

researchers to rethink the use contact theory in tourism contexts. The contact theory assumes that the attitude of groups or individuals are positively changed through intercultural contact (Allport, 1954); however, the outcomes of the trip were not positive for all countries. Adding three destinations on the previous analysis, this study challenges the findings of the previous studies employing contact theory.

Study abroad programs are often structured and unidimensionally focused on academic outcomes. Study abroad professionals' should consider focusing their attention on designing and implementing programmes that maximize the experiential learning opportunities during the program, provide ample time for social/cultural interaction within the local context, and additional free time that students can use for exploring their own interests at their own pace. This will allow for students to have a sense of control as well as provide the best opportunity for positive experiences, which could act as a counter any potential negative experiences outside of their control.

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Exploring memorable surfing trips



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Surf tourism is travelling for the primary purpose of surfing that entails at least one overnight stay (Buckley, 2002). Concomitant with the growth of the surf tourism industry over the past four decades, the literature on this topic has mainly focused on community impacts, urbanization threats, and entrepreneurial complexities in surf tourism destinations (Martin & Assenov, 2012). More recently

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attention has shifted to surf tourists, examining their social space (Ponting & McDonald, 2013), and surf travel behavior and preferences (Barbieri & Sotomayor, 2013). More in-depth examination of the factors influencing surf tourism, however, is needed given its capacity to stimulate local economies especially in developing countries (Barbieri & Sotomayor, 2013; Ponting, 2009).

This research note, a component of a larger study examining surf tourism behavior, explores the meanings of memorable surfing trips that can assist capturing surf travelers and encouraging repeat visitation. Data were collected in 2010–2011 using an online survey available in English and Spanish. Snow-ball sampling, initiated with a convenience sample of 52 adult surfers residing in various countries, was used to recruit study participants. This note is based on the open-ended questions asking whether respondents had experienced a memorable surfing trip, and if so, what made the trip memorable.

A total of 136 responses were gathered from surfers mostly residing in the Pacific South America (48%) and continental U.S. (26%). Most respondents were male (87%), had at least a bachelors' degree (62%), and lived with some financial comfort (72%). Participants averaged 35-years old. Most respondents (61%) had been surfing for at least 10 years and 24% for five-to-ten years. On average they surfed 3.6 days per-week. Most had taken a surfing trip in the past (91%), were considering a surfing trip in the near future (94%), or had embarked on more than five surfing trips during the past five years (55%). Most of the surf tourists (67%) reported having a memorable surfing trip, predominantly abroad.

Two researchers initially open coded statements associated with memorable trips through constant peer-debriefing. These codes were axial coded into categories. The third researcher reviewed the coded material to ensure consistency in data interpretation (Ahuvia, 2001). Three themes regarding what constitutes a memorable surfing trip emerged: *Living Surfing*, *Having Indelible Experiences*, and *Discovering An-other*. Shared references to the destination attributes (e.g., family-friendly atmosphere, secluded surroundings) were not analyzed as they were pertinent to a variety of tourism destinations and did not add to an understanding of memorable surfing trips.

Living Surfing, the most common theme, denoted the maximization of the surfing experience, usually referring to relentless surfing (e.g., “2 months of consistent unforgettable swell” and “Great surf all over for a week straight”) or describing conditions making surfing or the waves peculiar (e.g., “South swell in the mix producing perfect waves” and “Because of the waves that were full glass with tubular sections, good points to hit the lip and fly out. . .”). A 59-year-old surfer described his trip during the 1980's as:

The surf was the best I have ever seen it there. We had 4 days of excellent surf in the 4 to 6ft range, then it dropped to 3–4ft fun surf and then it picked up to maxed out conditions of long hollow, did I say long, waves of 8 feet at least. . .

Such surfing preponderance confirmed the socially constructed notion of the perfect wave in surf tourist spaces (Ponting, 2009) and the realization of surfers' ceaseless quests and dreams (Butts, 2001; Ponting & McDonald, 2013).

Having Indelible Experiences referred to experiences so strong that they were impossible to forget. These memories often referred to an initial experience such as a first flight or tropical surf, which were consistent with the role of novelty in creating memorable tourism experiences (Kim, 2014). Some respondents related their memorable experience to personal satisfactions associated with attending major surfing events as spectators (e.g., “I watched all my favorite surfers and I was in the most important surf championship. . .”) or participants (e.g., “Because representing my country in a surf world championship is an honor; hold up the flag of my beautiful Guatemala”), findings that confirm the role of events in creating memorable tourism experiences (Kim, 2014). Others recalled a memorable trip because of a thrilling or distressing event. A 60-year-old female surfer described losing her front teeth as memorable, as did a 61-year-old male who had to be rescued because of losing his surfboard while offshore alone. A surfer summarized his indelible experience:

Hurricane Belle, I went when I was 16 years old. It was the size of a complete single story house rolling in with perfect form and glassy. The surf was too advanced for me. But I surfed it a little and got scared. Then the hurricane hit about 24 hours later. . .

Those recollections reflected how the emotionality of an event in the form of thrill or stress, crafted unforgettable experiences (Zimmerman & Kelley, 2010).

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