Market Research: Carving Surf School

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19 December 2014

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Degree programme

Degree in International Tourism

Report/thesis title Market Research: Carving Surf School	**Number of pages and appendix pages** **28 + 12**

This report will present the findings of market research carried out to investigate Carving Surf School (CSS), a surfing school founded recently in Asturias, on the North coast of Spain. The research aims to identify whether or not Finland would provide a profitable market area.

The report will first introduce the company, this will briefly outline the target market of CSS followed by the employees and their company policy, information regarding Asturias, the company's location will also be provided.

Theory of marketing, which offers a guideline of how to prepare a new marketing plan and market a product globally and the concept of active tourism, focussing primarily on economic, environmental and social consequences will then be examined. Finally the report will detail methods used for data collection and the results found, concluding with analysis and summary of the research.

Keywords

Marketing, surfing, Finland, Spain

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1   Introduction

The meaning of this research is to study the marketing opportunities in Finland as requested by Carving Surf School. The commissioner is curious to know if investing money on a marketing campaign in Finland would be profitable for the company.

One of the aims of this project is to provide valid information about the theory in order to make the case study reliable. Parallel to this function research is made to give readers information about Asturias, the location chosen. The purpose is not to create new knowledge but to communicate essential information about the topic based in previous research what would be a secondary source of information. Hence, it is exploratory academic research. (Evanschitzky, Baumgarth, Hubbard and Armstrong, 2006.)

Theoretical framework of this thesis contains theories which are handling marketing and marketing planning. They will be presented in the beginning to support this particular market research. Additional information such as marketing abroad is presented. Information used in theoretical framework is gathered from books and available internet sources.

There are limitations regarding this project. Main ones are lack of budget and limited time period reserved for the implementation. Also the commissioner's company is recently founded in which case no previous work is done for possible comparison. More challenges will arise from the fact that during this project the team members are living in different countries.

The research was implemented with online questionnaire by using Webropol. Same tool was used for the analysing of the gathered data. In the final part of this report results are presented and analysis of the data is made.

2 Commissioner

Carving Surf School (CSS) was founded in spring 2014 and is located in Aguilar beach, which is located in the region of Asturias on the North coast of Spain. CSS offers surfing lessons and accommodation.

Asturias has perfect conditions for surfing and therefore there is a great deal of competition. CSS is aiming to gain international customers in order to prolong the season and ensure a steady flow of customers throughout, therefore there is a need to develop an international marketing plan and it will be first implemented in Helsinki.

CSS is a small company which employs:

- Hector Acebal Pelaez, co-founder, logistics and surf instructor.
- Roberto Pire Fidalgo, co-founder, logistics and surf instructor.
- Mario Pire Fidalgo, surf instructor.
- Raquel Pire Fidalgo, logistics.

CSS has an ideology which accepts every customer regardless of their background. The company believes in leaving the smallest possible footprint into the surrounding environment and cooperating with local businesses and providers. (http://carvingsurfschool.com/)

Applying the theory of Kotler & al. strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats can be identified that define the current situation of the studied company. The strengths of CSS include installations and agreements with neighbouring businesses such as the possibility to offer a high standard of accommodation in the Hotel Azpiazu. Weaknesses lay on the small amount of foreign visitors in the area and the increasing number of competitors with similar target groups.

Playa de Aguilar, where CSS is located, is considered one of the most beautiful beaches in Spain; it is surrounded by numerous natural attractions which are advertised to tourists making it a big marketing opportunity for the company. This unique space could also be considered a threat as other businesses could try to found a similar company in an already limited market.

3 Target group

The identified target market can be narrowed down to the age bracket of 19 to 34 years old, this will be used to make the data easier to analyse and will be referred to as generation Y.

Generation Y values their social status and individualism. They want to differ from each other but also be popular among peers. Inspiration to travel can develop from movies, reality TV and curiosity towards other cultures, amongst other things.

Research shows that generation Y is now travelling more than ever before with increasing use of travel packages. Research done by Amadeus also shows that generation Y is spending the largest amount on long haul and short trips. Prior to travelling this age group are saving large amounts of money, allowing them to come up with comprehensive budgets. Generally generation Y travel to warm destinations to experience adventure travel, however, they also share an interest towards leisure and luxury products. (Petrak 2011.)

While travelling generation Y expects excellent service, the service provider should also be prepared to pay personal attention to their young customers. Although generation Y is buying more package deals than before they are not satisfied solely with the flights and accommodation, service providers are expected to offer new interesting experiences as an incentive, if this can be achieved it appears sustainable. (Red Book Connect 2014.)

Generation Y is very brand loyal and active in sharing their experience through social media; they also value openness from travel agencies and are very negative towards hidden costs. During travels independent decisions are made by generation Y, however, support and help are welcome when needed. Tour operators should have trendy travelling ideas they can offer as travelling is a desirable personality trait for many people which is growing in popularity. This generation is not at all attracted to products for mass consumption, they want to be inspired and avoid so called normal tourist activities. Therefore, contact with the local people is a common reason to travel for generation Y. (Amadeus 2013.)

4   Asturias

This chapter introduces Asturias. As mentioned before Asturias is the destination of our commissioner (CSS) and has ideal conditions for surfing and potential for other active tourism.

4.1   Location and accessibility

To understand how Asturias is located, it is relevant to understand the political division of Spain. Asturias is one of the seventeen Autonomous Communities in which Spain is divided. As an Autonomous Community it has its own government and borders limiting it from the neighbour communities: Galicia, Cantabria and Castilla y Leon. Figure 1 clearly represents the location of Asturias. (Hispanoteca. Comunidades Autónomas 2014.)
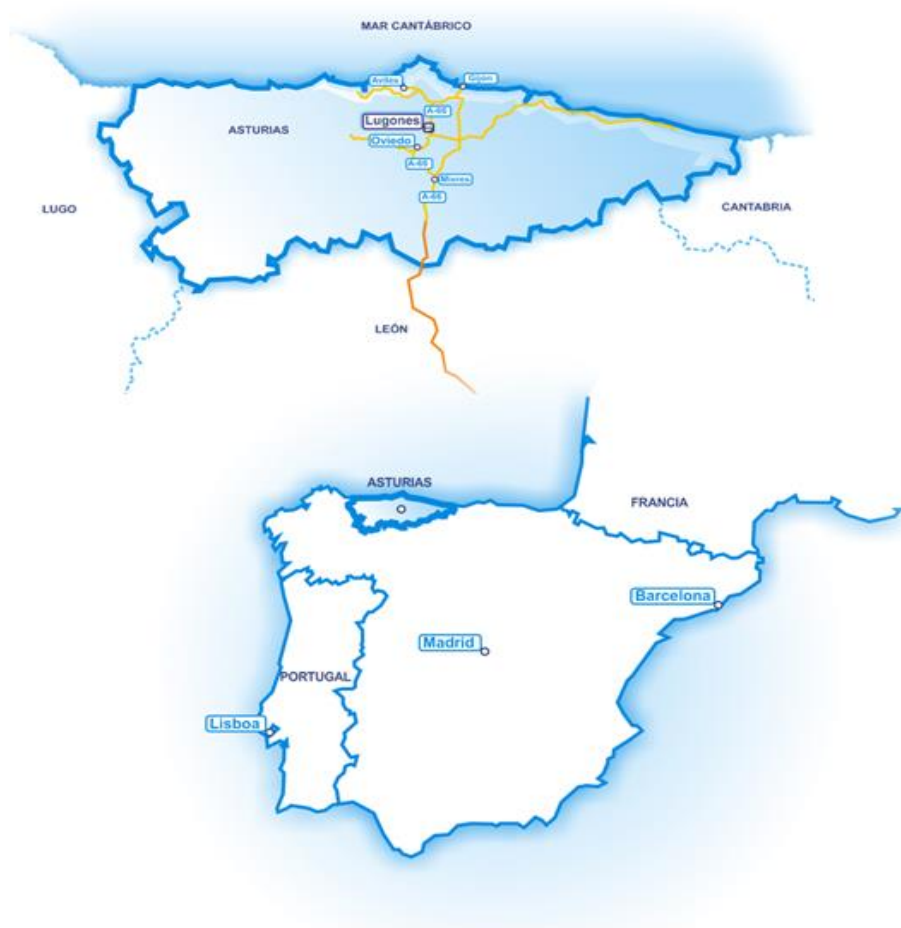

Figure 1: Location of Asturias (Atraasturias 2014.)

Asturias is easily accessible by road, rail and air:

- By air through Oviedo Airport which has daily domestic flights connecting with the major hubs of Spain, Madrid and Barcelona. Oviedo Airport also has several weekly direct connections to London, Paris and Berlin. (Aena 2014.)
- By rail the major links are the routes to Bilbao and to Madrid, which connect Asturias with major cities of Spain. (Renfe 2014.)
- By road Asturias is connected from North to South and from East to West. The major national roads are Autopista Ruta de la Plata and Autovía del Cantábrico. (Race 2014.)

4.2   Climate and relief

The natural separation from Asturias and the rest of Spain is the mountain chain called Cordillera Cantábrica at the South and the Cantabric Sea, part of the Atlantic Ocean at North, see Figure 1. It is for this reason why Asturias is a unique destination with the sea and the mountains at a glance. Asturias has a humid weather with common precipitations throughout the full year and soft winters and summers. (Gobierno del Principado de Asturias 2013, 2.)

4.3   Nature

"Asturias Natural Paradise" is the slogan promoting Asturias for decades and it is, in fact, very appropriate. In the small surface of 10 600 square meters that form Asturias the UNESCO has proclaimed 6 World Biosphere just a short distance from the major cities. Within this World Biosphere, there are the last shelters remaining in Spain for the iconic brown bear. (Gobierno del Principado de Asturias 2013, 5.)

Figure 2: Sangoñedo, Ballota and Potes (Cimadevilla 2013)

Down from the mountains the extended cost of Asturias has over 200 beaches forming a total of 345 km of coastline. (Gobierno del Principado de Asturias 2012, 1-15.)

4.4 Society

Asturias has a total population of over a million inhabitants. The majority are residents in one of the three largest cities: Oviedo, Gijon and Aviles. Apart from these cities there are numerous small fishing villages and mountain establishments which are little by little decreasing in population. (Idepa 2013.)

4.5 Asturias as a tourism destination in a nutshell

There is no doubt about the potential that Asturias has to offer to the tourism industry. Apart from the already mentioned attractive nature Asturias has very old historic heritage. Some of these include; prehistoric paintings in caves in the mountains, pre-Romanesque constructions which are the oldest buildings remaining in Spain, and Art World Heritage by UNESCO. (Gobierno del Principado de Asturias 2012, 15-24.)

Asturias is also famous for rural tourism. Which combined with gastronomic tourism can offer to visitors the real essence of "natural paradise". For those who are not enthusiastic about nature Asturias has three large cities located within half an hour from each other with all the amenities of any large city. (Gobierno del Principado de Asturias 2012, 15-24.)

4.6 Potential of the destination in active tourism

The section above tries to demonstrate the potential Asturias has as an active tourism destination. This is due to the extended coasts and the possibility that many activities can be organized with world-class standards throughout the year:
- Surfing
- Rafting
- Climbing

Figure 3: El Castillo, Cadavedo and Los Quebrantos (Rompiente Norte 2014a)

5   Theory

In this chapter, marketing is explained in theory. The main goals of market research are presented in detail. In addition, actions behind marketing planning are introduced.

5.1   Marketing

Today´s customers have become global ones, with more power to improve or damage companies' images. More and more frequently purchase choices are made on comments and opinions of others. (Kotler, Bowen & Makens 2010, 5.) This is why customers create a significant role for marketing in companies. The purpose of marketing is to offer real value, fulfil the needs of customers and motivate purchases (Kotler & al. 2010, 6).

As mentioned above our commissioner should furthermore be aware of what marketing includes and demands. One definition of marketing is made by the American Marketing Association (2014), "Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large." Another definition in words of Kotler, Bowen and Makens (2010, 11), "Marketing is the art and science of finding, retaining and growing profitable customers." According to these definitions, marketing is not only about having value for customers but to find customers who are valuable to the company.

Focus on customers is important for all companies regardless of the size (Kotler & al. 2010, 6). Not only is marketing about advertising and sales but also research, information systems and planning (Kotler & al. 2010, 8). Common in tourism marketing is for companies to create cooperative relationships. For instance co-operation between airlines and hotels with travel packages, create a chance for better success. (Kotler & al. 2010, 10.) For example, Carving Surf School is cooperates with the hotel located right next door.

Marketing includes the needs, wants, demands and expectations of customers. Needs and wants are formed by culture and individual personality. People have both basic needs which include for example, food and safety and social needs such as fun, belonging and relaxation. Wants are the way of communicating needs. Additionally with wants people satisfy their needs. Customers have nearly unlimited wants but limited resources. Therefore, products are chosen based on the value for customers' money. (Kotler & al. 2010,12.)

In hospitality and the tourism industry a 'product' takes the form of customer service and experience instead of being something visible and concrete. In one case Ritz – Carlton Resort staff set up chairs on the beach at sunset and served champagne to their guests. (Kotler & al. 2010,13.) Customers' expectations are based on previous experience and marketing information. Therefore, marketers should set expectations at the right level. Marketing is well planned when companies promise what they can deliver and then exceed expectations. (Kotler & al. 2010,14.)

The most important goal of marketing is to create profitable customer relationships. There are several tools to aid in approaching this matter. One tool is to add financial benefits. A good example of adding financial value is frequent-flyer programmes used by airlines. A second tool would be increase social aspects. Social aspects mean creation of personal bonds with customers and personalization of products or services. The third tool is to add structural ties to both benefits mentioned above. (Kotler & al. 2010, 21.) For our commissioner we recommend the second tool as they are trying to create new long lasting customer relationships. In the future when a customer base in Finland is secured financial benefits could be added for regular customers.

5.2 Global marketing

Many marketing theories from The United States have been adapted to other countries. However because of cultural differences these theories may not serve a purpose in other cultures. (Mooji 2010, 4.) In order to create a new global market, it is vital for our commissioner to understand aspects of marketing in a different culture. It is obvious that matters connected to marketing such as values and ways of communication are different in Finland compared to Spain.

In different cultures, people have varying motives to buy products. Even if a target group is unchanged, customers make purchase choices depending on their motives. For example a survey from the advertising agency Euro RSCG shows attitudes towards buying technology products vary considerably among youth in big European cities. According to the survey, 16% of respondents in Amsterdam claimed that they mainly use technology for entertainment. Whereas in Helsinki and London 9% and only 4% in Milan act the same way. (Mooji 2010,12.)

In addition value variety can be seen in characteristics of culture. To mention one example individualism is more prominent to Americans whereas to Japanese group values are important. In Japan, they have to learn how to think individually. In the West, tradition and modernity are contrasted but in Japan they are seen as one. Even though Japanese are conservative it does not mean that they could not be introduced to modern ways. (Mooji 2010, 2.)

Marketing communication styles vary across the world and are influenced by culture. Americans see this action as the persuasion of others and changing attitudes as well as influencing behaviour. In individualistic cultures marketing is meant to persuade, whereas in collective cultures marketing is supposed to build trust and relationship between the seller and the buyer. (Mooji 2010, 174.)
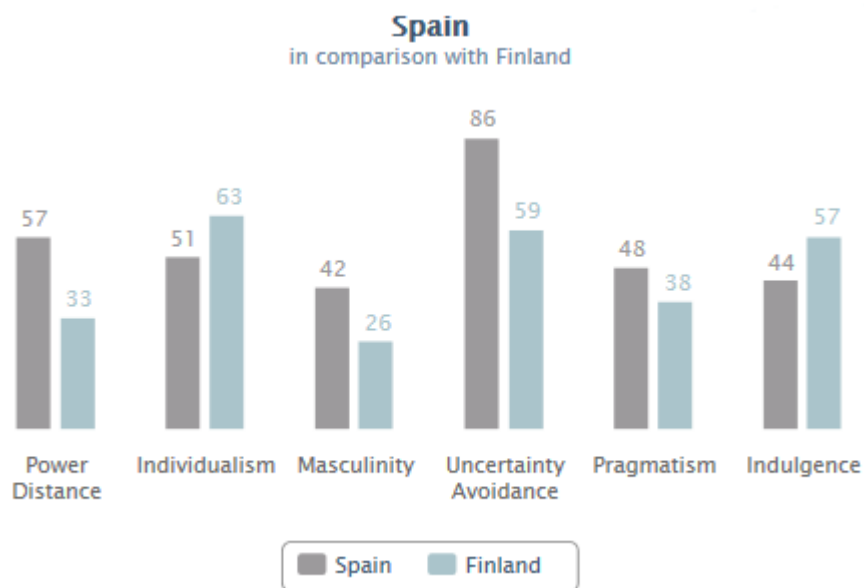

Figure 4: Spanish culture compared to Finnish culture

As seen in figure 4, individualism is higher in Finland compared to Spain. Based on the scores above, Spain is a collective culture and Finland is an individualistic culture. Therefore, our commissioner should have a different approach for marketing in these two countries.

5.3   4 P's

Consumer behaviour reflects on how organizations need to adapt their four Ps strategy to satisfy their target market. Four Ps include the modification of product, price, place and promotion. All of them can be adjusted to the marketing mix separately or together. In this manner, the marketing mix is easy for every organization to make it their own. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 161.)

Key objective is product position. Consumer will recognize the product from competitors´ due to product´s uniqueness and the differentiation of the company. Needs and wants of customers have to be identified in order to get an ideal position for the product and services. Additionally, a company needs to study the market and competition. (Swarbooke & Horner 2007, 162.) Every product has a lifecycle of four stages, induction, growth, maturity and decline stage. It is possible to attract different types of customers depending on the stage of product lifecycle. Tourism organizations usually have products and services in multiple stages at the same time. Therefore, all the products and services require a unique marketing plan. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 163.)

Price set for a product has to be balanced with a company's financial goals and what target customers are ready to pay (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 165). Price of a product or service is determined depending on many aspects. The most important one is customers´ view of price regarding quality and value for money. It is important that there is a link between the price and quality. Higher price in tourism products or services usually mean more special features and personal services. One example is the differences between business class and economy class. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 166.) Place for a product has to be chosen carefully. All customers who are interested of buying must have easy access to make purchase (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 167).

Promotion is where organization is communicating successfully with its´ target market. Goal of promoting is to affect the behaviour of customers. Several methods are used such as advertising, brochures and sponsorship. Tourism organizations use press or public communication techniques to create positive image. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 170.)

5.4 SWOT

Management of marketing can begin after a company has completed full analyses of the situation. Generally SWOT is contacted for analysing a company´s current place in the market. With SWOT, a company can evaluate overall strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Strengths include internal positive factors and weaknesses negative. Opportunities are external factors in the favour of a company and threats are external factors causing difficulties to do business. (Kotler & al. 2010, 71.)

Companies have to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses constantly. Each and every factor needs to be rated from the major strength to major weakness. After discovering, strengths a company has to make a decision whether its´ going to concentrate only for the market it already has the needed strengths or to develop further. (Kotler & al. 2010,72.)

Purpose for environmental scanning is to discover new opportunities. Marketing opportunity is defined by Kotler, Bowen and Makens (2010, 73), "an area of need that a company can perform profitably." When classification of opportunities is made, attractiveness and successfulness are used as criteria (Kotler & al. 2010, 73). Threats to marketing can emerge when unfavourable trends or developments are discovered. Therefore, the lack of defensive marketing action concerning these threats can lead to sales or profit deterioration. (Kotler & al. 2010, 74.)

5.5 Relationship Marketing

According to the Nordic School, the core of management services is managing of relationships and the building of networks, development of customer databases and management of marketing communication (Grönroos 2013, 97). Grönroos defines relationship marketing (RM) in such a way as to: "identify and establish, maintain and enhance and, when necessary, terminate relationships with customers and other stakeholders, at a profit so that the objectives of all parties involved are met; and this is done by mutual exchange and fulfilment of promises" (Grönroos 1994, 9). The key factor of Grönroos definition of RM is the creation of win-win scenarios for all the parties involved in a determined business.

When a company deals with relationships, it is not just about the goods, but the sharing of opinions, insights and ideas. This helps to forge ties of loyalty and affection between company and customer and a presumed obligation is created as well as an exchange of values. When talking about RM the concept of trust is an important factor. In marketing, trust is defined as the confidence in a reliable exchange between partners. Trust can be a determining force of success in situations where partners feel vulnerable, especially in risky transactions. (Egan 2002, 32.)

According to J. Egan, there are four types of marketing depending on their focus area. One of these types is called transaction marketing, which is not directly linked to RM as it relies on economic transactions. The other three types of marketing that are linked to RM are: database, interaction and network marketing. Respectively, these marketing types focus on: information and economic transactions; interactive relationship buyers and seller; and connected relationship between firms. (Egan 2002, 89.)

In RM customer satisfaction is a key element. A company needs to promise to fulfil customer needs (see section 5.1 of this report). According to Egan there are four connections between a firm and customers: classic and special relationships; customer markets; buyer partnerships; and customer partnership. Satisfaction is crucial in all four connections. (Egan 2002, 127.)

What has not yet been explained is what is understood as 'partnering' when talking about RM. Partnering refers to a recognized relationship that exists between a customer and a certain type of supplier. This relationship is maintained due to a profit that both parties can obtain. As it was hinted above, partnering depends on win-win scenarios and it does not materialize when only one party advantages from the other. (Egan 2002, 176-179.)

Finally, in order to fully grasp RM one needs to understand the relevance the effect that networking has on the logistics of a company. Networking refers to the connections between people; of an individual with others, and not to the connections between organisations. The individual can use networking as an advantage to the organization he/she belongs to. Networking is the building of links, that can be formal or informal, which aid in obtaining needed knowledge for the company. Networks can evolve positively into alliances. When an alliance is created the organisations involved need to be sure that a positive-sum game takes place and that it can be maintained long term. (Egan 2002, 189-198.)

6   Active Tourism

This typology of tourism is not only oriented towards the 4 S's of old tourism but also to-wards winter and seasons with less pleasant weather. The aim for travelling for active tourists is to have the possibility to practice physical activities in new environments. The tourists participating in this kind of tourism do not demand much from the local resources. (Aronsson 2000, 71.)

Active tourism frequently overlaps with other sectors of the tourism industry as adventure tourism and ecotourism, where to draw the line between these however, is problematic. This is because active tourism combines characteristics from the other two typologies; it supports the search of adventure for the adventurous but in an ecological environment. The destination is chosen for its qualities making no need to change the environment to recreate the adventure. (Beard, Leckie, Pomfret & Swarbrooke. 2005, 3-7.)

6.1   Economic consequences of active tourism

All types of tourism have a remarkable impact on the economy of the destinations. Active tourism is often oriented towards medium class travellers who avoid tourist oriented at-tractions and search to experience the local services. Their actions support the region's providers. It might appear to be a less profitable form of tourism than mass tourism but on the contrary it has fewer costs for the destinations. This means that in order to make prof-its from adventure tourism no specific infrastructure is required. Since the key factor is to adapt to what is already there for the locals. Ancillary services such as: transportation facilities, retail functions, water supplies, etc. do not need to suffer as bigger changes as they would with mass tourism. (Aronson 2000, 68-74.)

It is a fact - shown by numerous studies - that tourism can push the economic develop-ment of a region. By increasing the prices of services for tourists this effect is maximized. Nevertheless it is good to keep in mind that active tourists are, often, expert travellers and they will typically find local contacts that will provide better rates fairly easily. It is reasona-ble to deduce therefore, that the impacts of active tourism are less noticed in services created specifically for tourists. (Mathieson & Wall 2006, 70-85.)

It is important to understand the expansion of the seasonality. Nowadays, Asturias receives its pick of visitors in July and August. By marketing the area, it would be achievable to expand this frame of time from May to October. As a result this would decrease the environmental impact of tourism and would create long time work placements. (Duncan 2013.)

Active tourism creates new jobs that are less promoted by other types of tourism such as: surf schools, downhill bike organizers, rafting clubs, etc. Additionally it provides locals with a new mentality to appreciate what their country has to offer and as a result they become more active members of local activities. Unfortunately in some cases, such as winter installations, the economy suffers from high unbalanced seasonality. (Mathieson & Wall 2006, 70-85.)

6.2   Environmental consequences of active tourism

Agarwal and Nangia, 1974, say "Tourism provides an incentive for the restoration of ancient monuments and archaeological treasures and for the conservation of natural resources, as well as the economic mean by which they can be achieved." Active tourism concentrates this effort into the natural resources what force local authorities to invest in the maintenance of the natural resources since nature is, in this case, the economic mean. (Boers & Bosch 1994, 28.)

Generally, active tourists are environmentally focused and not only search for holiday destinations with a lower footprint on the environment; they often try to help the environment through diverse global organizations. Ski resorts for example, seek to find other uses for their installations during the warm seasons thereby using existing installations which have already had adverse effects, instead of creating new ones and damaging the environment more. (Mathieson & Wall 2006, 155-168.)

Even though active tourism has a less negative effect on the environment, there are still factors that damage the environment such as transportation, accommodation and other amenities. Even so, active tourists recognize the biodiversity and ecological integrity of the destinations and are committed to keeping them as intact as possible. Active tourism is in a way an environmental education institution which focuses on the preservation of Earth's resources. (Surfrider Foundation 2010.)

6.3   Social consequences of active tourism

Any kind of tourism has a clear influence on society. Depending on the type of residents and the characteristics of the tourists, these impacts are varied. It is a remarkable consequence of this typology of tourism, that education and collaboration occurs with local lovers of the adventure and travel. (Mathieson & Wall 2006, 220-258; active-tourism 2009.)

A migration from rural areas to more populated areas is a common tendency; draining villages and aiding in the loss of ancient cultures. Active tourism is designated to where nature allows practicing it and this usually means away from big cities. This can help to revive rural areas from this drainage. To understand this point more clearly, take this hypothetical case as an example: an inhabited, small village by a mountain becomes a holiday destination for mountain lovers who also want to experience local life. Locals are then able to move to their former residents and start lively businesses in the area that previously lacked clients. (Mathieson & Wall 2006, 220-258.)

7 Methods and data

In this chapter, the methods used in this research are described. The ways of data collection are explained and expected validity of the research is discussed. From all the available methods, two were chosen: a case study and a questionnaire.

7.1 Methods

When conducting the research for this thesis, there has been two major ways for obtaining the needed information. One method was an online questionnaire and the other was a case study. The reason these methods were chosen was due the previous experiences in the field. Previous work placements in surf schools around the destination gave a clear vision that Carving Surf School is a very good example to study about how active tourism has convenient impacts in Asturias. An online questionnaire was chosen as it is an efficient way of obtaining valid data.

Case studies can extend experience or add knowledge to already familiar subject through previous research. Tools for collecting data can be surveys, interviews and documentation review. (Soy 2006.) Social scientists have used case studies to examine contemporary real-life situations. The aim is to produce evidence to make the case understandable and find answers to the research questions. (Soy 2006.)

A questionnaire is a tool for collecting data in rigorously standardized way. The searched information is obtained by the questions that form the questionnaire. Therefore, the questionnaire needs to be well thought in order to obtain relevant information which allows the researcher to arrive at solid and valid conclusions. (Social Investigation techniques, Ana Suarez, 2011,3.)

Two types of questions can be designed for the questionnaire. Close-ended which provide answer options. These questions produce quantitative data. Open-ended questions produce qualitative data. Unlike the closed-ended, these questions do not offer answer options. (Sociology Central 2010.)

Anonymity and reliability are advantages when using a questionnaire as a research method. Questionnaires are an effortless and fast way to reach large number of people simultaneously. (Sociology Central 2010.) Disadvantages include the difficulty in gathering data which is rich in both depth and detail. Without the presence of researcher, it is difficult to know if the respondents have understood the questions. (Sociology Central 2010.)

7.2   Data collection

Data collection was completed with Webropol. For the purpose of data collection an online questionnaire was the most convenient and logical choice. The goal was to reach a large number of young people at the same time. Answering this online questionnaire they had to spend only 5 to 7 minutes of their time and were able to fill it in regardless of neither time nor location.

Webropol was established in 2002. It is the developer and supplier of Webropol survey and analysis software. Webropol offers additional services such as training and consulting to their customers. Webropol has operations in UK, Germany, Sweden and Finland. Independent Webropol resellers are located in Turkey, Belgium, Russia, Singapore and Indonesia. There are over 40 000 Webropol users worldwide. (Webropol 2014a.)

One of the values for Webropol is reliability. In Webropol they want to ensure a reliable and safe environment for their users to collect and process information. Furthermore, the aim is to assist work communities in collecting information from their groups of interest. The first goal was achieved when the Webropol 2.0 application became a global forerunner due to its technical features. The next goal is to gain global leadership in providing tools for the data collection and analysis field. (Webropol 2014a.)

7.3   Implementation

The online questionnaire was sent to universities, Arcada University of Applied Sciences in Arabianranta, Helmi travel & Business College in Malmi and HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences in Porvoo. Link to the online questionnaire was shared on Facebook as well. In order to make it more efficient an event was created and 221 friends were invited to take part.

The questionnaire used in the research of this thesis contained four types of questions (Kevin Battey, 2014,214):

- Dichotomous questions: require the selection of one of the two possible answers to the questions. It can be "yes" or "no", "male or "female", etc.
- Contingency questions: qualify the respondents to proceed with one part of the questionnaire or to skip.
- Multiple choice questions: three or more options are given as answers and the interviewees are asked to choose one or more than one.
- Open-ended questions: looking for qualitative answers. The interviewee has the chance to express in detail an own opinion.

The questionnaire is also divided into five sections, an introduction and 15 individual questions. The introduction is needed for communicating the aim of the questionnaire and the way the data is handled. A crucial part of the introduction is to inform about the privacy policy, who is conducting the research and with what purpose.

The first section has four demographic questions of the dichotomous and multiple choice types. The aim of this section is to divide the respondents according to their: age, sex, occupation and nationality.

"Travel habits" is the topic of the second part of the questionnaire. It has five multiple choice questions and aims to:
- Help CSS to know when and how long should the trips and camps oriented for people living in Finland be.
- Indicate the possibility to obtain regular customers or one visit customers.
- Hint when and in what form is the marketing most efficient.

From CSS point of view, it is important to know how familiarized are the potential clients with the area where they operate. For this reason the third section of the questionnaire interrogates the interviewees about their previous experiences they had, or not, in Spain and about their knowledge of the coasts of Spain related with surfing.

The fourth section relates to surfing. Enquires about if the respondents had practiced the sport before, where and the level of skills. Also collects information about the level of desire that the respondents of practicing surfing. This section contains contingency, dichotomous and multiple choice types of questions.

The last section focused on commissioners' interest in collecting data that helps CSS to design a product which is adapted to the needs and possibilities for Finnish market. As this is the most important part of the questionnaire it has an open ended question, which is time consuming but provides information that cannot be obtained otherwise.

The questionnaire was implemented during the last week of November and the first week of December. All the data collected was properly archived and analysed.

8   Market Research

In this chapter a summary of the data gathered from the Webropol survey is introduced. Furthermore the results are presented with figures.

8.1   Results

The total amount of answered questionnaires was 71. The results in detail are visible in the Annex 1. In this section there is a brief summary of the obtained results.

The majority of the respondents were Finnish locals. Four of them were from other European countries and one respondent was from Canada. There are more answers from females than from males and the biggest age group is 26-36 closely followed by 18-25. The professional field differs from one respondent to another but a large majority are students of tourism or businesses.

Booking of trips are made fairly early among the respondents. Most of them, 30 out of 71, make their bookings 3 to 6 months before the trip. Online booking tools are the most popular way to make bookings with 63 answers indicating this was how they booked trips.

Traveling for holidays is done throughout the year. However, for the most part respondents travel during summer or winter seasons. The duration of the holiday is usually one week and happens 2 to 3 times a year according to 36 respondents out of 71. An average budget for a surfing holiday would be between 200 euros to 400 euros. Finding out about various attractions of the destination are arrived at through Google according to 52 respondents out of 71.

When asked if the respondents had ever visited Spain, 57 out of 71 had and 14 had not. From those who had visited Spain, most of them travelled to the Canary and Baleares Islands, Madrid, Barcelona, Malaga, Alicante and/or Basque Country. The interviewees were also asked if they had practiced surfing at some point, and from the 29 respondents that had tried surfing previously 9 did it only once, 5 practiced surfing twice, 13 surf at least once a year and 3 consider themselves as very skilful surfers. The remaining 42 respondents have not tried surfing jet but the majority stated that they would like to try it if the chance for it is given.

When it comes to what amenities the respondents find a must for CSS, they repeatedly pointed to good gastronomy, pleasant accommodation, skilful teachers and easy accessibility as essentials. Similar answers were given when the respondents were asked what would make a successful surfing trip. In addition to the ones previously mentioned the respondents gave a special interest to the meteorological conditions, the recreation of a positive and good atmosphere, a fair value for money and to the possibility to practice other activities besides surfing.

8.2 Analysis

This chapter includes an analysis of the questionnaires filled in Webropol. It reflects on the obtained data and describes the background behind the answers.

8.2.1 Travel habits

The travel habits of the respondents have many characteristics of traveling habits of generations Y. Usage of the internet is very common when making bookings and when researching the destination. Online booking tools are used by 63 of 71 respondents. Less than 5 are using a travel agency.
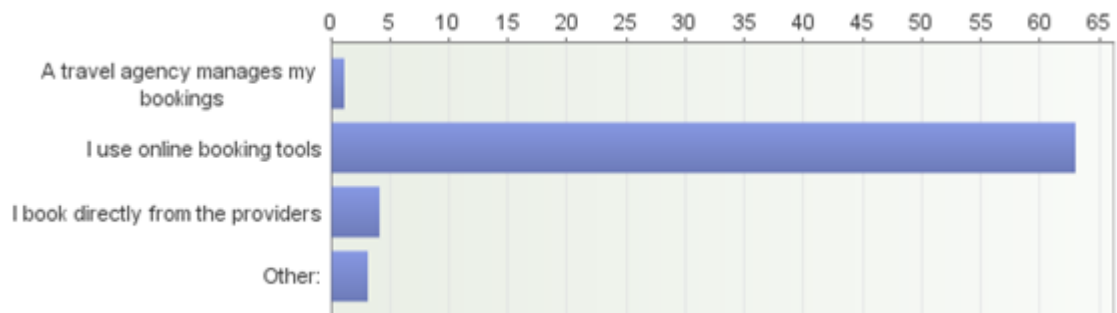
Figure 5. How do you make your bookings when organizing your holidays?

Youth want their information faster. Using for example, Google offers a perfect opportunity to find out what you are looking for effortlessly. People belonging to the age group from 19 to 34 are not afraid to try new things and they have more trust for the technology than older generation.

Respondents were mainly students. This fact explains why travelling happens mainly in summer and winter. Universities and schools have longer holidays during these seasons. The third most popular season for traveling is autumn. Spring is the season when there is less traveling.

Majority of respondents claim to travel outside of Finland for holidays 2 to 3 times per year and clearly most popular duration of a vacation trip among the respondents is one week. These figures match with the school holidays as well. Only 6 out of 71 say they travel for longer than two weeks. Longer holidays require more time and money which could be one of the reasons why one week is popular among the respondents.
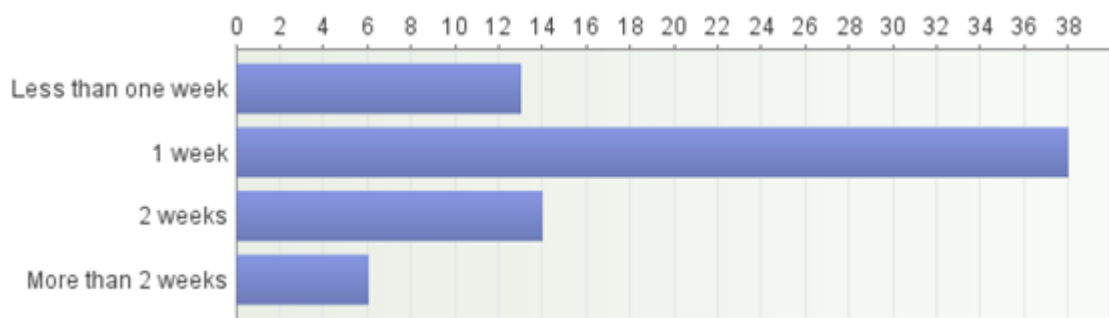
Figure 6. How long is your average vacation trip?

Most of the respondents make their bookings 3 to 6 months before the trip. Only 3 out 71 say they do bookings 6 months beforehand. Surprisingly many, 15 out of 71, say they make bookings less than 31 days before travelling. When holidays are booked earlier there is a better chance to save money and get the exact flights and accommodation that the traveller had in mind.
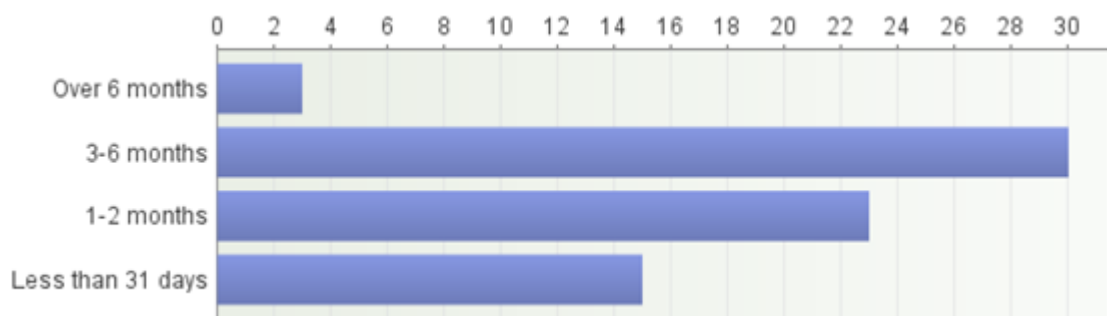
Figure 7. How long in advance before your holiday do you make your booking?

The budget of what most respondents are willing to pay for a surf holiday per person is 200 to 400 euros. Only 2 out of 71 say that they would be ready to pay more than 600 euros. The reason behind this is that starting families happens later in life these days and young people have therefore more money to spend on traveling and to focus on their life-style.

8.2.2   Spain and surfing experience

When asked how much do the respondents know about surfing and about Spain, certain results where unexpected. These are the main points analysed for this section from the questionnaires:
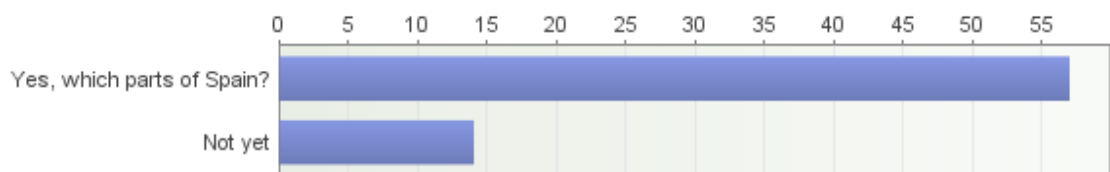
Figure 8. Have you ever visited Spain?

Most of the respondents had visited Spain at least once. This was an already well-known fact that Finns like to travel to Spain. The South Coast of Spain, together with the Spanish islands, has been receiving regular tourists from Finland for the last few decades. While studying the destinations in Spain, it was clear from the respondents that Basque Country was among the most visited. This was thought to be an interesting point due to the proximity and the similarities between Basque Country and Asturias.
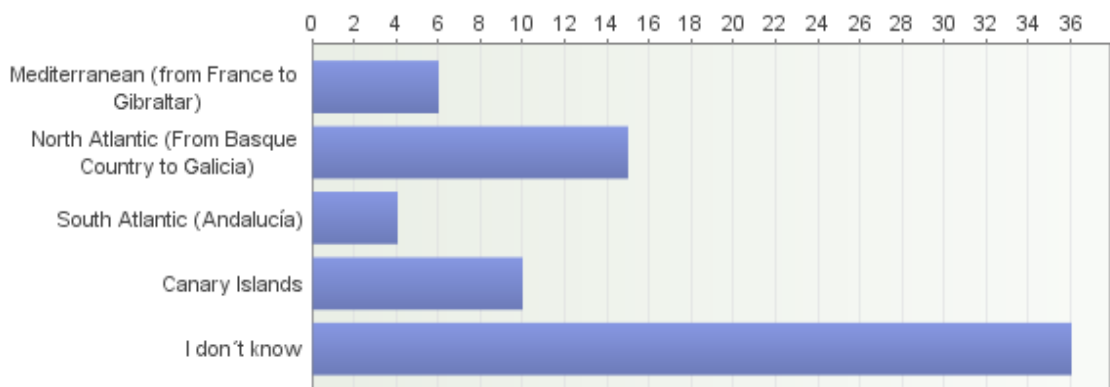
Figure 9. Which Spanish coastline do you think is the best for learning to surf?

A noticeable percentage of respondents did not know which coastline of Spain has the best conditions for surfing. Due to their contact with the Atlantic Ocean, influence of tides and proper wind the Canary Islands and the North Atlantic coast of Spain are the best options for surfing. Surprisingly the respondents who chose one coast did know about others coasts. The two coasts mentioned above where chosen most often. Perhaps the difference is not that remarkable within the answers. However, considering the amount of respondents that did not know about suitable coastlines, a marketing campaign promoting other areas as surf destinations would be needed. Despite the knowledge of which coast offers better surfing, the majority of respondents thinks that Spain is a good surf destination in total.
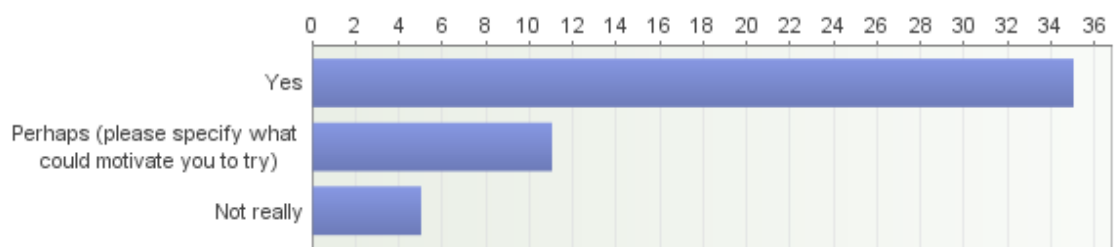
Figure 10. Would you like to try surfing?

A common feeling among the respondents was the desire of trying surfing if the chance is given. Yet the experience should be as safe as possible avoiding any situation that could put the inexperienced surfers in risk of injury.

The total amount of respondents that had tried surfing is surprisingly high, as it can be seen in Annex 1 at the end of this report. According to the obtained answers, it is safe to assume that the average Finn is interested in the sport and is willing to travel to difficult-to-reach destinations with the purpose of surfing.

When the respondents were asked what services and amenities would they consider a must if going on a surfing trip to Asturias most of the answers repeated a similar idea. The results indicate that Finns are interested in taking part on a surf trip if the weather is pleasant and the accommodation is comfortable. The respondents would also like to be offered the possibility of taking part in other activities, tasting high quality gastronomy and have the freedom of travelling around the area.

According to the comments written above an ideal company for a Finn looking for surfing, would be one located in warm weather with skilful staff that speaks English if not Finnish. Apart from that, the mentioned company should offer other activities as touristic visits and active tourism. On top of that the company should be well connected and able to supply and recommend good gastronomy.

9   Discussion

In this chapter the validity and reliability of the research is discussed. The ethical issues arising during the project are commented. Furthermore the results are summarized and an example of campaign for the commissioner is given.

9.1   Validity and reliability

Validity refers to how a research measures and reflects what it wants to represent. Like validity, reliability of the research findings depends on how accurate they would be replicated if the research was conducted again.

Overall, the research conducted for this report accomplishes what it set out to do and offers strong enough evidence to give useful advice to the commissioner; therefore the research is valid and reliable. The research would had achieved higher levels of validity and reliability if the size of the subject population would had been bigger; the time given for the data collection would had been longer; and the subject variability would had been stronger.

When analysing the data, bias was studied and their effects were abolished as much as possible in the conclusions. As the subject population was small and not so variable the results were affected and therefore bias appeared. Even if the received answer amount was too small to represent the chosen sample the respond rate is however acceptable for illustrating the questions in this bachelor level thesis.

Most of the respondents are users of HAAGA-HELIA's Porvoo Campus and for that reason the results regarding the profession and field of the sample population are not reliable as there is not enough variability.

9.2 Ethical issues

As always in social research with human participants, there is a big responsibility attached to the researcher. This responsibility is translated in ethical issues that arise independently of the type of research. To proceed with the research successfully and not cause harm to respondents, there are several criteria that researchers should acknowledge beforehand. There is a need for consideration of the potential ethical issues and the researchers must make sure that every aspect is well considered when designing the research. (Smith & Quelch, 137-139.)

The researcher plays the role of interviewer and needs to state clearly to the interviewee the option of voluntary participation. The communication must be open and honest to gain the informed consent. Only then will the potential subject be able to make a valid judgement about participation as sufficient information has been presented. Appendix 2 contains the questionnaire used in the research conducted for this thesis; the introduction text aims to solve the ethical issues explained above. Furthermore, there is an introduction of the researchers as it felt necessary when developing the research.

The introduction text of the research also explains the clauses of confidentiality and anonymity that are followed during, and after, the research. Confidentiality refers to the right of access to the data given by the participants; anonymity is concerned with how the identities of the participants are presented in all data results of the research. In regards to the aforementioned clauses, it was a topic of discussion for this thesis as to how the data that was generated was handled.

It has also been necessary to identify and avoid any potential harmful situations for the interviewees. Considering the topic of the research and methods used, explained in chapter 7, there were not any situations that required any type of following-up, and the research concluded without causing harm to the respondents.

9.3 Summary

All in all, the project was successful. We got the result we wanted and we are content with our work. Even though there were few problems with gathering the data. We came up with solutions fast enough to meet deadlines. However, we should have done more work at the beginning and reserve longer period of time for the data collection. The only major challenge for us was that during this project my research partner and I were living in different countries.

This project introduces comprehensively all we have learned and all our abilities when creating and implementing research. For us being effective in time managing still has room for improvement.

For Carving Surf School a marketing campaign would be profitable when the target group is students and youth age 19-36. It has been researched than generation Y is travelling more than ever with increasing usage of travel packages. The product of CSS needs to be further developed in order to accomplish the requirements of Finnish clients. The target group is not satisfied with just flights and accommodation. Close collaboration with the Tourist Office of Asturias is a solution for the demand of unique experiences from the target group. The use of Asturias' slogan, "Asturias, natural paradise" expresses the uniqueness of the area with the sea and the mountains at a glance.

For our commissioner we suggest a social media campaign for marketing purposes according to our results. Taking into account that generation Y is very brand loyal and active in sharing experience through social media. The campaign should focus on obtaining customers who are valuable for the company, as customers create a significant role for marketing in companies. When dealing with such a young target group and especially students it would be essential to price products considering their economic situation. Perhaps give student discounts and offer separate, focussed campaigns.

We consider that CSS should collaborate with stakeholders in the market to ensure the flow of international customers. Asturias is not reachable with a direct flight from Helsinki. In order to create a comfortable connection we believe that agreements with ALSA, RENFE, Vueling and Volotea will create an attractive connection using Madrid as a hub and at the same time obtaining an affordable journey.

That said, the below could be an example of a campaign that could be implemented using our findings:

- A social media campaign spread throughout Finland by contacting the countries universities and universities of applied science. As for example HAAGA-HELIA, Arcada, Metropolia, Aalto University, etc.

- Implement the campaign during March, April and May. During these months students are in their schools and motivated, with the increasing level of light, to take part in new experiences together with their peers.

- According to our results the target group usually make their bookings over 3 months prior to their trip. This means that the campaign should focus on trips that take place in autumn. Autumn is an ideal season for CSS and for Finns to travel. In September the flow of Spanish tourists starts to decrease and gathering international clients for the following months will mean prolonging the season. On top of that, in the autumn Finnish students are able to travel as there are numerous holidays. The weather difference between Finland and Asturias in these months is also a pull factor.

- Make visible in the campaign the collaboration with the Asturias Government, the above mentioned carrier companies and with environmental initiatives. In our opinion Surfrider Foundation is a strong name in the field and the target group wants to have an experience with a small green footprint.

- In the package of the campaign the quality of the accommodation and the good reviews from Azpiazu's restaurant should be clearly visible.

- The training of the instructors needs to be mentioned. This will give the Finns a sense of security, especially those that are in doubt as to the safety of the sport.

- The product should be under 400 € and include accommodation, surf lessons and material, meals, transportation in the area and extra activities. Discounts for students and groups are a must.

If all this points are accomplished the campaign will reunite the 4 P's of marketing and the results will be positive.

Further research can be made to study cases as the influence of the basketball competitions in Bilbao on the experience of Finns on the North Coast of Spain.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Results

1. Gender

    Number of Respondents: 71
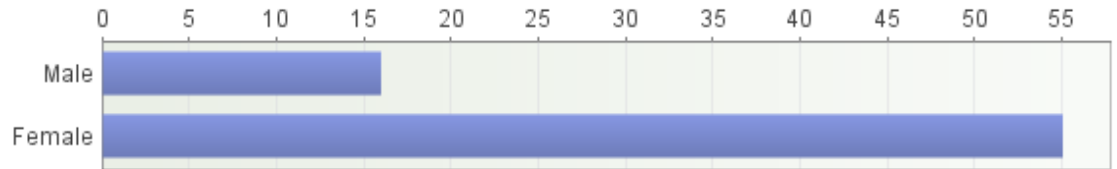
From all the respondents 16 were male and 55 were female.
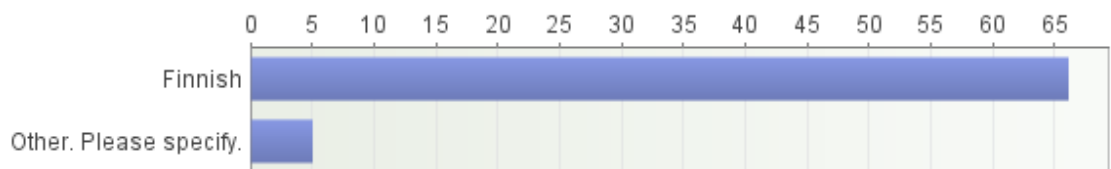
2. Age

    Number of Respondents: 71
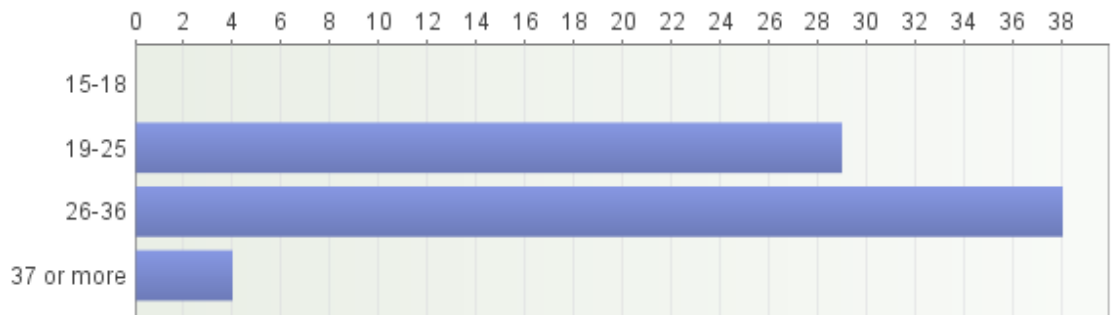
There were no underage respondents. There were 29 respondents with ages between 19 and 25; 38 with ages between 26 and 36; and 4 respondents older than 36.
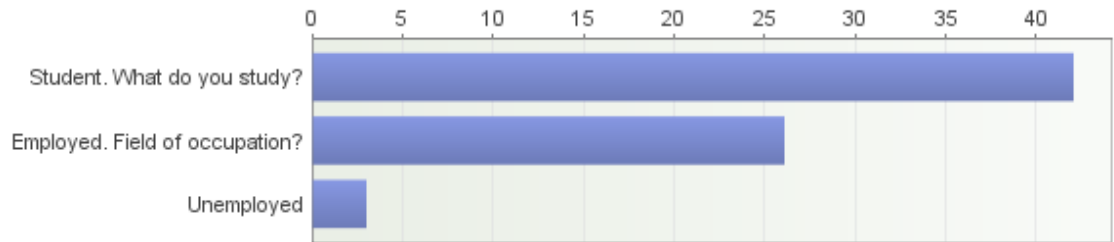
3. Nationality

    Number of Respondents: 71

The majority of respondents, 66, were Finnish while 5 respondents came from Spain, Ukraine, Latvia and Canada.

4. Occupation

Number of Respondents: 71

43 respondents were students, 26 employed and 3 unemployed. 27 of the students were related to the tourism business, the 16 left study businesses, being the second most popular answer; technology; etc. From the 26 employed respondents there was no repetition between their occupations.

5. What time of the year do you usually travel for holidays?

Number of Respondents: 71
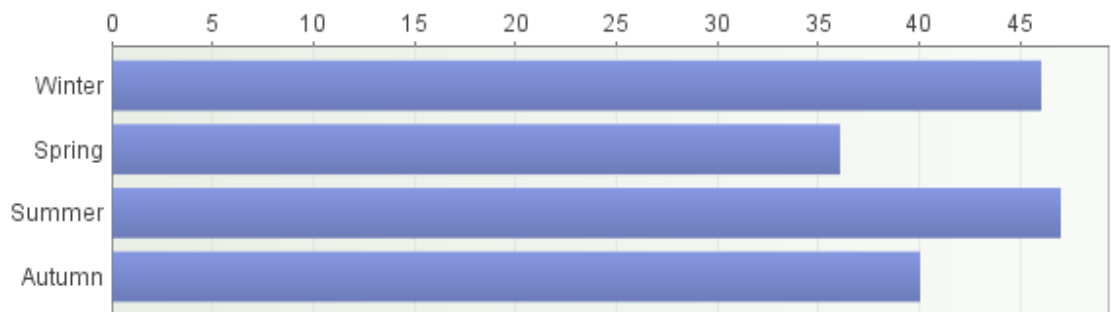
47 respondents out of 71 say they travel usually during summer and 46 are travelling in winter. Only 35 of the respondents are travelling in spring and 40 in autumn.

6. How often do you travel outside Finland for holidays per year?

Number of Respondents: 71
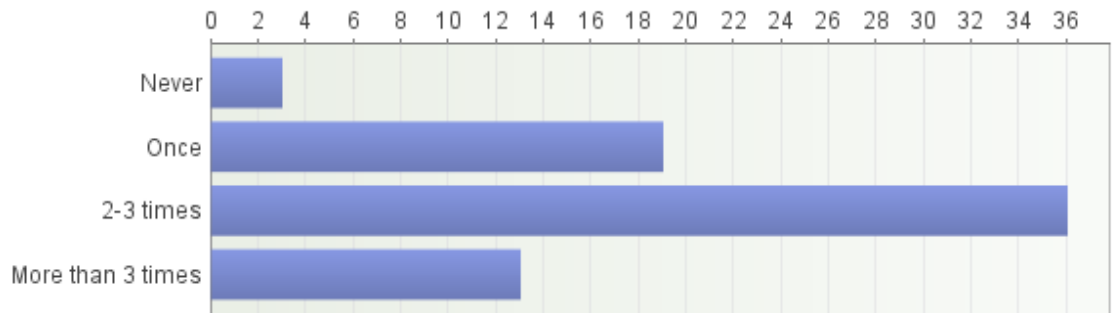
36 of the respondents claim that they travel out of Finland for holidays. 5 out of 71 say they have never travelled out of Finland.

7. How long is your average vacation trip?

Number of Respondents: 71
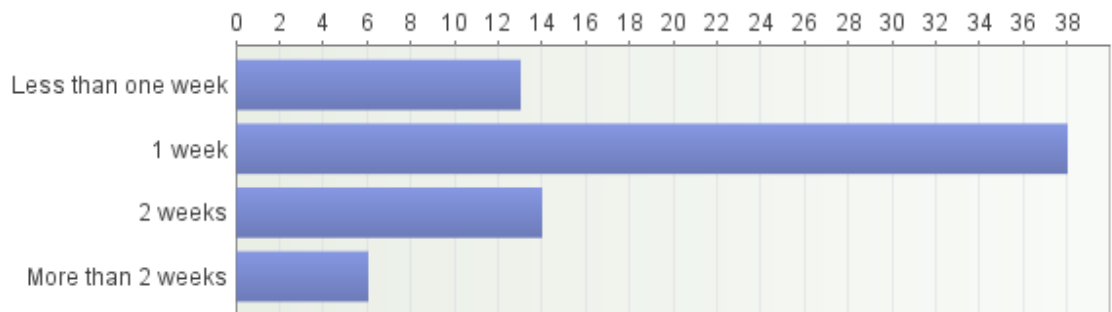
Most popular duration for holiday travelling is one week with 38 answers out of 71. Only 6 respondents say they travel for more than two weeks.
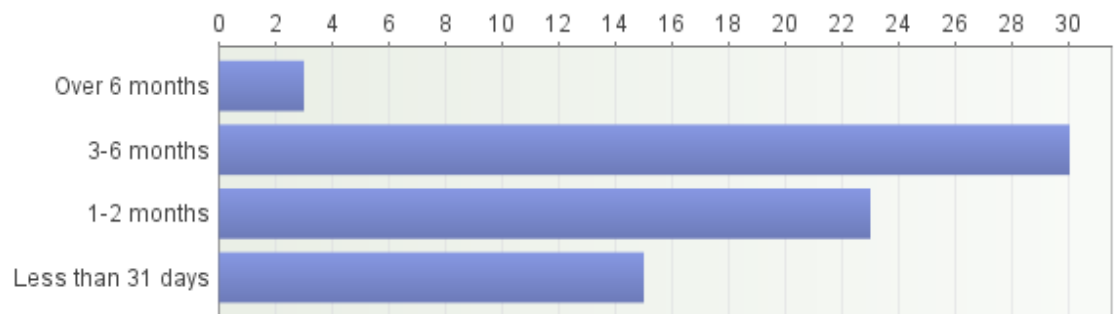
8. How do you make your bookings when organizing your holidays?

Number of Respondents: 71
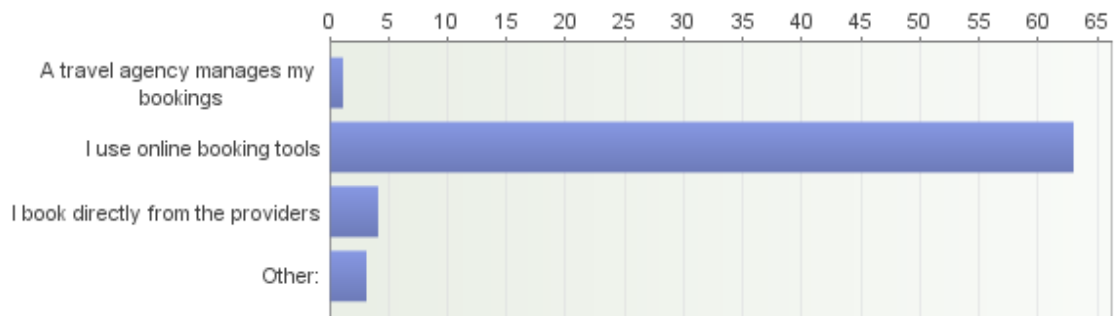
Online booking tools are used by 63 respondents out of 71. One respondent says that he or she is using a travel agency.

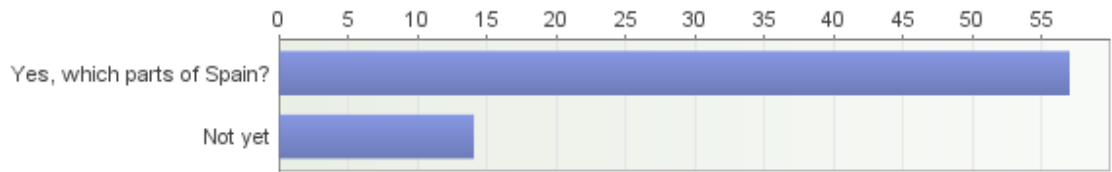9. How long in advance before our holiday do you make your booking?

Number of Respondents: 71

30 of the respondents make their bookings 3 to 6 months before the trip. Only 3 out 71 say they do bookings 6 months beforehand. 15 out of 71 say they make bookings less than 31 days before travelling.
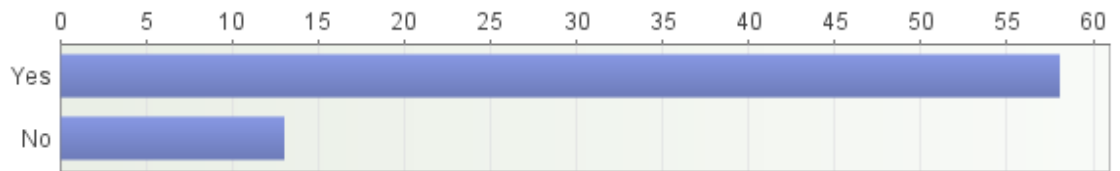
10. Have you ever visited Spain?

Number of Respondents: 71

57 respondents had already been and 14 have not jet visited Spain. The most chosen locations in Spain where: Canary and Baleares Islands, Madrid, Barcelona, Malaga, Alicante and Basque Country.

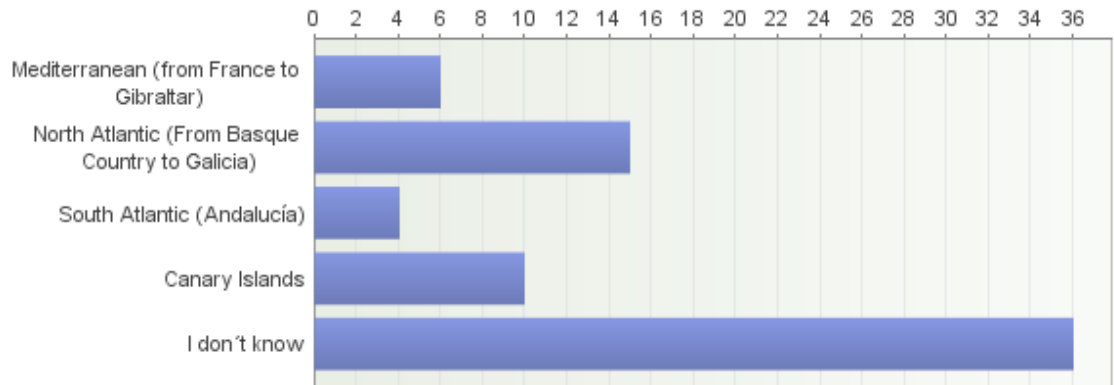## 11. Do you think that Spain is a good location for learning to surf?

Number of Respondents: 71

58 respondents thought that Spain is a good location for learning to surf and 13 respondents thought the opposite.

12. Which Spanish coastline do you think is the best for learning to surf?
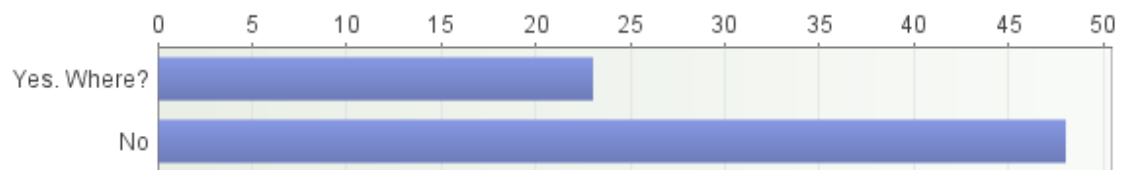
Number of Respondents: 71

Out of the 71 respondents 36 did not know which coastline of Spain has better possibilities for surfing. From the rest of respondents 15 believe that the North Coast is best for surfing, 10 chose Canary Islands and only 6 respondents thought that the Mediterranean coast was the best option.
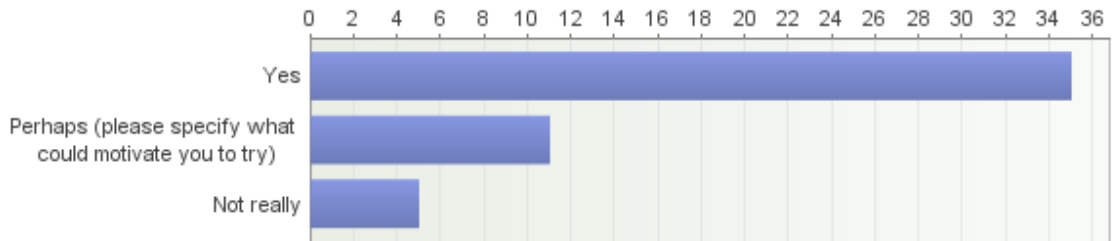
13. Have you ever surfed?

Number of Respondents: 71

47 respondents had never surfed before. From the 24 that did surf before they practice the sport in different locations as: Spain, Portugal, Finland, Morocco, Australia, South Africa, Indonesia, New Zealand, Central America and Caribe, US and France.

### 14. If you have not surfed would you like to try?

Number of Respondents: 51

A big majority of the respondents wants to try surfing, 35 out of 51, and only 5 respondents are not interested in surfing at all. The push factors for the 11 respondents in doubt are: security and safety, appropriate pricing and skilful teachers.

15. How much have you practiced surfing?

Number of Respondents: 29
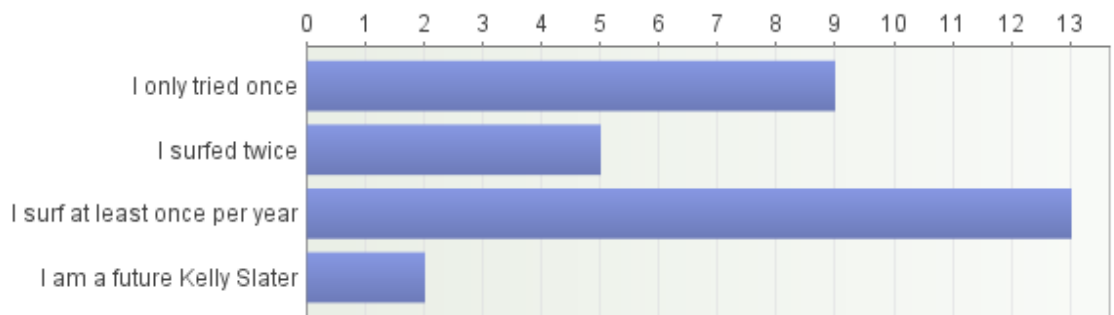
From the 29 respondents that had tried surfing previously 9 did it only once, 5 practiced surfing twice, 13 surf at least once a year and 3 consider themselves very skilful surfers.

16. What services and amenities would you consider a must if going on a surfing trip to Asturias?
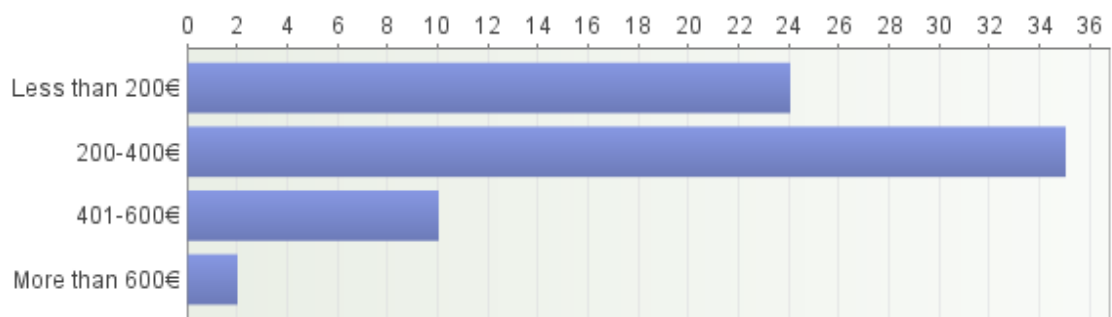
Number of Respondents: 71

The answers of the 71 interviewees were different from each other. Here are listed the most repeated services and amenities mentioned:

- Good gastronomy
- Pleasant accommodation
- Skilful teachers
- Easy accessibility
- Warm weather
- Wider range of activities
- Organization of cultural and touristic visits
- Rental of materials
- Transportation
- Proximity to different commerce
- Good language skills
- Yoga, massages and other in-place activities.

17. How much would you like to spend on a surf holiday per person?

Number of Respondents: 71

35 out of the respondents are ready to pay for a surf holiday per person 200 to 400 euros. Only 2 out of 71 say that they would be ready to pay more than 600 euros.

### 18. What in your opinion would make a successful surfing trip?

Number of Respondents: 71

The answers to this question are mostly related to the question 16. The most repeated answers were:

- Good waves and weather
- Positive and good atmosphere
- Remarkable improvement in surf skills
- Comfortable accommodation
- Fair value for money
- Extra activities beside surfing
-

19. How do you find about the attractions in a destination?

Number of Respondents: 71
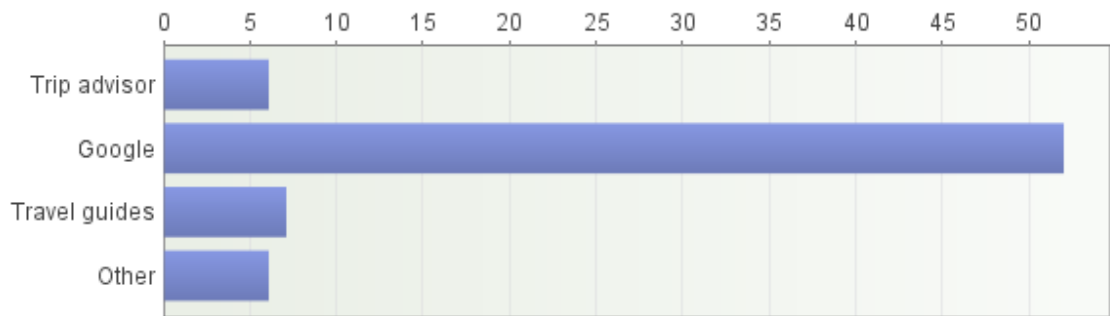
Google is clearly the number one choice when finding out the attractions in a destination with 52 answers out of 71. Only 12 respondents say that they use Trip advisor or travel guides to find out about the attractions.

20. If you want to be contacted by CSS and receive information about new campaigns please write down your email.

Number of Respondents: 5

- jxxxx@gmail.com
- exxxx@gmail.com
- mxxxx@msn.com
- hxxxx@hotmail.com
- pxxxx@hotmail.com

Appendix 2. Questionnaire

Dear all,

On behalf of HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences, let us invite you to take part in a research for Carving Surf School (further below referred to as CSS), a company that offers surfing courses and accommodation in Asturias, the North coast of Spain.

This research is a part of our thesis. The aim is to know the behavioural patterns and wishes of Finnish youth in order to create a new market for Carving Surf School in Finland.

The research is conducted via the questionnaire that you can find at the link provided here: https://www.webropolsurveys.com/S/2059D03C6D7310AE.par

The link is open until 2nd of December.

Answering this questionnaire will take only about 5 minutes and your responses will be kept completely anonymous. Your participation is highly appreciated. Should you have questions about the questionnaire, please email us at mari.poikolainen@haaga-helia.fi

Sincerely,

Mari Poikolainen and Pedro Menéndez de Luarca,

Degree Programme in Tourism,HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences

Demographics

1. Gender
   - Male
   - Female
2. Age
   - 15-18
   - 19-25
   - 26-36
   - 37 or more
3. Nationality
   - Finnish
   - Other. Please specify _____
4. Occupation
   - Student. What do you study?
   - Employed (field of occupation)
   - Unemployed

Travel habits

5. What time of the year do you usually travel for holidays? (please select all that apply)
   - Winter
   - Spring
   - Summer
   - Autumn

6. How often do you travel outside Finland for holidays per year?
   - Never
   - Once
   - 2-3 times
   - More than 3 times

7. How long is your average vacation trip?
   - Less than one week
   - 1 week
   - 2 weeks
   - More than 2 weeks

8. How do you make your bookings when organizing your holidays?
   - A travel agency manages my bookings
   - I use online booking tools
   - I book directly from the providers
   - Other:_____

9. How long in advance before your holiday do you make your booking?
   - Over 6 months
   - 3-6 months
   - 1-2 months
   - Less than 31 days

Location

10. Have you ever visited Spain?
    - Yes, which parts of Spain?:_____
    - Not yet

11. Do you think that Spain is a good location for learning to surf?
    - Yes
    - No

12. Which Spanish coastline do you think is the best for learning to surf?
    - Mediterranean (from France to Gibraltar)
    - North Atlantic (From Basque Country to Galicia)
    - South Atlantic (Andalucía)
    - Canary Islands

Surfing

1. Have you ever surfed?
   - Yes,
     i. Where?
     ii. How much have you practiced surfing?
        1. I only tried once
        2. I surfed twice
        3. I surf at least once per year
        4. I am a future Kelly Slater
   - No, would you like to try it?
     i. Yes
     ii. Perhaps (please specify what could motivate you to try)
     iii. Not really

CSS (Carving Surf School) services

1. What services and amenities would you consider a must if going on a surfing trip to Asturias?_____
2. How much would you like to spend on a surf holiday per person? (excluding transportation costs to/from the destination)
   a. Less than 200€
   b. 200-400€
   c. 401-600€
   d. More than 600€

3. What in your opinion would make a successful surfing trip?
4. How do you find out about the attractions in a destination?