Article

The Experience Economy in a Wine Destination—Analysing Visitor Reviews

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Abstract: Wine tourism in rural territories, sometimes organised along wine routes, increasingly attracts visitors, tourism agents, wine producers and those responsible for developing rural territories. Wine tourism is located at the intersection of two distinct business sectors: the agribusiness-oriented wine production and the hedonic service/experience-oriented tourism activity. From the tourism perspective, the visitor experience is paramount and requires an understanding of its nature, conditioning factors and possible outcomes. This study analyses tourist experiences of the Bairrada wine route/Portugal, as reported by regional visitors on TripAdvisor. Results reveal not only the overall quite positive evaluation of these experiences, but also the importance of the aesthetic and educational experience dimensions, when applying Pine and Gilmore's consumer experience framework. Diverse experience contexts contribute to a rich *terroir* experiencescape, where contents are far from limited to wine, wine cellars or wineries. These contexts seem to be connected distinctly to diverse experience dimensions, whose analysis should help regional developers understand the role of core resources and conditions for attracting, satisfying and delighting visitors. Additional understanding of the relationship between experience dimensions and outcomes, namely satisfaction and destination loyalty, should further help develop wine destinations more successfully.

Keywords: rural wine tourism; experience economy; experience dimensions; experience context; experience outcomes; Bairrada wine route; user-generated content; content analysis

1. Introduction

Hall et al. [1] (p. 3) define wine tourism as "visitation to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows for which grape wine tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of a grape wine region are the prime motivating factors for visitors". Although initially very focused on winery and wine-related experiences, researchers increasingly adopt a broader wine destination perspective, under which also non wine-related attractions and features stand out as relevant assets of wine destinations, responding to more broadly motivated travellers [2,3]. Hall and Mitchell [2] (p. 69) suggest the concept of tourist terroir, which they define as the "unique combination of the physical, cultural and natural environment (that) gives each region its distinctive tourist appeal". Associated to this concept is the complex experience of visiting such a terroir, with opportunities for having unique learning, socialising and hedonic experiences [4,5].

Particularly in the tourism field, the concept and models of the so-called experience economy [6,7] have evoked much resonance, since here, more than in other consumption contexts, consumers seek, most and above all, appealing, sensory-rich, emotionally engaging, unique and memorable experiences. These are conditioned by expectations, but also by the destination itself, with all its particularities [8,9].

Analysing wine tourism from a consumer experience lens, improved wine business and destination marketing means 'digging into' the traveller's mind, trying to understand his/her motivations, expectations, feelings, thoughts and memories related to the visit of a wine tourism destination. Today, many travellers share travel memories, thoughts and feelings about the experience lived 'on site' and 'en route' with other potential future visitors on travel blogs, Internet forums and platforms. Analysing the content of such online posts is most relevant not only for potential visitors eager to better plan their trip, but particularly for business and destination managers as well as for researchers seeking a better understanding of consumer behaviour based on first-hand, voluntarily shared, experience-based information [10,11]. Such understanding allows the design of more engaging and impactful tourist experience opportunities, enhancing the experience outcome for all involved.

The present paper aims to (a) characterise tourist experiences on the Bairrada wine route, in the Central Region of Portugal, and analyse their dimensional nature, (b) conditioning context factors as well as (c) experience outcomes. To achieve this goal, a content analysis of tourist experiences, voluntarily shared on TripAdvisor by visitors of the Bairrada wine route, was performed, trying to answer the following research questions: (1) From an experience economy perspective, which are the dimensions and (2) the attraction contexts that constitute the tourism experience in the Bairrada region? (3) How are those aspects related to the experience outcomes?

The following sections will first conceptualise the here presented approach through a literature review on the experience economy in tourism—specifically applied to rural and food and wine tourism- and on social media analysis in tourism research. Then the case study context is presented as well as the research methodology. Results firstly present the sample of visitor reports, general features and patterns of reported experiences. Secondly, after assessing the main experience realms suggested by Pine and Gilmore [6], the study identifies differences between these realms, associated with experience context. Finally, findings related to experience outcomes (including satisfaction, loyalty and visitors' suggestions for improvements) are explained. The paper finalises with a reflection on the present results' contribution to: (a) knowledge on the wine terroir experience, and (b) practical recommendations for destination marketing of the Bairrada Wine Route and possibly other similar wine regions. Acknowledging limitations, the article concludes suggesting future research avenues.

2. Conceptual Framework—Experience Economy and Its Application to Tourism

From early on, Abbott [12] (p. 40) emphasised the relevance of customer experiences, as "what people really desire are not products but satisfying experiences". Pine and Gilmore [6] took up this theme, defining the experience as a distinct economic offering, different from services, goods and commodities, and suggested the progression of economic value towards the experience economy. The authors' central assumption is that in the increasingly competitive environment, businesses are compelled to upgrade their offerings to the next stage, deliberately designing engaging experiences.

Pine and Gilmore [6,13] suggested that an experience occurs when a company intentionally uses services as the stage to engage individual customers in a memorable event. However, this is a too supply-focused perspective, difficult to directly identify with memorable events [14]. Instead, experiences are inherently personal, existing only in the mind of individuals when interacting with the staged event, and therefore, always co-created [6]. Experiences provide sensory (physical), emotional, cognitive (intellectual), behavioural (physical), relational (social), and even spiritual values to customers [6,7,15]. Therefore, the customer experience, far from being result of a firm's design and crafted for the customer to receive, is understood as actively co-created by the customer in a broader ecosystem, through internal and subjective responses to personalised interactions with other actors (i.e., the company, other customers) [16]. Consequently, customers play an essential role in the co-construction of their experiences and co-create unique value [17,18]. Besides,

engaging experiences are thought to bring back enjoyment dimensions, usually making the experience more memorable.

A number of frameworks and models in the literature have addressed the difficult challenge of defining experience dimensions and elements [19,20]. One of the most cited approaches is Pine and Gilmore's [6] model distinguishing two experience dimensions: customer participation and connection with the environment. Customer participation may go from passive, with customers not involved in any performance, to active participation, where customers play key roles in creating the experience. Along the connection axis, the experience may move from absorptive, occupying the person's attention by bringing the experience into the mind, to immersive, where the person becomes physically or virtually a part of the experience itself. Consequently, experiences may be classified in four realms: entertainment (passive, absorption), educational (active, absorption), aesthetic (passive, immersion), and escapist (active, immersion).

The 'experience economy' paradigm is suggested as transversal across a wide range of industries [6,21]. However, tourism is one of the business activities in which the experience framework makes most sense, with the core product in tourism being the destination experience [9]. According to Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie [22], experience economy dominates the philosophy of tourism, as it permeates how we engage with tourism and how we consume tourism (p. 114). Destinations have a complex nature, combining a wide range of tangible and intangible assets, goods and services. Moreover, although the tourism experience may be understood as the whole destination experience, it is composed of everything tourists go through at the destination (different experiences), e.g., visiting, seeing, learning, enjoying, etc. [23]. In addition, tourism sells a 'staged' experience contrasting with the customer's daily life. In fact, destinations might create stories for authenticity (e.g., Dracula tourism in Romania) [24], although increasingly 'authentic' immersion in 'real' places and communities is also sought [22,25]. Besides, interactions with service providers, local people, and other tourists at the destination are utterly important for building the experience(s) (e.g., [25,26]). Furthermore, the customer is in the centre of this experience, with tourists perceiving all its elements in a multi-sensory way, affecting their emotions distinctly [27].

Oh et al. [23] applied Pine and Gilmore's [6] experience realms to the tourism context, developing a contextualised measurement scale for each dimension. According to the authors, entertainment firstly describes experiences that occur when tourists passively observe activities or performances, such as watching spectacles. Secondly, education represents learning experiences, with tourists absorbing the events unfolding before them by participating actively (physically and/or cognitively), such as when visiting museums. Thirdly, aesthetics refers to the tourists just being there, passively appreciating the destination's sensorial appeal, while indulged in its physical environment (e.g., in a sightseeing tour). Finally, the escapist experience requires greater immersion and participation, where tourists actively participate and engage in performances "diverging to a new self". Although possibly rather associated with one category or another, Pine and Gilmore [6] acknowledged that an experience might fall into more than one dimension. Moreover, they claimed that the richest experiences encompass aspects of all four realms, forming a "sweet pot" in the area where the spectra meet.

Based on this framework [23], several researchers have empirically examined the applicability of Pine and Gilmore's "experience economy" and its four dimensions in tourism. For instance, Hosany and Witham [28] employed it in cruise travel, and Mehmetoglu and Engen [29] in a music festival and a museum. Further, Mody et al. [30] suggested serendipity, localness, communitas and personalisation as valuable additions to Pine and Gilmores's original experience economy dimensions in accommodation, with Airbnb outperforming hotels in all of them. The experience economy and its dimensions are very important to explain interesting outcomes for both the tourist and tourism providers (destinations and tourism-related services). Most studied outcomes in the literature are arousal, memory, overall quality, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions [28,29,31], as well as meaningful-

ness and well-being [30]. Depending on the type of the analysed tourism activity, the effect of each dimension (i.e., entertainment, aesthetic, educational, escapist) on experience outcomes will considerably differ [29].

Although the seminal work on the experience economy proposed by Pine and Gilmore [13] was developed almost 25 years ago, it has only been applied systematically for a better understanding of the tourism experience since 2007, being, however, increasingly applied to diverse tourism contexts, contributing to its relevance in tourism research and practice. The model is still prevailing for many reasons. Firstly, its continuous use makes it a reference for a systematic, largely validated, path of analysis, with increasing evidence also highlighting the role of specific experience dimensions in distinct product markets, permitting comparisons and debate on conditioning factors as well as on outcomes of not only the overall tourist experience, but also a debate on the dynamics between experience dimensions, their specific features in diverse tourism contexts, and their relationship with other tourist behaviour constructs. Furthermore, the model has demonstrated a large adaptation and evolving ability [22], including its usage within the digital environment [32] and, more recently, the post-pandemic context [33]. Additionally, the research approach is appropriate to anticipate desirable outcomes, making it relevant for tourism management (e.g., [28,32]). However, more research is needed to reveal the most important experience dimensions (or combination of dimensions) and their role for tourism product/destination appeal, in different tourism contexts [34] including rural and wine tourism.

2.1. Experience Economy in Rural and Food & Wine Tourism

From the visitors' perspective, wine tourism comprises diverse experiences and a wide range of activities, such as visiting wine cellars, tasting, and learning about and buying wines [35–37]. Often visitors also engage in social interaction, e.g., with local producers [38,39], in exploring the cultural destination attributes, relaxing, and enjoying the typical vinery-shaped landscape as well as wine cellars' architecture [35,36,40–42]. The environment of the tourist experience, sometimes designated as 'wine-scape', strongly affects the tourists' subjectively lived experience and its perceived value [30]. Terziyska and Damyanova [39] (p. 480) define 'winescape' as "a specific environment where the variety of tangible (landscape, wineries, architecture, etc.) and intangible elements (social interactions with locals, tour guides, winery staff, etc.) blend together to shape the wine tourism experience." The elements of this winescape, particularly those resonating the local identity, give tourists the opportunity to live more unique, meaningful and memorable experiences. Indeed, the experience context contributes to add unique value to the tourist experience, since natural (e.g., vineyards landscape) and cultural elements (e.g., traditions and local lifestyles) of the destination are also an integrative part of multisensory food and wine experiences [35,39]. Furthermore, Sassenberg et al. [43] noted that the physical environment influenced visitors' emotions positively in wine tourism, stressing the importance of natural settings (e.g., gardens) in winery experiences. Indeed, the adoption of a holistic perspective of food and wine experiences contributes to visitors' satisfaction and loyalty, as pointed out in this and other studies. Similarly, Carvalho et al. [38] found that visitors' interaction with human and physical environments (with both natural and material cultural elements) influence their satisfaction and loyalty, when visiting a Portuguese wine region. In Quadri-Felitti and Fiore's [44] study, the authors revealed the crucial importance of the aesthetic dimension in visitors' satisfaction and loyalty and the moderate effect of the educational dimension in memorability and satisfaction. Sassenberg et al. [43] also pointed at the outstanding importance of the natural environment (besides live music and social interaction, i.e., immaterial culture elements) to visitors' positive emotional well-being in a winery experience, corroborating other studies showing the relevance of natural and cultural resources. Cruz-Ruiz et al. [45] present a model that comprises the elements that should be considered in a wine route or itinerary design, based on a literature review and on visitors, winemakers and stakeholders' perspectives from a wine destination in Spain. They identified as central elements 'tra-

ditional architecture', 'gastronomy/food', 'wine/traditional festivities', 'landscape/wine landscape', and 'wineries/cellars'. One may retain from these studies the outstanding role of 'landscape/nature', 'culture' ((1) Tangible—architecture/monuments—and (2) intangible —traditions and events), and particular 'gastronomy' and 'wine' experience contexts that revealed, in diverse combinations, significant impacts on experience outcomes [35,43].

Some studies applied the lens of the 4E's model to wine tourism (e.g., [37,40,41,46,47]). According to Quadri-Felitti and Fiore [41], Pine and Gilmore's model [6] allows the identification of the most important experience dimensions, in which supply agents should invest. Firstly, considered a main motivation in wine tourism, the educational dimension relates to tourists' interest in learning about wine production, tasting, food and wine pairing [47], and taking part in cooking classes [41]. Here visitors assume an active role, which is central to satisfaction and experience memorability [44,47,48], influencing post-visit wine purchasing [46]. By analysing online reviews of tourists who visited Cognac, in France, Thanh and Kirova [48] confirmed the importance of the educational dimension, reflected in the recurring references to guided tours and wine tasting. Haller et al. [47] pointed out that tourists who visited the Alsace winegrowing region in Northern France expected to learn about wine tasting, food and wine pairing as well as historical facts of the wine grower and the estate in an entertaining way, which suggests the emergence of 'edutainment' [49], the combination of educational and entertainment experiences.

Secondly, within wine tourism, entertainment can be also promoted in festivals and events [37,46], concerts in the vineyards and wine cellars, "farm and food demonstrations" or "museum and heritage site visits" [41] (p. 8). Analysing wine tourism in China, Duan et al. [46] found that this dimension was hardly present. Brochado et al. [50] also found, through a netnography analysis of tourist experiences in the Douro region, that the dimensions education and entertainment needed more emphasis.

Thirdly, in wine tourism experiences, aesthetics are related to "consuming the winescape", "driving rural roads lined with vineyards" [41] (p. 8), and enjoying the (cultural) landscape. Haller et al. [47] found that the aesthetic dimension was highly appreciated by tourists, specifically in terms of perceived authenticity of the place and the wine-growing landscapes and heritage sites visited. Also, Pikkemaat et al. [36] stressed the aesthetic experience as the most salient and appealing dimension in the South Tyrolean Wine Route. Quadri-Felitti and Fiore [44] found aesthetics to be highly related to memorability, satisfaction and loyalty of wine tourists visiting the Lake Erie Wine Country in the US. Similarly, Thanh and Kirova [48] found the aesthetic winescape enjoyment in Cognac related to the positive tone identified in tourists' discourses.

Last but not least, escapism also contributes to more memorable experiences, namely through tourists' deep immersion into the region's reality and culture, which may be promoted by engaging activities within the rural setting, such as harvesting, vineyard hiking or cycling tours [41]. In fact, Carvalho et al. [51] found that emotional engagement enhanced visitors' sense of escapism and enjoyment in a grape harvesting experience. Escapism may also be triggered by a sense of evasion fostered by the winescape, but it is rarely found in wine tourism experience studies, as tourists' immersion in the rural context may require more time for fully entering and enjoying it [37]. Brochado et al. [50] found weak evidence for escapism in tourists' experiences in Douro, referring to the possible minor focus of Douro winery managers on corresponding experience features.

2.2. Social Media Analysis in Tourism

Tourism is a very dynamic activity, whose evolution has benefitted from innovation in information and communication technologies (ICTs). These have gained such a relevance in the tourism industry over the years that the concept of "smart tourism" has emerged. In this context, ICTs allow the creation and exchange of extensive data sets that can be turned into value, with implications in three major areas: tourist experiences, tourism business models and tourism destinations [10,52]. Information shared through ICTs has increased rapidly since 2010 due to the quick development of social networks, which has consequently led to

an increasing number of studies addressing and using social media in tourism [53]. Social media can play an important role in both sides, tourism supply, mainly in strategy building, and tourism demand, associated with sharing experiences and influencing the decision-making of tourists planning future trips [54]. One may distinguish different categories of social media depending on the content and the way it is shared, i.e., 'social networks' (e.g., Facebook, Instagram), 'content and media groups' (e.g., Youtube), 'discussion forums' (e.g., Travel forum), and 'review sites' (e.g., TripAdvisor) [55].

TripAdvisor, the platform used in the present study, was founded in 2000, being one of the most popular and influential travel sites worldwide, with about 884 million opinions and evaluations [56]. This site encourages its users to share information about products, services and place experiences. It combines different forms of information (i.e., reviews, photos and information on services and attractions) that, all together, represent and describe a destination, its services and attractions [55]. The information created and shared on social media such as TripAdvisor is eminently powerful and produces effects in distinct parts of the tourism system. In addition to being considered by the users/viewers as more truthful, real, transparent and reliable [54], this information is also easily available and appreciated, as it is distributed in real time and with no costs [57]. The content shared by other visitors about tourism products or services in a region is available to numerous potential visitors [58], which may influence their decisions regarding specific destination choices accordingly [54]. On the other hand, through an analysis of visitor reviews, tourism supply agents can identify their weaknesses and strong points [58], better understand their positioning within the market, and, consequently, improve their strategies [10,59]. Furthermore, this precious, first-hand, voluntarily given customer data is available without the financial and time cost required for alternative, traditional market research (e.g., surveys) [11]. It is noteworthy that the content shared by visitors in social media permits new insights that frequently are not recognised or explored in traditional market studies, thus providing new, sometimes unique and more valuable elements, crucial for innovation and competitiveness of tourism companies [60].

Social media has become, in fact, one of the biggest global channels of information distribution, featuring as "producer and distributor of active touristic information" [61] and a space of co-creation of value. Considering the role it plays in promoting destinations and tourism products and reaching potential clients at a reduced cost, the importance of social media is immense, particularly for small and medium companies in the tourism sector, specifically in rural areas [54].

2.3. The Bairrada Case

The present study is part of a broader research project, entitled TWINE: co-creating sustainable Tourism & WINe Experiences in rural areas, which aims to study the market for and issues involved in co-creating integral tourist experiences in rural wine destinations, based on a study of three contrasting wine routes in Portugal's Central region: Bairrada, Dão and Beira Interior.

Bairrada is located in the Central Region's coastal area, between two important tourist destinations: Aveiro and Coimbra (cf. Figure 1). This territory is characterised by a low-lying plateau and a Mediterranean climate (mild and temperate), moderated by the Atlantic Ocean, with mild and rainy winters and summers softened by the winds from the sea [62]. This region's great thermal amplitude (up to 20 °C) at the time of the ripening of the grapes is responsible for maintaining the acidity of the fruits, giving freshness to its wines. Represented mainly by small-scale wineries, Bairrada is renowned as the main Portuguese region for natural sparkling wine. The Bairrada Wine Route was created in 1995 by a group of regional and local wine-related public and private entities, aiming at promoting the region's wine and creating a regional governance structure to offer an innovative tourism product [63]. The diversity of the region's tourism supply is evident, transcending wine products and offering a wide range of experiences related to local food, culture and nature. Some important tourist attractions are the maritime and river

beaches, the thermal baths and spring waters, several museums, the exotic Buçaco forest including a famous Manueline Palace, today used as a historical charm hotel, and the typical villages of Lourizela and Macieira de Alcôba. Nowadays, the Bairrada Wine Route has about 100 members, amongst wine producers, restaurants (many specialised on roasted suckling pigs) and accommodation units. As for regional tourism dynamics, the region received, in 2019 (most recent pre-COVID data), more than 860 thousand guests in accommodation units, 53% of whom were international travellers, which resulted in more than 1300 overnight stays, with an average stay of 1.6 nights [64]. Most of the region's municipalities present a performance that is below the national values in terms of average length of stay, share of international travellers and occupancy rates of accommodation, although the boom observed in tourism demand in Portugal before the pandemic has also led to increasing demand in this region [64].

Figure 1. Bairrada region [65].

3. Materials and Methods

A passive netnography was used [66], which consisted of a content analysis of online reviews posted by visitors regarding their experience in the Bairrada region. The selected platform was TripAdvisor due to its popularity and recognised reliability [10].

3.1. Data Collection

The selection of comments for the study was based on the following inclusion/exclusion criteria: discourses were included whenever (1) they were integrated in the TripAdvisor categories "things to do" and "tours and tickets"; (2) they contained the word 'Bairrada', only if referring to regional experiences (not only referring to the origin of wines/products); (3) they presented an evaluation of an experience related to the territory and its attractions (not simply service evaluations); and (4) they were written in Portuguese, English or Spanish. In total, 793 reviews, published between 2011 and 2020, were considered, as this period comprises significant diversity of visitors' perspectives regarding distinctive experiences in the past ten years in the region. Other netnography studies on wine tourism

also adopted similar observation periods in terms of visitor reviews, such as Terziyska and Damyanova [39], who selected the period between 2013 and 2019, Thanh and Kirova [48], who analysed data from 2011 until 2016. In netnography studies, the diversity of time spans selected in different studies is clear, which might be also related to the volume of information available in the time-frame defined in each context, as well as the objectives of the research, requirements regarding details searched or substance regarding patterns and relations within the body of discourses available for a specific destination. The extended time frame is reasonable in the present case, since the Bairrada region (whose route has existed for over 20 years) has not changed substantially over the past ten years, while destination image forms slowly and does not change abruptly either. These images formed through travellers' experience sharing lead to experience expectations, which are consolidated through patterns of experiences presented also on online travel forums. The extended timeframe helps identify experience dimensions in diverse contexts as well as confirms association patterns. However, we consider the inclusion of 2020 data as a possible limitation, although it refers to only 1.6% of the discourses analysed. Comments were analysed in the original language.

3.2. Data Analysis

Content analysis was performed using QSR NVivo 12 (QRS International, Portalegre, Portugal). A deductive approach was used, selecting the most prominent experience dimensions, context factors and outcomes, as defined in the objectives of the study, namely: (1) Pine and Gilmore's [6] experience realms, (2) type of attractions/experience contexts following Timothy [67]; and (3) experience outcomes, specifically memorable experiences [68], satisfaction [38,43,44] and loyalty (including intention to repeat and recommend). As the codification process advanced, an inductive approach was added, with categories emerging from discourses. These were considered relevant for the study (also for practical implications) and included 'not recommended experiences', 'suggestions made to other visitors and suppliers', and 'emotional tone' (cf. Table 1). The content analysis followed an interpretive perspective, with the same comment possibly coded in more than one category.

Table 1. Main categories assessed and number of references.

Category	Number of References
Type of attraction/Experience context	1393
Tangible cultural heritage	485
Wine	388
Nature/landscape	106
Intangible cultural heritage (traditions)	75
Gastronomy	41
Experience dimensions/realms (4E's)	965
Aesthetic	523
Educational	341
Escapist	91
Entertainment	10
Emotional tone (valence)	997
Positive tone	657
Negative tone	340
Experience outcomes	1429
Satisfaction	732
Recommended experience	339
Suggestions to other visitors	170
Intention to return/repeat visit	68
Suggestions to suppliers (for experience improvement)	45
Perceived authenticity	42
Memorable experience	23
Not recommended experience	10

Based on the common procedures for content analysis [69], the literature-based conceptualisation of categories was the basis for interpretation, with four authors coding together twenty comments and defining the main coding criteria, also discussing discrepancies with the coordinator of the study. In a pairwise process, each coder continued coding independently, later comparing results with one colleague. Whenever necessary, all coders and the coordinator met to overcome lack of agreement and ensure reliability, as recommended in the literature by Kozinets [70]. Concerning data analysis, NVivo provided frequency of references (number of times a certain category was coded), coding matrix queries, word frequency (word cloud) and correlation between categories (based on Pearson's coefficient). As for association and correlation analysis, only those categories with a minimum of 90 references were considered. In the specific case of word counting, Portuguese words were translated into English to group them into the same category. Similar and related words were also grouped, when adequate (e.g., wine/wines). Additionally, IBM SPSS-24 (Armonk, NY, USA) was used to calculate experience evaluation score means and frequencies.

4. Results

4.1. Sample and Overview of Relevant Themes

The sample is mainly composed of comments posted by male individuals (68%) residing in Portugal (69.9%). Among the international places of origin, Brazil (9.6%) and Spain (8.4%) stand out. Regarding the travel group, there are participants who travelled as a couple (32.2%), with friends (31.6%) or family (28.9%), while only few travelled alone (4.7%). Most travelled for leisure and only 2.5% in a business context.

Table 1 shows the overall results of the content analysis, more specifically the main categories considered, respective sub-categories and number of references.

An initial exploratory content analysis revealed that the visit experience is dominated by positive emotions derived from experiences related to culture, nature, food and wine. Wine-related attractions, specifically sparkling wine, with museums combining wine and art (Aliança Underground Museum) clearly standing out as deserving experience reports. The Manueline style (unique Portuguese architectural style, also known as *Portuguese late Gothic*, a sumptuous style from the 16th century) Buçaco Palace, located within an exotic forest, is also one of the main attractions. The territory reveals potential for organising tours, where the guides play an important role. Although strongly marked by wine, Bairrada seems to be a diversified destination with elements such as water (Thermal springs of Curia and Luso), nature and landscape (Pateira de Fermentelos (lake), Buçaco Forest), historical heritage (museums), gastronomy and wines. It is apparently a destination with many and diverse attractions to see, get to know and engage with. All these preeminent elements/themes marking the region were extracted from the discourses and are reflected in the word cloud that gathers the most repeated terms in the visitor reviews (Figure 2). It reflects Bairrada's main attractions and experience features, highlighting the explorative nature of the customer experience in the region, as well as the relevance of authentic and didactic contexts. Therefore, words such as *wine* (n = 1972), *visit* (n = 1591), *arts* (n = 674), *museum* (n = 657), *beautiful* (n = 603), *palace* (n = 575), *local* (n = 571), *tours* (n = 466), and *guide* (n = 466) lead visitors' discourses.

The analysis also shows that Bairrada is a destination with many positive connotations. In fact, the valence (emotional tone) of narratives is predominantly positive (65.9%), as reflected in the reviews with highly repeated terms such as *beautiful* (n = 603), *excellent* (n = 383), *interesting* (n = 277), *amazing* (n = 227), and *pleasant* (n = 151), among others. Although most comments were general positive expressions, visitors also specified their appraisal of professional service provision, and revealed positive surprise or amazement (see Review #1), related to a contrast with city life or to a perception of a 'magical atmosphere' and relaxation feeling (see Review #2).

Review #1: "When arriving at a quiet village, very unassuming and agricultural, you are in for an incredible experience as you visit this winery" (J. N., 09/2019, about Aliança Underground Museum).

Review #2: "You can stroll through the woods and relax by the water and enjoy the silence and peace of this magical place" (L. O., 10/2014, about Buçaco Florest).

Figure 2. Word cloud.

4.2. Experience Dimensions/Realms (4E's)

The deductive content analysis allowed identifying all four experience dimensions in the visitors' reviews, although not distributed in a uniform manner. The narratives codified as experience dimensions are dominated by 'aesthetics' (see Review #3), with 54.29% of respective references, followed by the educational (see Review #4) dimension (31.2%). Escapist experiences exist (see Review #5) but are not as frequent (12%), while the 'entertainment' dimension is hardly present at all (1%), revealing the little effort made yet to present 'show-like' funny events in the region's tourism supply.

Review #3: "You arrive and your breath will be taken away: such a majestic old palace, well in shape, set in a magical environment. Take the path to the Coimbra gate and admire the golden light at sunset letting its mosaics shine." (J., 01/2020, about the Palace of Buçaco).

Review #4: "I cannot fully describe … how much we learned on this tour. Our guide, Bia Coelho, was cheerful, knowledgeable and the places chosen by Bago D' Uvas 360 were incredible. This is a full day wine tasting tour, with an incredible lunch, visit to Aveiro and much more." (L.B., 11/2017, about Aliança Underground Museum).

Review #5: "Staying in the Buçaco Palace is a legitimate "nowhere else in the world" experience. With its regal and 'old world vibe', you really do feel like royalty. The dining room, bar and grand lounge are incredible and take you away to a different era." (C.M., 10/2015, about the Buçaco Palace).

Simultaneous codification permitted identifying main attractions in the Bairrada region, providing visitors with interesting and diversified experiences related to tangible cultural heritage (35.9%), wine (28.7%) and nature/landscape (22.0%). Gastronomy was also positively highlighted in some narratives (7.8%). These experience themes/contexts were distinctly present in each of the experience realms. Results in Table 2 show that the educational dimension correlates most with wine and intangible cultural heritage experiences, whereas the aesthetic dimension seems to be more relevant in tangible cultural heritage and nature/landscape attractions. The latter experience combination is also found

for escapism, with fewer references, though. Entertainment, as barely mentioned, is not considered in this analysis.

Table 2. Association of attractions with experience realms.

	Aesthetic n = 523	Educational n = 341	Escapist n = 91
Tangible cultural heritage	**247 (46.7%)**	**134 (39.3%)**	**46 (50.5%)**
Wine	56 (10.7%)	**146 (42.8%)**	10 (10.9%)
Nature/landscape	**195 (37.3%)**	13 (3.8%)	**28 (30.8%)**
Gastronomy	11 (2.1%)	7 (2.1%)	3 (3.3%)
Intangible cultural heritage	14 (2.7%)	41 (12.0%)	4 (4.4%)

Note: references in absolute values, column percentages in brackets; absolute values and column percentages with values > 30% highlighted in bold.

Focusing on the wine-related experiences (n = 609, see Table 1), i.e., from a row-percentage perspective, the link with the educational dimension is still the strongest (23.9% in relation to the wine category's total, i.e., respective row percentage), with aesthetics being of second highest importance (9% within the wine experience category) (Table 2).

The relationship between experiences reported in the wine context and the tangible cultural heritage scope in Bairrada (Table 3) is mainly due to the strongly appreciated combination of wine and art, present in the Aliança Underground Museum. Learning about the history of wine, its production processes and enjoying tasting moments, together with various art exhibitions (not always related to wine) is a pleasant surprise, attracting people who would not have visited the place only for wine-related reasons. This engaging, sensory-rich and heritage-related escapist experience is sometimes additionally enhanced through the interaction with a passionate guide (see Review #6).

Table 3. References to wine in combination with other attraction contexts (absolute values).

Other Contexts	Wine N = 609
Nature/landscape	6 (1%)
Gastronomy	29 (4,76%)
Intangible cultural heritage	38 (6.24%)
Tangible cultural heritage	**123 (20.2%)**

Note: references in absolute values, column percentages in brackets; category with highest percentage in bold.

Review #6: "We were greatly surprised, we arrived right on time for a tour, but we had a private visit as we were only two . . . the guide was passionate about her work, the visit lasted an hour thirty but we didn't see time go by as it was very interesting . . . first time I saw art and wine barrels mixed together . . . The art collection is impressive; moving from African art to Portuguese ceramics, the room with mineral stones impressed me the most . . . Then we had a glass of sparkling wine, offered with almonds: great tour!" (M., 04/2015, about Aliança Underground Museum).

In brief, the combination of (particularly) tangible, but also intangible cultural heritage with wine experiences stands out in the visitors' comments, while, interestingly, nature and landscape are elements not as visible in the wine-related experience reviews (Table 3), as might be expected, considering other studies.

Last but not least, Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was calculated in order to quantitatively assess the strength of relationship between experience dimensions and context-related categories (cf. Table 4). Establishing 0.80 as the cut-off value [71] and excluding the entertainment dimension due to lack of reviews within this dimension, we confirm the close association between experiences that stimulate thinking and reflection (educational) and both wine and tangible cultural heritage. The aesthetic dimension, for

its part, seems to be mostly related to nature/landscape and tangible cultural experiences, but also to wine. Finally, immersive and active escapist experiences that take the visitor to "another dimension" are mainly found when reporting tangible cultural and natural heritage experiences. Wine experience in itself tends to thus be of rather educational, partly aesthetic nature, enhanced by tangible culture in the experiencescape (Tables 2–4).

Table 4. Correlations between experience realms and contexts/attractions.

Pine and Gilmore Model	Contexts/Attractions	Correlation (r)
Aesthetic	Nature/Landscape	0.96
	Tangible Cultural Heritage	0.96
	Wine	0.86
Educational	Wine	0.95
	Tangible Cultural Heritage	0.94
Escapist	Tangible Cultural Heritage	0.89
	Nature/Landscape	0.87

4.3. Experience Outcomes

Tourist discourses show that Bairrada visitors are generally satisfied with their experience in the region. However, they present modest loyalty levels, with some comments recommending the destination experience to others (see Review #7) (4.8%) or making specific recommendations to potential visitors (see Review #8) (2.4%).

Review #7: "We really enjoyed walking through the gardens. (...) Highly recommended if you are currently in the area." (I.D., 05/2018, about the Palace of Buçaco).

Review #8: "Maria's (the guide) knowledge of food and wine is superb, making us want to return ... " (Anonymous, 10/2019, about the Prior Lucas Winery).

Despite the high experience evaluation scores attributed, considering a five-point scale (M = 4.35, DP = 0.9), only a few reviews clearly stressed the memorable nature of the experience (see Review #9) (1.4%). Some reports referred to this memorability concept explicitly connected to wine-related experiences and highly appreciated interaction with travel guides and local producers (see Review #10).

Review #9: "A nice place to visit. A magnificent building and gardens. Is not cheap but if you visit "Bairrada" please go there and you will never forget." (L.V, 02/2012, about Palace of Buçaco).

Review #10: "Perfection! (...) the place, the atmosphere, the very friendly Patricia (the guide), the sparkling wine. We loved it and we even brought some bottles to remember all the "flavor" of these cellars later." (F.N., 05/2018, about Caves Messias).

Results in Table 5 show that aesthetic and escapist experiences are highly related to tourist satisfaction, as more than half of the reviews in each category alluded to visitors being satisfied. In educational experiences, satisfaction is not present to the same degree (35.2%). Furthermore, interestingly, experiences with a remarkable educational character show the lowest levels of experience outcomes in the other categories analysed. On the other hand, experiences based on the aesthetic dimension stimulate one out of ten visitors to recommend the experience to others and to also provide other visitors with most concrete suggestions when looking for inspiration on TripAdvisor.

Table 5. Association of experience realms with experience outcomes.

	Aesthetic n = 523	Educational n = 341	Escapist n = 91
Satisfaction	**53.3%**	**35.2%**	**52.7%**
Recommended experience	10.3%	5.6%	7.7%
Suggestions to other visitors	6.3%	1.5%	4.4%

Note: Highest associations highlighted in bold, column percentages shown.

In terms of type of attraction/theme of the experience, we found that satisfaction is mainly induced by tangible cultural heritage (standing out most), but also wine and nature/landscape, while recommendable experiences are connected similarly to the three mentioned contexts, while concrete suggestions are more found for those reporting nature/landscape than other types of experiences, as visible in Table 6.

Table 6. Association of attractions/thematic contexts with experience outcomes.

	Satisfaction n = 732	Recommended Experience n = 339	Suggestions to Other Visitors n = 170
Tangible cultural heritage	**36.3%**	**14.7%**	12.4%
Wine	**26.2%**	**15.6%**	10.0%
Nature/landscape	**24.7%**	**15.9%**	**32.9%**
Gastronomy	7.4%	2.7%	4.7%
Intangible cultural heritage	3.28%	1.5%	2.4%

Note: Highest associations highlighted in bold, column percentages shown.

5. Discussion

According to visitor comments shared on TripAdvisor, the Bairrada wine tourism experience tends to be a positively enjoyed, mostly aesthetic and, secondly, educational experience, enhanced through interesting and appealing tangible cultural and natural heritage elements, often leading to satisfaction and sometimes to recommendation. Our results regarding these two most important experience realms corroborate other studies [44,47], although there is lack of consensus regarding the most prevalent experience dimensions in wine destinations. In Thanh and Kirova's [48] study undertaken in Cognac/France, for example, the authors identified educational and entertainment as the most pertinent dimensions, while aesthetics was less perceived. On the other hand, in Quadri-Felitti and Fiore's study [44], in the Lake Erie Wine Country/USA, aesthetics stood out, being the educational dimension of moderate relevance, similar to our results. Despite the possible role of destination specificities, the present study adds value to the debate by corroborating the central role of both the aesthetics and the educational dimension, suggesting they should play an important role in the wine route's marketing strategy.

Those visitors specifying wine experiences do so generally reporting a very positive emotional tone, mostly when associated with an educational experience, and sometimes leading to recommendation (similar to those reporting nature experiences). Many discourses highlight the positive role of the guide in the educational winery experience, while all other experience realms are underrepresented (see Table 2).

Also, similar to other studies [46,47,50], the entertainment dimension is hardly mentioned, while highly impactful escapist experiences are identified by only few visitors, mostly connected to cultural and natural heritage experiences, but not much related to wine. Interestingly, findings reveal the potential of the escape dimension, since it was found to be highly associated to satisfaction (Table 5). The relatively smaller number of references to such experiences in the present sample may mirror the limited opportunities the Bairrada wine route provides in this scope, suggesting the pertinence to complement the region's experience supply accordingly. This escapist dimension may be triggered by enhancing tourists' immersion in the visited territories, i.e., their landscape, communities

and culture. Active participation in cultural events, involving hiking or cycling tours through vineyards, grape harvesting, food and wine pairing, culinary workshops and production of personalised wines are examples pointed out in other studies [44,46,48,51]. Time to truly engage with the place, its culture and people may be central, too [37,51], as may be the 'personalisation' of experiences [38,51], which would suggest approaches of 'slow', 'small scale' and less standardised experience contexts [38,72]. This would respond to a trend in the travel market searching for more authentic and meaningful experiences that are also more memorable [25,73,74].

As for the attraction context, it seems that Bairrada experiences basically refer to exploring a territory with a variety of culture and nature [8,38]. Here, strongly positively lived nature/landscape experiences stand out, however, with little relation to wine. Other studies highlight that wine landscapes (winescapes) are central to wine tourism experiences [35,38,44,48,50,75], contributing to tourist satisfaction, memorability and distinctive value of wine destinations. As a matter of fact, also in the present study, nature and landscape stand out to provide highly valued aesthetic and even escape experiences (Table 4), that are particularly associated with concrete suggestions presented on TripAdvisor to other visitors, i.e., a potentially more impactful recommendation (Table 6). In the present case, it was not much nature/landscape, but tangible cultural heritage that revealed most association to wine experiences (Table 3), the latter being connected to aesthetics and educational experiences (Table 4).

Other studies highlight that wine landscapes (winescapes) are central to wine tourism experiences [35,38,44,48,50,75], contributing to tourist satisfaction and memorability as well as to the distinctive value of wine destinations. It therefore seems that the Bairrada wineries and route should take more advantage of the natural winescape environment for more involved and memorable wine route experiences. Activities such as picnics in vineyards, walking or cycling through these landscapes would probably add delight and immersive experience opportunities, as well as the chance of including more elements of intangible cultural heritage [76]. As a matter of fact, the diverse positive impacts that nature, culture and wine-related attractions revealed on visitors' experience outcomes (Table 6) suggest the potential of combining these three themes/experience contexts, possibly through wine-related activities in the aesthetically appealing cultural landscape of wine-producing territories (winescape), enriched with cultural heritage and art, and active cocreation, e.g., through workshops (e.g., food and wine pairing, creative culinary or artistic workshops), concerts or traditional events in the vineyards, simultaneously fostering visitors' entertainment, as pointed out in previous studies [41,44,48]. These initiatives would contribute to visitors' enjoyment of the aesthetics of the landscape and could also lead to a sense of escapism.

These aspects may be important to promote experience uniqueness and foster tourists' involvement [38,51,77], possibly enriched through storytelling [75,78], as tourists appreciate interaction with the tour guide as enjoyable learning experiences. As, similar to other studies [44,47], entertainment was less found in Bairrada, 'edutainment' could be a strategy to reinforce this dimension in the region's wine experiences, particularly when considering the potential and sometimes neglected market of families travelling with children [79]. Besides, for more active, co-creative experience opportunities [38,47,51], possibly local actors may be involved, thus facilitating tourists' engagement in experiences perceived as 'authentic' while fostering the social dimension of the experience and thereby sustainable wine tourism development [38,73,76].

Given the particular territorial context (Section 2.3), with several outstanding natural and cultural heritage attractions and the well-known regional food and wine culture, in a region located between two important cities (that are relevant tourist attractions in their own right), it is understandable that visitors explore the region on their way from one city to the other, but their typical short stay makes true 'escape' experiences more difficult. However, by understanding the context in which escape experiences are more likely to occur (particularly in nature), such opportunities may be developed in a way that should additionally make travellers stay longer, engage more intensely with the place, local culture

and people, thus enhancing not only the visitors' experience quality, but also opportunities for more sustainable tourism development.

In this context, Montella [80] stresses the pertinence of identifying those tourists who are environmentally aware of green issues in wine tourism and who sustainability-yielding wineries may want to attract through targeted experience offerings [80]. In La Axarquía, Zamarraño et al. [76] also found an increasing concern about sustainability issues amongst wine tourists, which should be taken into account when designing the tourism offer, such as guided tours or other 'educational' winery experiences. These actual global themes, with locally visible repercussions, could enhance the visitors' emotional and cognitive engagement, make the visit more meaningful and memorable, as well as potentially enhancing sustainability behaviours amongst tourists (who may become more aware of the need to save water, even on holidays, being an increasingly scarce and crucial resource for wine production). The development of sustainable tourism practices along the wine route may help differentiate the route, if adopted consistently. Activities such as (waste avoiding) picnics in vineyards, walking or cycling through the unique landscapes, highlighted as sustainable tourism practices, would probably add value and immersive experience opportunities.

The Bairrada wineries and route should therefore invest in providing more complete, appealing, entertaining, but also meaningful and involved experience opportunities, emphasising aesthetic elements, specifically related to the vineyard and cultural landscape (as found in other routes), introducing learning, personal development and even escapist experience opportunities. Through these initiatives, suppliers could ideally provide a 'sweet pot' [13] of unique, emotionally engaging, sensory-rich, meaningful and memorable experiences [8,40,48,50], possibly leading to increased tourist loyalty and place attachment, and thereby increased competitiveness of wine destinations [8,44].

6. Conclusions

Contributions of this paper are diverse. Firstly, it applies an established and contrasted theory, with apparent applicability in tourism, namely the Experience Economy theory, analysing the model's suggested four dimensions (4Es) [13]. Our study reinforces the prominence of the dimensions 'education' and 'aesthetics' in tourists' holistic wine tourism/terroir experience, which should be recognised as central in the product/experience design. Although the influence of experience economy dimensions in wine tourism has already been analysed by other authors [37,44,48], the present study adds to previous research by not only clarifying the role of experience dimensions in wine/terroir tourism, but also by identifying most important experience context factors/themes associated with each dimension (thereby helping characterise it in this specific tourism context).

The analysis of the wine experience from a holistic perspective contributed to reinforce the relevance of natural and cultural resources in this wine region, due to their aesthetic and educational impact, and, not least, the potential of escapist experience development. Escapism, as the most active and immersive experience realm in Pine and Gilmore's model, may be triggered through more active involvement and co-creation opportunities, especially if undertaken in the outdoors. In order to improve tourists' active involvement in wine regions, such activities would add value to the experience and give visitors the opportunity to be truly immersed in the place. Also, creative tourism, with experiences that additionally foster visitors' self-development and self-expression, with a positive impact on their emotional engagement [51], may contribute to more intense immersion in meaningful 'escape-like' experiences.

The study further reveals the associations and correlations between Pine and Gilmore's experience realms and desired experience outcomes (satisfaction, recommendation), thereby stressing the impact of each dimension on these variables that are essential to wine destinations' competitiveness. The mentioned results are relevant to both theory and practice.

Besides, the broader experience perspective, embracing the entire wine terroir, was confirmed by visitors' discourses, who were attracted to more than wine, despite its out-

standing role in the regional experience. This reality confirms the appropriateness of a more comprehensive conceptualisation of the wine tourism experience, reinforcing other authors' recommendations [3,40]. This broader conceptualisation stimulates the promotion of new opportunities to co-create value with customers, as illustrated here for a particular geographical area (Bairrada, Portugal). This potential should be recognised and encourage the development of appropriate experience co-creation approaches, also in other regions, taking the advantage of existing regional, cultural and natural resources and stakeholder collaboration, possibly within a well-articulated wine route context, which additionally enhances sustainable regional development [73,76,80], particularly if experiences additionally present transformative experience opportunities, fostering sustainable tourism practice.

The main limitation of the present study lies in the lack of representativeness/generalisability of the sample of TripAdvisor comments, which are actually self-selected, voluntary reports. Still, the reports are an important primary data source that should not be ignored by destination marketers and wine route developers, not only since they provide relevant qualitative visitor feedback regarding the route's tourism supply (that may help suppliers correct and focus on good practice), but also given the influence that those reports exert on other potential visitors in their destination choice [54,57,58]. Still, future research could additionally systematically assess the four experience realms through interviews or surveys, addressing a representative tourist sample, despite the challenges that survey approaches also pose, making them often time and resource intensive and vulnerable to bias and constraints in the attempt to obtain valid responses in the desired numbers [81]. Future research could also address the interplay between wine tourism and other relevant associated tourism experience products, such as cultural tourism, nature tourism and gastronomy tourism, trying to better understand aspects such as experience co-creation. It would be interesting to better understand the nature, dynamics and impacts of co-creative food and wine tourism experiences, where visitors assume a central, active role in the experience, e.g., in culinary and wine workshops. Future research could also analyse the specificities of distinct wine tourist experience types (with a focus on diverse experience realms) in their contribution to sustainable regional development, considering particular impacts of these experiences on the visitors, but also on wine tourism suppliers, local residents and other economic and cultural local agents. Additional research from other regions and experience contexts, e.g., in the context of wine festivals or events, or in routes where more active co-creative wine tourism experiences are presented to visitors, would permit important complementary insight. This may help identify best practice in wine-tourism experience provision.

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