



Satisfaction in border tourism: An analysis with structural equations



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ABSTRACT

Border tourism is the temporary displacement of people to the dividing line between two countries contiguous areas. This activity promotes the economic development of these geographical regions. The aim of this research is to analyze visitors from the Dominican Republic and Haiti border. We propose the results of an empirical study with structural equations that show correlations between the attitude factor towards the border tourism, the value factors perceived by the tourist, satisfaction and loyalty of the visitor in the destination place.

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1. Introduction

Lacoste (1993) defines the border as a line of separation and contact between two or more States, revealing itself because of the existence of an evident discontinuity between each country spaces, even when this discontinuity may not only be territorial, but cultural, economic, religious, among other reasons as well; so, these cultures do not have to exactly coincide with the usual geographical borders (Giménez, 2007). According to Marcu (2015), borders are an essential element for people mobility between different countries. In some parts of the world, these geographical areas become tourist destinations, appearing what is called 'border tourism'. Although, according to Martínez and Valdés (1982), unlike other tourist typologies, there is a higher economic disparity in border tourism through a line that separates two countries, being this a scenario that confers its own characteristics and its *sui generis* evolution to tourism.

Bringas (2004: 8) defines border tourism as "the temporary displacement of people outside their usual place of residence to

the boundary between two countries adjacent cities, originated by leisure, entertainment, health, business, visits to relatives and/or friends, religion, social events or shopping, among others reasons, whose stay does not exceed one year and which compromises at least one night in the visited place. This mode emerged in the 1980s, with the first publications on this subject (Anguiano, 1991; Bringas, 1991; Martínez & Valdés, 1982), standing out the studies on the Northern Border of the United States and Mexico (Martínez, 1994). Later, the range of tourism researches in border areas increased, with studies that have been carried out on the Mexican-Guatemalan (Campos Delgado & Odgers Ortíz, 2012), American-Canadian (Konrad, 2015), Paraguayan-Brazilian (Banducci, 2011), Lusa (Vázquez, 2015) or Namibian-Angolan (Röder, Präp, Stellmes, Schneibel, & Hill, 2015) borders, among many others.

According to the World Tourism Organization border tourists are those who stay on the frontier for 24–72 h (Valenzuela, 2003), although it is not clear in this definition if tourists who stay more than three nights at there are tourists or not, neither it indicates if they would be included into the category of receptive or international tourism in case of exceeding those 72 h in the border area (Orgaz & Moral, 2014). Bringas and González (2003) identified two types of tourists that visit the border areas: the first one refers to a traditional tourist, who travels to satisfy his or her leisure needs,

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and the second one refers to those who travel for business reasons. Valenzuela (2003) points out that border tourism is not only defined by the border neighbourhood, restaurants or hotels, but that it is a continuous interaction between the different actors, producing practical integrations and experiences for both tourists and residents.

Border tourism destinations are often characterized by the political and socio-economic advantages that it offers, such as lower taxes or more permissive policies, favouring the development of certain types of tourism (Gelbman & Timothy, 2011). According to Timothy (2001), some examples of destinations with advantages are Livia (Spain), Campione (Italy) or Jungholz (Austria). Timothy and Tosun (2003) also mention obstacles found in international boundaries, which can affect the tourists flow, differentiating between two types of barriers: physical barriers, which are the typical fortifications or fencing; and psychological barriers, in which different circumstances may arise such as socio-cultural ones on both sides of the border, different policies or different economic circumstances in each of the countries or border areas.

Bringas and Verduzco (2008) consider security as an important element in border destinations, appearing three clearly delimited dimensions: population security, related to events and situations that could endanger people and their properties; urban and regional security, through surveillance, control and punishment; and national security, which has a clear purpose, such as addressing structural problems and international aspects that could jeopardize national viability. Thus, boundaries mark the legal limits of the national sovereignty of a particular country, or the limits where a state can exercise its sovereign authority (Gelbman & Timothy, 2011). Many of these border areas are economically marginalized and geographically isolated, mainly due to their distance from the central zones (Wastl-Walter, Varadi, & Veider, 2003). Differences between frontier populations appear with the development of different economies, cultures or lifestyles (Rumley & Minghi, 1991). Sometimes, the differences can be positive, generating benefits that affect border growth (Hoekman, Frenken, & Van Oort, 2008).

The aim of this research is to empirically contrast the relationship between the attitude factor towards border tourism and the visitor value and satisfaction in the destination place. This is, therefore, an appropriate research topic, since the scarcity of studies in this field and on this type of tourism is notorious. Thus, the present research is relevant because it seeks empirical evidence on scarcely covered issues about the relationship between the variable attitudes on tourism at the border, the perceived value and the satisfaction of the tourism by the visitor.

2. Literature review

As the public has become more aware of the importance of protecting and conserving cultural and natural resources, studies have focused on ways to promote positive attitudes towards diverse elements (Tikka, Kuitunen, & Tynys, 2000). According to Zhang and Lei (2012), knowledge of the environment positively affects attitudes towards environmental actions, effectively promoting positive attitudes towards tourism at destination; in addition, improving the quality of the local environment increases the visual attractiveness of tourists who visit the geographical area, what also improves the aesthetic and recreational values and the quality of life of residents.

Tourism in border areas can produce benefits that encourage border growth (Hoekman et al., 2008). Among positive attitudes, tourism generates employment opportunities (Gu & Ryan, 2008), enhances local economy (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004), contributes to raise the standard of living of the local population (Ahmed

& Krohn, 1992) and improves investment opportunities in new businesses (Dyer, Gursoy, Sharma, & Carter, 2007). Tourism activity also encourages cultural one, enhancing cultural heritage (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008), natural parks promotion (McCool & Martin, 1994), leisure opportunities increase (Perdue, Long, & Allen, 1990), increase of recreational facilities (Dyer et al., 2007) and create opportunities for cultural exchanges between visitors and hosts (Besculides, Lee, & McCormick, 2002).

Tourism also generates negative attitudes, highlighting the rising cost of living (Látková & Vogt, 2012), rising land and housing prices, and goods shortages (Belisle & Hoy, 1980). Tourism can cause local cultures and traditions to be affected by other cultures such as Occidental one (Weaver & Lawton, 2004), a negative perception of tourism by the local community (Ap & Crompton, 1988), increase in the crime rate (Lankford, 1996), traffic congestion (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004), increased prostitution in the area (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011), increased vandalism (Dyer et al., 2007), depletion of wildlife (Látková & Vogt, 2012), pollution (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011), garbage generation, agglomerations and traffic congestion (Látková & Vogt, 2012) and ecological degradation (Sheldon & Var, 1984).

Attitudes, both positive and negative, are related to the importance of a tourist destination value, which has frequently manifested itself in tourism marketing and literature, being value an antecedent of customer satisfaction, willingness to buy, repeat buying and brand loyalty (Yoon, Lee, & Lee, 2010). In this sense, McDougall and Levesque (2000) tested a model in which the relationships between value, satisfaction and intention of behaviour were identified through four different types of service companies. On the other hand, Lee, Yoon, and Lee (2007) explored the effects of three perceived values on the satisfaction of travel participants of the Demilitarized Zone of Korea (DMZ) in his study, positively influencing the three values for the tourist's final satisfaction. Therefore, the positive effect of value on satisfaction can be interpreted from the logic that the resource value triggers customer satisfaction (Yoon et al., 2010).

Satisfaction influences the long-term evaluation of service quality perceived by demand (Alén González & Fraiz Brea, 2006), although for McAlexander, Kaldenberg, and Koenig (1994) it is impossible to conclude which of them precedes the other, but, there is always a relationship between both of them. In this regard, there are several destinations and organizations that develop satisfaction surveys aimed at tourists (Zabkar, Brencic, & Dmitrovic, 2010). According to Mazanec, Woeber, and Zins (2007), when destination is competitive tourists' satisfactions will be higher, therefore, this can help to increase the number of visitors and incomes to destination. For Yoon and Uysal (2005), the successful commercialization of the destination helps tourists to choose it and, once they have enjoyed the products and/or services, if the satisfaction has been good, they can return. Cronin and Taylor (1992) propose to determine the quality and satisfaction of the service through demand's perceptions.

Cooper, Flecher, Gilbert, and Wanhill (1993) developed the "Four A" model to analyze a tourist destination offer (*Attractions, Access, Amenities and Ancillary Services*), although later Buhalis (2000) took it to "Six A" (*Attractions, Accessibility, Amenities, Available packages, Activities and Ancillary Services*). This last model has been used by other authors to evaluate the satisfaction of the trip (Cole & Illum, 2006), concluding Hui, Wan, and Ho (2007) that these attributes are those that generate that a destination creates satisfaction or dissatisfaction in tourists groups, although it will depend on the different geographical regions. Therefore, satisfaction consumers' degree on a particular tourist destination depends on the consumer's expectations regarding the attributes of the destination, and the extent to which these expectations are met (Clemons & Woodruff, 1992).

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