging and more memorable experiences by eliciting greater engagement with the place (Gross et al., 2008), which naturally translates into both increased sales of endogenous products (e.g., local wines) and loyalty to regional brands (Galati et al., 2017). In this way, through “*terroir* tourism”, the wine-growing region strengthens and diversifies its economic development opportunities, which in turn stimulates the economic, social and cultural structures that transcend the wine product itself (Hall et al., 2000; Pellin & Vieira, 2015). A more diverse and properly articulated rural wine tourism destination would increase attractiveness not only for wine lovers, but also for those less interested in this product (Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002), even for visitors to the region who would end up discovering the regional wine, albeit only during such tourist experience, originally motivated by other attractions of the territory. Despite the increasingly recognized potential of the multiple heritage resources (both natural and cultural, material and intangible), landscapes, people, products and non-wine-centric services of wine-growing regions, the vitivinicultural *terroir* experience is rarely studied in a systematic and integrative fashion that comprises its various dimensions as a strategy to promote the success of these destinations.

2.2. Tourist Experience

Tourism is first and foremost a social and psychological phenomenon, and in this sense the tourist experience is a central aspect of the attrac-

tiveness of a destination, for there is increasing demand and appreciation of pleasant, meaningful, authentic and interactive experiences (Carvalho et al., 2016; Carvalho et al., 2021; Kastenholz et al., 2012). The tourist experience can be defined as a set of psychological events through which a tourist actively participates, physically and/or mentally, in activities and interacts with other subjects/resources in the environment where the experience is taking place (Campos et al., 2018). In this context, destinations as “experience providers” can facilitate environments and conditions to promote competitive experiences (Campos et al., 2018) that are both engaging and memorable (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2012). Aspects such as visitors’ recalling, overall satisfaction and loyalty are closely associated to how well local resources are leveraged to promote immersive, authentic, active and interactive experiences, as well as opportunities for cognitive, physical, sensory, and emotional engagement during such experiences (Campos et al., 2018; Carvalho et al., 2016; Kastenholz et al., 2012; Kastenholz et al., 2020; Lee & Chang, 2012). In the specific context of rural tourism, local resources and visitors’ perceptions of authenticity are even more important (Kastenholz et al., 2021b; Kastenholz et al., 2012), with local gastronomy and wine often taking the role as protagonists (Carvalho et al., 2021a; Gross et al., 2008). Schmitt’s (1999) model, adapted to tourism by Quadri-Felitti and Fiore (2013), analyzes the tourist experience, both highlighting its complexity and specifically emphasizing the role of sensory (“sense”), cognitive (“think”), emotional (“feel”), behavioral (“act”), and relational (“relate”) dimensions. The sensory dimension comprises experiences of sight, taste, touch, smell, and sound. The cognitive dimension refers to cognitive experiences based on intellectual and creativity challenges. The affective dimension highlights visitors’ emotions. The behavioral dimension stresses the relevance of physical experiences, interactions, and lifestyles. Finally, the relational dimension

highlights the importance of integration in a given social context, encompassing aspects of the previous modules (Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2013). There is scientific evidence of the applicability of this consumer experience model that underlines the significance of its multiple dimensions in promoting more attractive, enjoyable and memorable tourist experiences (Lee & Chang, 2012; Pestana & Gageiro, 2008; Prebensen & Dahl, 2013; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2012; Rather, 2020), and consequently increase visitors' overall satisfaction and loyalty, thus contributing to their competitiveness (Kastenholz et al., 2012).

2.3. Social Media Analysis

The growing influence of social networks globally is an undeniable fact in the most diverse contexts, whether social, economic, political, cultural or environmental, among others. In the case of the tourism market, social networks can play a role in shortening the distance between the customer and the destination offer, helping potential visitors to reduce the perceived risk of decision making by sharing travel experiences via electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) (Litvin et al., 2008). In this sense, social media mainly influence the way visitors search, obtain, share and reproduce information about destinations and their tourist experience, be it before, during and after the trip (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). This type of information is often shared online in real time by visitors and is generally perceived as authentic and trustworthy (Hays et al., 2012; Litvin et al., 2008), and therefore it also has a great influence on the potential market. For this reason, entities that use the information obtained from social media usually enjoy a commercial advantage compared to their competitors (Ali et al., 2018) and can leverage this tool to create a positive image of their brand among consumers. In fact, monitoring online content is a powerful source of information that allows getting

a better understanding of what is most valued by the market, thus contributing to enhanced product development (Hays et al., 2012). In the context of the vitivinicultural industry, the use of online social platforms can improve not only companies' visibility, but also interaction with the market and customer relations, as evidenced by the particularly interesting case of small Sicilian producers (Galati et al., 2017). The authors found that an active online presence aligned with consumer interests was positively associated with building customer loyalty, brand recognition, and improved market performance (Galati et al., 2017). This is also true for the wine tourism context, where social networks have been found to exert substantial impact on consumer choices (Litvin et al., 2008; Niu et al., 2016), helping to generate interest in visiting certain contexts in a more engaging and personalized way.

3. Empirical Study

3.1. The TWINE project and Beira Interior as a case study

This study is part of a larger project entitled "TWINE: co-creating Sustainable Tourism & Wine Experiences in rural areas", carried out between 2018 and 2022. This project studied the co-creation of tourism experiences in rural wine tourism destinations, focusing on the Bairrada, Dão and Beira Interior routes (see Figure 1), located between the coast and the interior of the Central region. In our work, we focus on the post-experience analysis by examining the opinions shared on TripAdvisor by visitors to the Beira Interior [Inland Beira] region.

This Portuguese region was demarcated on November 2, 1999, and features a very rich and diverse *terroir*, with a harsh climate of enormous temperature range, for this region is strongly influ-

The Beira Interior Route was inaugurated in 2020. Conceived as a “*terroir* route”, it compri-

Figure 1 | Bairrada, Dão, and Beira Interior routes

A qualitative exploratory approach was used on the global experience of the rural enotourist and its relevance to promote a more competitive development of this region. More specifically, a passive netnography (Blichfeldt & Marabese, 2014) was carried out using content analysis of 300 reviews posted on the TripAdvisor social network between 2013 and 2020.

TripAdvisor are supplemented with both personal user data and trip data (e.g., place of origin, type of travel group). Third, TripAdvisor is considered a trusted platform (Chua & Banerjee, 2013), evidencing higher overall quality, usefulness, and consistency in the rating narrative compared to other online platforms (Xiang et al., 2017). For these reasons, it has been widely used in tourism research (Berezina et al., 2016; Fang et al., 2016).

The reviews analyzed were written in Portuguese, Spanish or English and referred to travel experiences to the following locations: Belmonte, Covilhã, Castelo Novo, Fundão, Guarda, Mêda, Sabugal, and Trancoso. NVivo software was used to support data analysis.

3.2.1. Data collection and analysis

All travel experiences corresponding to the keyword “Beira Interior” were identified on the TripAdvisor platform. Subsequently, only reviews with a broader experiential point of view related to the discovery of the territory and its attractions were selected, to the detriment of reviews containing only specific perceptions about the quality of service provision. The reviews were analyzed in their original language to preserve relevant connotations. Initially, the most prominent dimensions of experience in the literature were selected and a tree map of codes was created based on these dimensions (deductive approach). Throughout the coding process (content analysis), new categories emerged and were added to the initial tree map of codes (inductive approach).

The content analysis followed an interpretive perspective, with overlapping observable content, and the same review could be coded in more than one category. To minimize the subjectivity of the coding process, the authors met several times during the coding process to fine-tune criteria and overcome more ambiguous coding.

NVivo allowed calculating reference frequency (the number of times a given category was coded), coding matrices (relationships between variables: e.g., frequency of categories by gender), and word frequency (word cloud and word trees). The results were then presented and discussed from examples of narratives extracted from the analyzed reviews, always safeguarding the anonymity of the sample group.

4. Results

4.1. Sample characterization

The sample ($N = 300$) presents a high number of missing values regarding the gender (72.0%) and

visitor origin (17.0%) variables. Nevertheless, given the available values, there is a balance between male (14.7%) and female visitors (13.3%), as well as a majority of domestic (53.0%) versus non-domestic (30.0%) visitors. Regarding the type of travel group, most visitors travel as a couple (35.3%) or as a family group (30.7%). Some people also visit the region with friends (13.3%) or even alone (5.7%), with a tiny percentage traveling on business (0.3%).

4.2. Main coded categories related to the wine tourism experience

Emotional Tonality

The most commonly used categories (see Table 1) refer to the emotional tonality of the experience, deemed distinctly positive and patent in descriptions of the visit as being: “fantastic”, “amazing”, “interesting”, “excellent”, or “quite enjoyable”.

Among the aspects most associated with this positive emotional tonality are the following:

- 1) proper maintenance of spaces and buildings:

"(...) beautiful example of a very well maintained castle"(reference 14)

"Well-kept place with beautiful gardens"(reference 65)

- 2) affordability/or free access to various attractions:

"reasonable price, without being expensive"(reference 25)

"the visit (to the castle) is free of charge"(reference 2)

- 3) suitable geographical location and quality of access:

"the castle is suitably located and very easily accessible"(reference 41)

Table 1 | Absolute frequencies by category of lived experience on the route

Categories	Number of codings
Emotional Tonality	759
Negative	135
Disappointment	34
Negative in general without further specification	32
Difficult access	27
Lack of maintenance	17
Unprofessional/inadequate infrastructure	8
Expensive	7
Too confusing/overcrowded	5
Disorientation	3
Boring	2
Positive	335
Positive in general without further specification	111
Adequate maintenance	78
Affordable	27
Adequate Access	23
Surprised	20
Relaxed	19
Good signposting	18
Professional	15
Prestigious	13
Quiet (few visitors)	10
Romantic	1
Quality/diversity of wines	0
Liking X Activation (un/pleasant – calm /exciting)	289
Liking X low activation	183
Liking X high activation	70
Dislike X low activation	32
Dislike X high activation	4
Schmitt's Model	529
Sensory	272
Sight	230
Taste	26
Touch	13
Nonspecific	1
Smell	1
Hearing	1
Emotional	160
Cognitive	65
Behavioral	17
Relational	15
Type of experience	430
Material cultural heritage	194
Nature/landscape	172
Gastronomy	40
Traditions, intangible cultural heritage	21
Wine	3
Wineries and vineyards	3
Recommended experience	143
Suggestions for other visitors	40
Suggestions for improvement for the tourism agents	19
Experience not recommended	1

When we analyze emotional valence and intensity (liking versus activation), it turns out that the Beira Interior Route (RBI) mostly elicits emotions with positive valence, marked by low activation (calmness), as shown in Table 1:

"(...) Really superb, relaxing, a unique and genuine corner of the world. Be sure to visit. Portugal boasts magical landscapes and places, and this is definitely one of them"(reference 134).

Reviews marked by a negative emotional tonality mainly highlight the following:

a) Disappointment with the experience:

"As a great cheese lover, I decided to visit the museum to learn about the whole cheese making process; that part I did learn, but too bad it's all theoretical [...]. There is nothing practical [...]. I felt very disappointed because I paid 5 euros for a 15-minute visit, I visited with my son so he could have some notion of the process, and I couldn't get him to have the slightest notion [...]"(reference 22).

b) Difficult accessibility:

"The streets are very uneven and steep"(reference 242)

"Beautiful (tower) but poorly located"(reference 8).

c) Lack of maintenance of spaces or infrastructures:

"If this monument were located in another country it would be a relevant monument. Here it is a bit neglected and underused"(reference 2).

Dimensions of experience according to Schmitt (1999a)

Tourism experiences in RBI are very sensory and appeal mostly to the visual dimension of the experience.

"The Belmonte castle sits in a fantastic location, with breathtaking views over the Serra da Estrela mountain range, under the beautiful town of Belmonte"(reference 19).

Although less represented, senses such as taste, associated with the tasting of regional products, and touch, closely related to thermal sensations, are also recurrently referred to in the reviews about this destination.

"The visit ended with a tasting session of cheeses from the region, accompanied by red wine"(reference 9).

"On a very hot day, there were many people in the place wanting to cool off and rest on the banks of the Zêzere River"(reference 2).

"When I visited, it had snowed and it was very cold, which was made even worse by the wind there"(reference 11).

As mentioned above, the emotional dimension is also very evident in these experiences, whether through feelings of surprise, mystery, or plain rapture:

"This visit was definitely a good and pleasant surprise!"(reference 44).

"The place really exudes a certain mystery"(reference 3).

The cognitive dimension also revealed itself quite evidently, giving away the learning propitiated by the visit to the Beira Interior Route:

"(...) we got to know in situ the history of the woolen goods of Serra da Estrela, and a little more about our history"(reference 23).

The behavioral and relational dimensions are the least evident, making it clear that the experiences in RBI mostly imply a passive, experience-absorbing attitude.

4.3. Type of experience

Since this is a wine route, it is surprising that the references to experiences directly related to this product, such as visits to farms, cellars or wineries, are so few (only 3) and always associated with gastronomic experiences, namely with the region's cheese. It is thus clear that RBI offers experiences of territory by exalting both its material cultural heritage — marked by the Belmonte Castle, the Centum Cellas Tower, the historical villages and the Trancoso Castle — and natural environment: more specifically, visits to the Serra da Estrela mountain range, whether to enjoy the coolness in summer or the snow in winter.

4.4. Satisfaction with the destination

The levels of satisfaction with the experience are quite evident, for the overall score given (ranging from 0 to 5) is predominantly "5"(46.7%) or "4"(36.3%), thus making RBI a recommended destination by its visitors.

Even so, the most critical visitors do make important suggestions — both for other visitors to maximize the quality of their experience and for the tourism agents to improve their offer — mainly related to issues such as opening hours, maintenance, access security, or lack of sensitivity in the restoration of the buildings:

"We lunched there and I advise booking because the place is always full"(reference 2).

"It was a pity that the external museums were all closed, even though it was a Saturday morning"(reference 4).

"It's too bad they have done so much modernization intervention that you can hardly tell the medieval from the modern anymore [...] they might as well stay put"(reference 3).

"Both the ascent through the town and the descent must be the object of great care. There are winding curves with gigantic precipices, and there is no hard shoulder" (reference 18).

4.5. Most representative words of visitors' narratives

The following word clouds illustrate: 1) the most frequent words in the general narratives (including all codes) provided by the visitors (Figure 2); and 2) in the coded narratives, only regarding the themes "gastronomy and wine" (Figure 3). Non-Portuguese words were translated, and words with the same meaning were grouped together.



Figure 2 | Cloud of words representative of the (overall) wine tourism experience in Beira Interior

Most representative words from the narratives about wine and gastronomy

The region's wines are mentioned as a complement to the gastronomic protagonists, mainly the mountain cheeses (especially the buttery sheep

Most representative words from the general narratives

RBI is patently a *terroir* route, albeit wines are not yet the protagonist. This place is marked by its material cultural heritage, and the history of the places is properly valued. Nature, vineyard landscapes and gastronomy (the latter represented mainly by the mountain cheeses) are also frequently mentioned (although they do not stand out in the cloud of the most mentioned words, given their relatively minor reference). The excellence of the tourist experience does stand out in this interesting, aesthetically appealing place boasting great diversity.

cheese). Trout are also mentioned quite frequently, followed by wines and smoked ham. Regardless of the product, value is always placed on what is characteristic of the region and locally made/produced and homemade, with quality being duly recognized by those who taste them.



Figure 3 | Cloud of words representative of the wine tourism experience (focused on wine and gastronomy) in Beira Interior

5. Discussion

Social media are powerful instruments of social influence and their monitoring by wine tourism agents should not be underestimated, since this online sharing of experiences between actual and potential visitors contributes to increasing not only demand, but also customer loyalty and their engagement with the place (Ali et al., 2018; Litvin et al., 2008). Social media are accessible sources of reliable information that not only allow the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the destination and its image (Toral et al., 2018), but also suggest ways to improve the wine tourism experience and the territories' ability to attract new customers via recommendations and suggestions of previous visitors, both for wine tasting experiences and for discovering other attractions in the territory. Even the most negative reviews can be used as important improvement suggestions to be taken into consideration (Park & Nicolau, 2015). In this sense, the Beira Interior region could enhance its tourist experiences by improving access and the maintenance of some spaces and infrastructures, and by creating more engaging and surprising experiences. Nevertheless, the emotional tonality of visitors to this region is frankly positive, clearly patent in the high levels of overall satisfaction with the tourist experience offered by this territory, similarly to what happens with other wine tourism destinations in the Central region, such as Bairrada (Kastenholz et al., 2021).

According to the experience dimensions recommended by Schmitt's model (1999), tourist experiences in Beira Interior are quite rich in sensations, emotions and cognitive elements. Within the first dimension, the senses of sight and taste stand out: the first probably stimulated by the beauty of the region's landscapes and monuments, and the latter by the tasting of endogenous products, with special emphasis on the iconic and identifying local product that is mountain cheese, whose association with wine (and perhaps with smoked ham) may

be an interesting investment in a perspective of cross-selling and brand development of wines and other gastronomic products from Beira Interior.

These experiences are presented in an enthusiastic way that illustrates the feelings of pleasure and pleasant surprise found while exploring the destination, and also provide discoveries about diverse heritage, which are reported by visitors with equal appreciation. Above all, the content of this experience reflects emotionally pleasant tranquility, related to the tourist motive of "relaxation", which apparently is characteristic (and much appreciated) of rural tourism experiences in the Portuguese hinterland (Kastenholz, Marques & Carreiro, 2020; Marques, 2006). However, the behavioral and relational dimensions are little present in the tourist experiences lived in this territory and shared on TripAdvisor, thus translating into a somewhat incomplete experience from the perspective of the Schmitt's model (1999).

These results suggest that the agents responsible for this tourism offer need to incorporate a more active and relational dimension in their provision of experiences — for example, through the development of co-creative wine tourism products (Carvalho et al., 2021a), with which visitors can actively relate in greater relational proximity, especially with local actors involved in wine production and culture, thus enabling experiences also perceived as more "authentic" (Carvalho et al., 2021b). This goal does not seem difficult to achieve, since, as mentioned above, the physical and gastronomic elements already exist and can be used to provide more physically participative experiences, with possible integration in the lifestyles of local communities, namely by the combined offer of tours or walks through the vineyards during a tasting visit, or by participation in grape-picking and wine-making activities (behavioral experiences). This strategy would allow not only integrating visitors into the social contexts of the regions visited, but also providing a more relational experience.

In fact, despite this region's long vitivinicultu-

ral tradition, wine-related experiences are far from being the main attraction of Beira Interior, because the contact with this product is promoted by another series of experiences, namely gastronomic, in which wine emerges as an interesting complement, reinforcing more holistic experiences of visitors while allowing the extension of the post-visit experience through the sale of these local products (Kastenholz et al, 2016). Indeed, presenting an wine tourism destination organized through a territory route has proven to be a successful endeavor in the Central region of Portugal, such as the Bairrada Route, which combines experiences directly related to wine with others more focused on exploring the natural, historical and cultural heritage of the region (Kastenholz et al., 2021). This way, it is possible to develop an offer capable of capturing the interest of both visitors who seek the region for its connection with wine (as is the case of "lovers" and "connoisseurs" of this product) and of those more "curious" visitors for whom wine is just a happy coincidence of such destination (Cunha et al., 2022). It should be noted that the analysis performed is limited to reviews posted between 2013 and 2020, and therefore most of these reviews pre-date the creation of the Beira Interior Route, which may partly justify the reduced emphasis on the region's wines due to the absence, until that date, of a structured offer around this product.

In short, these results stress the importance of studying the territories from a broader perspective that not only encompasses their material cultural heritage, their characteristics in terms of nature, landscape and their people, but also reflects their traditions, culture, gastronomy and wines — a whole series of elements that should be integrated into an offer of distinctive and appealing experiences that go beyond wine-tasting experiences and become more holistic by combining sensory, cognitive, emotional, behavioral and also relational elements.

5.1. Limitations

This study presents some limitations, mainly of an exploratory nature, since it focuses on a specific region of Portugal where wine tourism activity is still at an early stage. On the other hand, this study explores the experience of visitors using only online reviews posted on TripAdvisor, with no specific mentions to wine tourism experiences, and therefore it would be desirable to complement the study with a questionnaire survey or interviews in this same context. Content analysis is always susceptible to subjective interpretation during the coding process, a risk that is mitigated here through the comparison of coding and shared reflections between the authors.

Still, the obtained results contribute to a better knowledge of the Beira Interior territories from the visitors' perspective, which, in turn, allows a better understanding of the potential for the development of wine tourism activities articulated with other riches of the region, in order to develop unique, memorable and recommendable experiences and thus enhance not only the "Beira Interior" brand, but also the sustainable development of this territory through wine tourism. This study contributes to the debate on the experiences of a vitivinicultural territory — in this specific case, a wine tourism destination still in a very incipient stage —, where wine has yet to consolidate itself as an added value of tourist attraction, probably because there are still few opportunities for wine tourism experiences that are adequately visible and known. It seems relevant to invest on the articulation with other resources — not only gastronomic (the mountain cheese), but also others already duly highlighted (culture and nature/landscape) — that allow engaging and appealing experiences, but also more active (a dimension still little present), thus being able to attract a more diverse audience that could even find reasons for longer stays. It seems appropriate to conduct further studies on the potential of this type of development, possibly from a

differentiated perspective and adapted to different segments.

Acknowledgements

This work was developed under research project TWINE – PTDC / GES–GCE / 32259/2017 – POCL-01-0145-FEDER-032259, funded by FEDER through COMPETE 2020 – Operational Program Competitiveness and Internationalization (POCI), and national funds (OPTDC / GES GCE / 32259/2017 –E), through FCT / MCTES.

References

- Ali, T., Ahmad, I., Rehman, A. U., & Kamal, S. (2018). Understanding Customer Experiences Through Social Media Analysis of Three Giants of Soft Drink Industry. *Proceedings - 2018 5th International Conference on Behavioral, Economic, and Socio-Cultural Computing, BESC 2018*, 216–224. <https://doi.org/10.1109/BESC.2018.8697304>
- Berezina, K., Bilgihan, A., Cobanoglu, C., & Okumus, F. (2016). Understanding Satisfied and Dissatisfied Hotel Customers: Text Mining of Online Hotel Reviews. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management*, 25(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2015.983631>
- Blichfeldt, B. S., & Marabese, M. (2014). A life posted: 'netnographic' approaches to tourists studies. Em J. W. Meged, B. S. Blichfeldt, L. A. Hansen, & K. A. Hvass (Eds.), *Tourism Methodologies - New Perspectives, Practices and Procedures* (pp. 61–76). Copenhagen Bussiness Scholl Press.
- Bruwer, J. (2003). South African Wine Routes: some perspectives on the wine tourism industry's structural dimensions and wine tourism product. *Tourism Management*, 24(4), 423–435. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(02\)00105-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(02)00105-X)
- Campos, A. C., Mendes, J., do Valle, P. O., & Scott, N. (2018). Co-creation of tourist experiences: a literature review. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 21(4), 369–400. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2015.1081158>
- Carvalho, M., Kastenholz, E., & Carneiro, M. (2021a). Co-creating wine and food tourism experiences: The case of Rota da Bairrada. [A co-criação de experiências enogastronómicas: O caso da Rota da Bairrada. *Journal of Tourism & Development*, 36(1), 325–339. <https://doi.org/10.34624/rtd.v1i36.10695>
- Carvalho, M., Kastenholz, E., & Carneiro, M. J. (2021b). Interaction as a central element of co-creative wine tourism experiences—Evidence from Bairrada, a Portuguese wine-producing region. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 13(16), 9374. ISSN: 20711050. [doi:10.3390/su13169374](https://doi.org/10.3390/su13169374)
- Carvalho, M., Lima, J., Kastenholz, E., & Sousa, A. J. (2016). Co-Creative rural tourism experiences: connecting tourists, community and local resources. Em E. Kastenholz, M. J. Carneiro, C. Eusébio, & E. Figueiredo (eds), *Meeting Challenges for Rural Tourism through Co-creation of Sustainable Tourist Experiences* (pp. 83–106). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Charters, S., & Ali-Knight, J. (2002). Who is the wine tourist? *Tourism Management*, 311–319. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(01\)00079-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(01)00079-6)
- Chua, A., & Banerjee, S. (2013). Reliability of reviews on the Internet: The case of TripAdvisor. *Lecture Notes in Engineering and Computer Science*, 1, 453–457.
- Cunha, D., Carneiro, M., & Kastenholz, E. (2020). «Velho Mundo» versus «Novo Mundo»: Diferentes perfis e comportamento de viagem do enoturista? («Old world» versus «New world» wine-tourism: Diverse traveler profiles and behaviors?). *Revista Turismo & Desenvolvimento*, 34, 113–128. <https://doi.org/10.34624/rtd.v0i34.22354>
- Cunha, D., Kastenholz, E., & Silva, C. (2022). Analyzing diversity amongst visitors of Portuguese wine routes based on their wine involvement. *International Journal of Wine Business Research* (ahead-of-print). <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJWBR-09-2021-0048>
- De Uña-Álvarez, E., & Villarino-Pérez, M. (2019). Linking wine culture, identity, tourism and rural development in a denomination of origin territory (NW of Spain). *Cuadernos de Turismo*, 44, 93–110. <https://doi.org/10.6018/turismo.44.404761>
- Fang, B., Ye, Q., Kucukusta, D., & Law, R. (2016). Analysis of the perceived value of online tourism reviews: Influence of readability and reviewer characteristics. *Tourism Management*, 52, 498–506. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.07.018>
- Galati, A., Crescimanno, M., Tinervia, S., & Fagnani, F. (2017). Social media as a strategic marketing

- tool in the Sicilian wine industry: Evidence from Facebook. *Wine Economics and Policy*, 6(1), 40–47. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wep.2017.03.003>
- Gómez, M., Pratt, M. A., & Molina, A. (2019). Wine tourism research: a systematic review of 20 vintages from 1995 to 2014. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 22(18), 2211–2249. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2018.1441267>
- Gross, M. J., Brien, C., & Brown, G. (2008). Examining the dimensions of a lifestyle tourism destination. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 2(1), 44–66. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17506180810856130>
- Hall, C. M., Sharples, L., Cambourne, B., & Macionis, N. (2000). Wine Tourism around the World: Development, Management and Markets. Em C. M. Hall, L. Sharples, B. Cambourne, N. Macionis, R. Mitchell, & G. Johnson (Eds.), *Wine Tourism around the World: Development, Management and Markets* (pp. 1–23). Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Hall, C., & Mitchell, R. (2002). The tourist terroir of New Zealand wine: the importance of region in the wine tourism experience. Em E. Montanari (ed), *Food and environment: geographies of taste* (pp. 69–91). Societa Grafica Italiana.
- Hays, S., Page, S. J., & Buhalis, D. (2012). Social media as a destination marketing tool: Its use by national tourism organisations. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 16(3), 211–239. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2012.662215>
- Holland, T., Smit, B., & Jones, G. V. (2014). Toward a Conceptual Framework of *terroir* Tourism: a Case study of the Prince Edward County, Ontario Wine Region. *Tourism Planning and Development*, 11(3), 275–291. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568316.2014.890125>
- Kastenholz, E., Cunha, D., Eletxigerra, A., Carvalho, M., & Silva, I. (2021). Exploring Wine Terroir Experiences: A Social Media Analysis. Em A. Abreu, D. Liberato, E. A. González, & J. C. G. Ojeda (Eds.), *Advances in Tourism, Technology and Systems. ITCOTTS 2020. Smart Innovation, Systems and Technologies* (pp. 401–420). Springer: Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-33-4260-6_35
- Kastenholz, E., Fernández-Ferrín, P., & Rodrigues, Á. (2021b). Nostalgia, sensation and local products in rural tourism experiences in a portuguese schist village. *European Countryside*, 599–621. <https://doi.org/10.2478/euco-2021-0034>
- Kastenholz, E., Carneiro, M. J., & Marques, C. P. (2012). Marketing the rural tourism experience. Em R. H. Tsiotsou, & R. E. Goldsmith (eds), *Strategic marketing in tourism services* (pp. 247–264). Esmerald.
- Kastenholz, E., Carneiro, M. J., Marques, C. P., & Lima, J. (2012). Understanding and managing the rural tourism experience - The case of a historical village in Portugal. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 4, 207–214. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2012.08.009>
- Kastenholz, E., Marques, C., & Carneiro, M. (2020). Place attachment through sensory-rich, emotion-generating place experiences in rural tourism. *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management*, 17, 100455–100467. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2020.100455>
- Lee, T., & Chang, Y. (2012). The influence of experiential marketing and activity involvement on the loyalty intentions of wine tourists in Taiwan. *Leis Stud*, 31(1), 103–121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2011.568067>
- Litvin, S., Goldsmith, R., & Pan, B. (2008). Electronic word-of-mouth in hospitality and tourism management. *Tourism Management*, 29(3), 458–468. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2007.05.011>
- Lopes, L. (2021). *Beira Interior os vinhos da montanha*. CVRBI. <https://www.vinhosdabeirainterior.pt/pt/vinhos>
- Loureiro, V. (2021). *Beira Interior dois mil anos de tradição na produção de vinho*. CVRBI. <https://www.vinhosdabeirainterior.pt/pt/historia>
- Marques, C. P. (2006). Seeking to escape: Sights over approach-avoidance dialectics. In M. Kozak & L. Andreu (Eds.), *Progress in Tourism Marketing* (pp. 191–205). Amsterdam; Oxford: Elsevier.
- Miguéns, J., Baggio, R., & Costa, C. (2008). Social media and Tourism Destinations: TripAdvisor Case Study. *Advances in Tourism Research*, 26(28), 26–28.
- Niu, Y., Wang, C., Yin, S., & Niu, Y. (2016). How do destination management organization-led postings facilitate word-of-mouth communications in online tourist communities? A content analysis of China's 5A-Class Tourist Resort Websites. *Journal Travel Tour Marketing*, 33(7), 929–948. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2015.1075455>
- Park, S., & Nicolau, J. L. (2015). Asymmetric effect of online consumer reviews. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 50, 67–83.

- Pellin, V., & Vieira, A. C. P. (2015). Contributions of geographical indications for territorial strengthening in rural space: A case study in southern Brazil. *Espacios*, 36(8), 7–17.
- Pestana, M., & Gageiro, J. (2008). *Análise de dados para ciências sociais: a complementaridade do SPSS* (5th ed.). Edições Sílabo.
- Pine, J., & Gilmore, J. (1998). Welcome to the Experience Economy. *Harvard Business Review*, 76, 97–105.
- Prebensen, N., & Dahl, J. (2013). Value co-creation significance of tourist resources. *Annual Tourism Research*, 42, 240–261. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2013.01.012>
- Quadri-Felitti, D., & Fiore, A. M. (2012). Experience economy constructs as a framework for understanding wine tourism. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 18(1), 3–15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356766711432222>
- Quadri-Felitti, D., & Fiore, A. M. (2013). Destination loyalty: Effects of wine tourists' experiences, memories, and satisfaction on intentions. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 13(1), 47–62. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1467358413510017>
- Rather, R. A. (2020). Customer experience and engagement in tourism destinations: the experiential marketing perspective. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 37(1), 15–32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2019.1686101>
- Rota dos Vinhos de Portugal (2021). *Beira Interior*. <http://rotadosvinhosdeportugal.pt/rotas/beira-interior/>
- Schmitt, B. (1999). *Experiential Marketing: How to Get Customers to SENSE, FEEL, THINK, ACT and RELATE to Your Company and Brands*. The Free Press.
- Toral, S. L., Martínez-Torres, M. R., & Gonzalez-Rodrigues, M. R. (2018). Identification of the Unique Attributes of Tourist Destinations from Online Reviews. *Journal of Travel Research*, 57(7), 908–919.
- TripAdvisor. (sem data). <https://tripadvisor.mediaroom.com/US-about-us>.
- Van, W. R. (1986). Consumer research on tourism mental and behavioral constructs. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 13(1), 1–9. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383\(86\)90054-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(86)90054-X)
- Western Australian Tourism Commission. (2000). *Wine Tourism Strategy*.
- Xiang, Z., Du, Q., Ma, Y., & Fan, W. (2017). A comparative analysis of major online review platforms. *Journal of Tourism Management*, 58, 51–65. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.10.001>
- Zeng, B., & Gerritsen, R. (2014). What do we know about social media in tourism? A review. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 10, 27–36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2014.01.001>