

Tourist satisfaction: an analysis of tourists visiting historic centres in Portugal

Satisfação turística: uma análise aos turistas que visitam centros históricos em Portugal

Satisfacción turística: un análisis de los turistas que visitan los centros históricos en Portugal

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Abstract

Achieving tourist satisfaction is one of the main goals of destinations, companies and managers in the field of tourism. To better understand this key concept, we have studied other associated constructs that we call antecedents and consequences, such as tourist motivations, quality of experience and loyalty to the destination. It was decided to achieve the proposed goals by conducting questionnaire surveys with non-resident tourists in Portugal over the three high tourist season months, which are regarded as June, July and August. The sample was collected in five of Portugal's main historical centres, namely, Porto, Coimbra, Lisbon, Évora and Faro. With this study it was possible to confirm that the level of satisfaction of tourists, who visit historic centers in Portugal, is very high. It was also possible to verify the existing connection between the various constructs developed in the research, through the hypothesis test.

Keywords: Tourist satisfaction; Tourist motivations; Quality of the experience; Loyalty to the destination.

Resumo

Alcançar a satisfação turística é uma das principais metas que se coloca aos destinos, empresas e gestores na área do turismo. De modo a entender melhor este conceito central desenvolveu-se o estudo de outros constructos associados, aos quais apelidamos de antecedentes e consequentes, tais como as motivações turísticas, a qualidade da experiência e a lealdade ao destino. Para conseguir alcançar os objetivos propostos, optou-se pela realização de inquéritos por questionário, a turistas não residentes em Portugal, durante os três meses que abrangem a época turística considerada alta – junho, julho e agosto, tendo a recolha da amostra sido feita em alguns dos principais centros históricos portugueses – Porto, Coimbra, Lisboa, Évora e Faro. Com este estudo foi possível confirmar que o grau de satisfação dos turistas, que visitam os centros históricos em Portugal é muito elevado. Também foi possível verificar a ligação existente entre os vários construtos desenvolvidos na pesquisa, através do teste de hipóteses.

Palavras-Chave: Satisfação turística; Motivações turísticas; Qualidade da experiência; Lealdade ao destino.

Resumen

Lograr la satisfacción del turista es uno de los principales objetivos de los destinos, empresas y gestores en el ámbito del turismo. Para comprender mejor este concepto central, se desarrolló el estudio de otros constructos asociados, a los que llamamos antecedentes y consecuencias, como las motivaciones turísticas, la calidad de la experiencia y la lealtad al destino. Para lograr los objetivos propuestos, se realizaron encuestas por cuestionario a turistas no residentes en Portugal, durante los tres meses de la temporada turística - junio, julio y agosto. Los cuestionarios se realizaron en algunos de los principales centros históricos portugueses - Oporto, Coimbra, Lisboa, Évora y Faro. Con este estudio se pudo constatar que el grado de satisfacción de los turistas que visitan los centros históricos de Portugal es muy alto. También fue posible verificar la conexión existente entre los distintos constructos desarrollados en la investigación, a través de la prueba de hipótesis.

Palabras Clave: Satisfacción turística; Motivaciones turísticas; Calidad de la experiencia; Lealtad al destino.

Introduction

One reason why a tourism satisfaction study is deemed important is that it is “the key to success for all companies operating in the field of hospitality and is of growing importance for managers” (BI, LIU, FAN & ZANG, 2020, p.1).

Tourist satisfaction analysis is often linked with the study of other key concepts, such as tourist motivations (Albayrak & Caber, 2018; Jaapar, Musa, Moghavvemi & Saub, 2017; Wong, Musa & Taha, 2017), quality of experience (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Taylor & Baker, 1994; Baker & Crompton, 2000; Bigné, Sánchez & Sánchez, 2001; Chen & Chen, 2010; Cong, 2016; Ekinci, Dawes & Massey, 2008; Zabkar, Brencic & Dmitrovic, 2010) and loyalty to destination, which includes recommending a destination and the intention to repeat the visit (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Taplin, 2013; Sanchez, Callarisa, Rodriguez & Moliner, 2006; Zabkar, Brencic & Dmitrovic, 2010).

Some authors (Aho, 2001; Brás, 2009; Ekinci, Dawes & Massey, 2008; Gutiérrez, 2005) have also focused on examining the antecedents and consequences of

tourist satisfaction and worked on the same constructs mentioned here. They linked them with different stages of the tourist experience; tourist motivations emerge as an antecedent of satisfaction, as well as the quality of the experience; at a later stage, it is possible to evaluate loyalty to the destination through the intention to recommend and/or come back.

A number of studies on tourist satisfaction in various contexts have been published. For example: AbuKhalifeh & Som (2012), the food and beverage departments of hotel chains; Agyeiwaah, Raymond, Dimache & Wondirad (2016), Hong Kong city; Ariffin, Nameghi & Soon (2015), the relationship between tourist satisfaction, national identity and hospitality; Barsky (1992), customer satisfaction in the hotel industry; Çetinkaya & Öter (2016), the role of interpreter-guides; Chen & Chen (2010), tourists interested in visiting heritage sites; Chen, Lin & Chiu (2016), the effect of advertising; Cong (2016), an empirical study in Vietnam; Devesa, Laguna & Palacios (2010), rural tourism; Faullant, Matzler & Fuller (2008), ski resorts in the Alps; Geva & Goldman (1991), guided tours; Han, Meng & Kim (2017), the bike-traveling phenomenon; Hosany & Whitham (2010), cruises; Hui, Wan & Ho (2007), in Singapore; Williams & Soutar (2009), adventure tourism.

The context chosen for the satisfaction study in the present work is focused on the historical centres. The capitals of the five regions that form the portuguese continental territory were selected: Porto (Northern region), Coimbra (Center region), Lisbon (Tagus valley), Évora (Alentejo region) and Faro (Algarve region).

There are two main objectives in this study. The first is the development of the concept of tourist satisfaction and its relationship with the constructs of quality of experience, tourist motivations, loyalty to the destination and behavioral intentions. The second objective is the validation of the proposed research model (Figure 1).

As for the specific objectives, the following stand out: the design of the tourist profile; knowledge of your tourist motivations; the identification of the elements that most influence the quality of the experience; the relevance of the recommendation factor when choosing a destination; and the analysis of the spatial behavior of tourists, in portuguese territory.

Literature review

Tourist Satisfaction

There are several elements that influence tourist satisfaction, “the social-psychological state that a tourist brings to a site, such as mood, disposition and needs, or external factors such as climate and group interactions, which are usually beyond the provider’s control” (BAKER & CROMPTON, 2000, p.789).

Satisfaction is part of an intangible domain and therefore can be seen as “the consumer’s fulfillment response” (OLIVER, 1997, p.8); it is an overall evaluation after the purchase (Fornell, 1992), which contemplates an affective response of varying

intensity and limited duration on the purchase and/or consumption of a product, according to Giese & Cote (2000).

For the World Tourism Organization (WTO, 1995), this psychological concept based on a pleasant feeling of well-being, happens when expectations about a destination interact with what one experiences in the destination itself.

Studies on tourist satisfaction take different approaches regarding its nature, which can be cognitive, affective or a combination of the two (cognitive-affective), but satisfaction is also taken as a process and, finally, as a result. In the cognitive context, satisfaction is defined as a post-consumption assessment where it is determined whether the expectations were met or not (Bigné, Andreu & Gnoth, 2005). In the affective approach, satisfaction is taken as an emotional response to the lived experience, while the cognitive-affective perspective is a combination of the two factors, consisting of the consumer's opinion of the experience as well as the emotions that result from it (Bigné, Andreu & Gnoth, 2005; Rodríguez del Bosque & San Martín, 2008). The study of satisfaction as a process looks at the procedures involved in comparison and focuses on the antecedents of satisfaction, while the approach to satisfaction as a result focuses on the subject's response to the experience of consumption, i.e. the true nature of satisfaction, leaving aside the analysis of its antecedents and consequences (Giese & Cote, 2000; Gutiérrez, 2005).

Regarding the assessment and measurement of tourist satisfaction levels, Sirgy (2010, p.246) refers to three theoretical lines: 1) situational theories, focused on aspects of specific services; 2) dispositional theories, widely used, which analyse satisfaction from personal characteristics of the tourist or the type of visit; and 3) interactive theories, quite common, into which models such as Oliver's expectation confirmation theory fit (Oliver, 1980).

The study by Ekinici, Dawes & Massey (2008) served as inspiration for the present investigation. The authors tested a conceptual model, very similar to the one proposed here, concluding that consumer satisfaction is a mediator in the relationship between the evaluation of the service and the intentions to return. Furthermore, they confirmed that the quality of the service is an antecedent of satisfaction.

In this investigation, the indicators developed by Sun, Chi, & Xu (2013) and Williams & Soutar (2009) were used to assess tourist satisfaction, duly adapted to portuguese territory.

Antecedents of Tourist Satisfaction

This central concept is better understood if we study other constructs that are associated with it and which we call antecedents and consequences, depending on the phase in which they influence tourist satisfaction. The first category includes the concept of tourist motivations and quality of experience.

Tourist motivations are a crucial component of tourists' consumption behaviour (Hsu, Cai & Li, 2010) and are “the starting point for consumer decision-making” (CABER & ALBAYRAK, 2016, p.75). This concept, which is common to several fields of knowledge, is related to psychological/biological needs and desires (Yoon & Uysal, 2005) and is a driving force that spurs individuals to act (Dann, 1981). According to Caber & Albayrak (2016, p.75), we can divide the studies on tourist motivations into three categories: 1) studies of an exploratory nature that focus on the personal motivations that lead people to adopt specific behaviours; 2) studies in which motivation is used to segment the market; 3) studies that examine the relationship between motivation and other constructs, such as satisfaction and behavioural intentions. This study belongs to the last category.

Several studies on the theme of motivations associated with tourist experiences can be identified, such as that by Gnoth (1997) which introduces a model on tourist motivation and forming expectations and explores the relationship between the two concepts. Goossens (2000) looked at the motivational and emotional aspects of tourist behaviour, studying the fact that tourists are stimulated and attracted by emotional issues, which becomes relevant for managers who want to know the affective and motivational reaction of customers to promotional incentives. Yoon & Uysal (2005) studied the causal relationship between push, pull, satisfaction, and loyalty to the destination, concluding that pull factors have a negative influence on satisfaction. Other authors sought to clarify issues related to tourists' motivations and satisfaction in a specific context, such as Caber & Albayrak (2016) for rock-climbing tourists and Xu & Chan (2016) with respect to nature-based tourism.

Regarding the quality of the experience, it can be said that this results from the tourist's assessment of it, their feelings and overall evaluation of it (Cong, 2016). For Chen & Chen (2010), the quality of service refers to the performance of the service at the level of attributes, while the quality of the experience refers to the psychological results generated by the customer's participation in tourist activities. As far as quality studies are concerned, the two most commonly used models are SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. The first, developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1988) consists of a 22-item instrument that measures the discrepancy between the evaluation of the respondents' expectations and the evaluation of their perceptions. Later, Cronin & Taylor (1994) developed the SERVPERF model, which proposes the direct measurement of respondents' perception of performance quality and is based on the idea that service quality should be defined in terms of perception. Other authors have subsequently developed models that seek to measure the quality of the tourist experience: Otto & Ritchie (1996), for example, classify it according to hedonism, peace of mind, involvement and recognition, while Kao, Huang & Wu (2008) propose to classify the quality of the experience using the areas of immersion, surprise, participation, and fun.

In this study, the analysis of the quality of the experience followed the guidelines of Zabkar, Brencic & Dmitrovic (2010) who developed a measurement model, whose indicators are destination attributes, such as “easy to reach destination;

overall cleanliness of the destination; diversity of cultural/historical attractions; quality of the accommodation; friendliness of the local people; opportunities for rest; personal safety and security; unspoiled nature; the offer of local cuisine” (ZABKAR, BRENCIC & DMITROVIC, 2010, p. 541).

Tourist Satisfaction Consequences

It is important in the post-satisfaction phase to take the relationship of loyalty to destination into account, and the intention to recommend and/or return. In these terms, Gutiérrez (2005), Thomas (2001) and Petrick (2004) say that gaining consumer loyalty is a true strategic objective for companies, since retaining customers is more desirable and cheaper than finding new ones.

Loyalty can be defined as the commitment to a particular product or service (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Lv, Li & McCabe, 2020) and it is seen as the main outcome of satisfaction, according to Rodríguez del Bosque & San Martín (2008). Oliver (1997) regards it as a state of deep commitment to buy a product or service again, or sponsor it, which leads to repeat purchasing of the same brand.

Lv, Li & McCabe (2020, p.2) give two reasons for carrying out a study on destination loyalty in research on tourism; first, “loyalty promotes a sustainable income for destinations through word of mouth and lower marketing costs”, and second, because “tourist destination choice is often motivated by novelty seeking which, together with the complexity of the decision-making process means that destination loyalty is harder to obtain than general customer loyalty, greater marketing efforts are required” (LV, LI & MCCABE, 2020, p.2).

Regarding the elements that influence consumer attitudes, and consequently their loyalty, in the case of tourism and hospitality experiences Tasci (2017) identified the following: consumer characteristics; the characteristics and practices of the company/product/brand; the macro environmental factors; the characteristics and practices of the companies/products/brands of the competition; and the characteristics of the tourism and hospitality industry. Oliver (1997) explains loyalty formation as a hierarchical process which starts in cognition (the perceived quality), passes through the affective component (satisfaction), until reaching the conative component (commitment or consumption intention). Later, the same author added a fourth phase, action (Oliver, 1999).

Once the process of loyalty and loyalty creation has been accomplished, it is important to note that consumers are not all the same, and that according to Gounaris & Stathakopoulos (2004) four types of loyalty can be identified, namely, premium, inertia, covetous, and none. There are also four behavioural indicators: word of mouth; buying alternative brands; buying in different stores/locations; and not buying anything.

To assess a visitor's loyalty to a destination it is common to study whether they intend to return to the destination and their willingness to recommend it to others (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chen & Chen, 2010; Lv, Li & McCabe, 2020).

Model and Research Hypotheses

The theme of motivation is often developed in tourism since it is pertinent to understand what leads tourists to choose a certain destination. The motives involved are varied in nature, considering internal factors such as the tastes and preferences of the individual and external factors such as the characteristics of the destination itself. This concerns the main studies on the subject, where the authors state that tourists are "pushed" towards the trip for internal reasons and/or are "pulled" by the features of the destination itself (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Devesa, Laguna & Palacios, 2010; Caber & Albayrak, 2016).

The relationship between motivations and tourist satisfaction has been the target of interest for several authors, among which Crompton (1979), Oliver (1980), Dann (1981), Yoon & Uysal (2005), Devesa, Laguna & Palacios (2010), Hsu, Wang & Huang (2014) and Caber & Albayrak (2016). It therefore seems relevant to test this relationship and this is the context that gives rise to the first research hypothesis: **H1 - Motivation positively influences tourist satisfaction.**

Some authors have established a direct and positive relationship between perceived quality and consumer satisfaction - Anderson & Sullivan (1993), Anderson, Fornell & Lehmann (1994), Tse & Wilton (1988), Chen & Chen (2010), Lee, Jeon & Kim (2011) and Cong (2016). The quality of the experience was thus added to the equation, giving rise to the second research hypothesis: **H2 - The quality of the experience lived positively influences tourist satisfaction.**

Some studies have been able to demonstrate the influence of tourist satisfaction on destination loyalty, for example: Anderson & Sullivan (1993) studied the antecedents and consequences of consumer satisfaction, based on more than 20,000 responses from Swedish consumers of various products and services; Bigné, Sánchez & Sánchez (2001) studied the satisfaction and loyalty of tourists visiting two Spanish coastal resorts in Valencia; the work by Chen & Tsai (2007) proposes an integrated model of tourist behaviour that includes the image of the destination and the perceived value, within the "quality-satisfaction-behavioural intentions" paradigm, where some similarities with the present study can be found; and Song, Li, van der Veen & Chen (2011) in their study in Hong Kong, developed the Tourist Satisfaction Index applied to the city in question, where they established relationships between various constructs, including that of tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. Following these theories and the conclusions found in the above-mentioned studies on loyalty, the third research hypothesis is proposed: **H3 - Tourist satisfaction positively influences tourist loyalty in relation to the destination.**

Other authors have gone a little further in the proposals and not only studied destination loyalty, but also evaluated the influence of tourist satisfaction on behavioural intentions after the trip, such as the intention to return and recommend. In their work, Choi & Chu (2001) examined on the importance of hotel factors (e.g. quality of the staff and rooms, and so forth) and their relationship with the general satisfaction of travellers and the probability of returning to the same hotels on future trips to Hong Kong. Chen &

Chen (2010) collected responses from tourists in four heritage sites in Taiwan, with a view to ascertaining the relationship between the quality of their experience, perceived value, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions.

Oliver (1997, 1999), in addition to his theory, widely used in satisfaction studies, has published other papers on the subject of the consequences of satisfaction, such as consumer loyalty, the complaints that can be made in the event of dissatisfaction and the positive recommendations that come from a satisfactory experience. Similarly, it has been found that satisfied tourists are more likely to return to their destination and are better suited to share their travel experiences with their family and friends (Chi & Qu, 2008). This is why the aim is to confirm the influence of tourist satisfaction on destination loyalty and on future behavioural intentions, thus presenting the fourth hypothesis of research: **H4 - There is a positive relationship between tourist satisfaction and future behavioural intentions of tourists.**

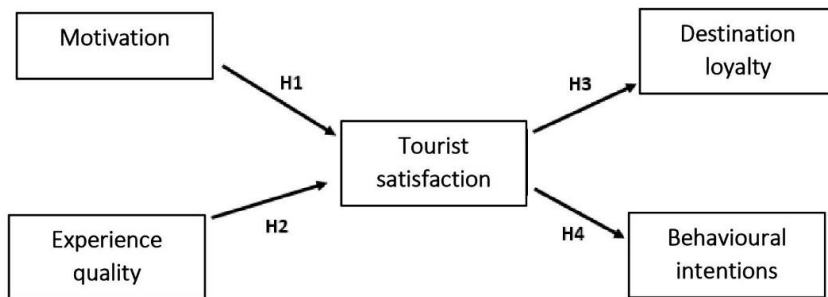


Figure 1: The investigation model
Source: Own elaboration

Methodology

Data collection

A descriptive research design is used for this study. According to Pizam (1994) this is adopted for a systematic, factual, and accurate description of the facts and characteristics of a given population or area of interest; it can be used to: i) describe the characteristics of certain groups (e.g. sociodemographic characteristics); ii) estimate the proportion of people in a specific population who have a certain behaviour; iii) make specific predictions or discover relationships and interactions between variables.

Since it is impossible to measure the total number of people under study, i.e. the tourists living abroad visiting Portugal, it was decided to apply the non-probabilistic sampling technique of convenience sampling. According to McDaniel & Gates (2004) the great advantages of this sampling method are that it is very easy to obtain data and cheap to implement.

Questionnaires were collected in the historic centres of five cities in Portugal: Porto (56 answers), Coimbra (42 answers), Lisbon (113 answers), Évora (13 answers) and Faro (160 answers). The choice of these five cities was because they are the capitals of the administrative regions of mainland Portugal. The number of responses per city was found through calculations, related to the proportion of overnight stays in each region of Portugal. At the end, 384 questionnaires were validated.

The respondents would have to have been in Portugal for at least 24 hours in order to participate in the study. The questionnaire was applied in June, July and August 2017, which are the high season of the tourist period.

Measurement

The questionnaire used in the study has seven parts. The first, on the features of the trip, was prepared based on other studies in the field of tourism and satisfaction, in particular the study by Turismo de Portugal (2015). Sections two and three concern the variables related to the antecedents of tourism satisfaction, such as motivations and perceived quality of the experience. The scales used by Lee, Jeon & Kim (2011), Beerli & Martín (2004), and Zabkar, Brencic & Dmitrovic (2010) have been adapted. Section four addresses tourist satisfaction, using the scales devised by Sun, Chi & Xu (2013) and Williams & Soutar (2009). Components five and six of the questionnaire relate to the post-satisfaction phase, assessing the variables of destination loyalty and behavioural intentions, drawing on the studies and scales used by Lee, Jeon & Kim (2011), Yuruk, Akyol & Simsek (2017), Han, Meng & Kim (2017), Cong (2016), and Zabkar, Brencic & Dmitrovic (2010). The last part of the questionnaire collects data about the socio-demographic variables that characterize the sample.

The questions in the questionnaire are mostly closed and an expanded 7-point Likert scale was applied.

Data analysis

After collecting the answers to the questionnaire surveys the data were organized and entered in the software tools SPSS (*Statistical Package for Social Sciences*) and Amos (*Analysis of Moments Structures*), version 21.0. They were then subjected to a descriptive statistical analysis followed by a confirmatory factor analysis, which included the test of the conceptual model initially proposed, the test of the relationship between variables, and the evaluation of the research hypotheses.

Results

Sociodemographic characteristics of the sample

Most of the tourists surveyed were adults aged between 26 and 45, married or cohabiting, well qualified academically, at the level of higher education, and working, i.e. they were employed or self-employed.

The main source markets were European countries not too far from the destination, such as the United Kingdom, Spain, France and Germany.

As for the trip, the main reasons for travelling to Portugal were holidays (66%), followed by people visiting family and friends (18%); in terms of travelling companions, the respondents were mostly accompanied by their spouses or partners.

The spatial behaviour of tourists in Portugal was analysed to find out if they mostly stay in one place or if they tend to travel round several regions of the national territory while they were there (see Table 1). It was concluded that, of the tourists surveyed, about 20% always stay in the same place (stationary tourists), about 32% would only visit places close to where they are staying, revealing some mobility, and finally, the largest proportion are the tourists who travel around different areas of the country (48%). This could be valuable information for tourist activity companies and travel agencies which act at regional and/or national level, creating packages that include several destinations and that meet the wishes of tourists.

Table 1: Spatial behaviour of tourists in Portugal

	Frequency	%
I've always been in the same place	76	19.8
I visited some places close to the place where I stayed	122	31.8
I took a tour and went to several places in the country	184	47.9
Missing answers	2	0.5
Total	384	100.0

Source: Based on survey data (2017).

Measure Validation

In the context of tourist motivations, the intention was to find out what elements mainly influenced the choice of Portugal as a tourist destination (Table 2) and what features of the destination most influence the experience quality of the visit (Figure 2). Once again, it was possible to obtain a response based on the data provided by the survey, where, for the first situation, the answers indicate the relevance of information found on the Internet (49,2%) and the recommendation by family/friends (40,4%), in relation to the destination. Another factor is that many have also visited the country before and returned (173 responses).

Table 2: Elements that influenced the choice of Portugal.

	Frequency “Yes”	%
Saw information on the internet	189	49.2
Recommendation from family and friends	155	40.4
I had already visited Portugal and liked it	167	43.5
Visited Portugal on business and wanted to go back for vacation	6	1.6
Saw information in travel agencies	42	10.9
Read an article in the press	10	2.6
Saw advertising	0	0.0
Saw on television	1	0.3
Others	73	19.0

Source: Based on survey data (2017).

In Figure 2 it is possible to see the main aspects that influence their choice of Portugal as a destination include liking the tourist facilities, the climate and landscape, the cultural attractions, and entertainment. The hospitality and welcoming nature of the country also played a part in making the decision. Regarding the elements that influence the experience quality, those that stand out most in the responses are: the local cuisine, the safety of the destination, the warmth of the local people and the wide range of cultural and historical attractions.

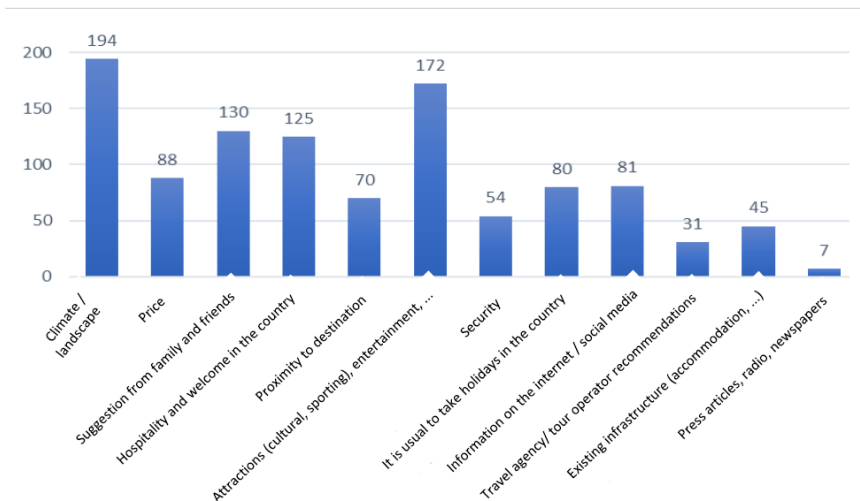


Figure 2: Factors that influence the experience quality of the visit.

Source: Based on survey data (2017).

Regarding the relevance of the recommendation factor, it was found that it is indeed important for the tourists visiting Portugal, since 130 of the 384 valid surveys collected were completed by tourists who were visiting Portugal based on recommendations made by family or friends.

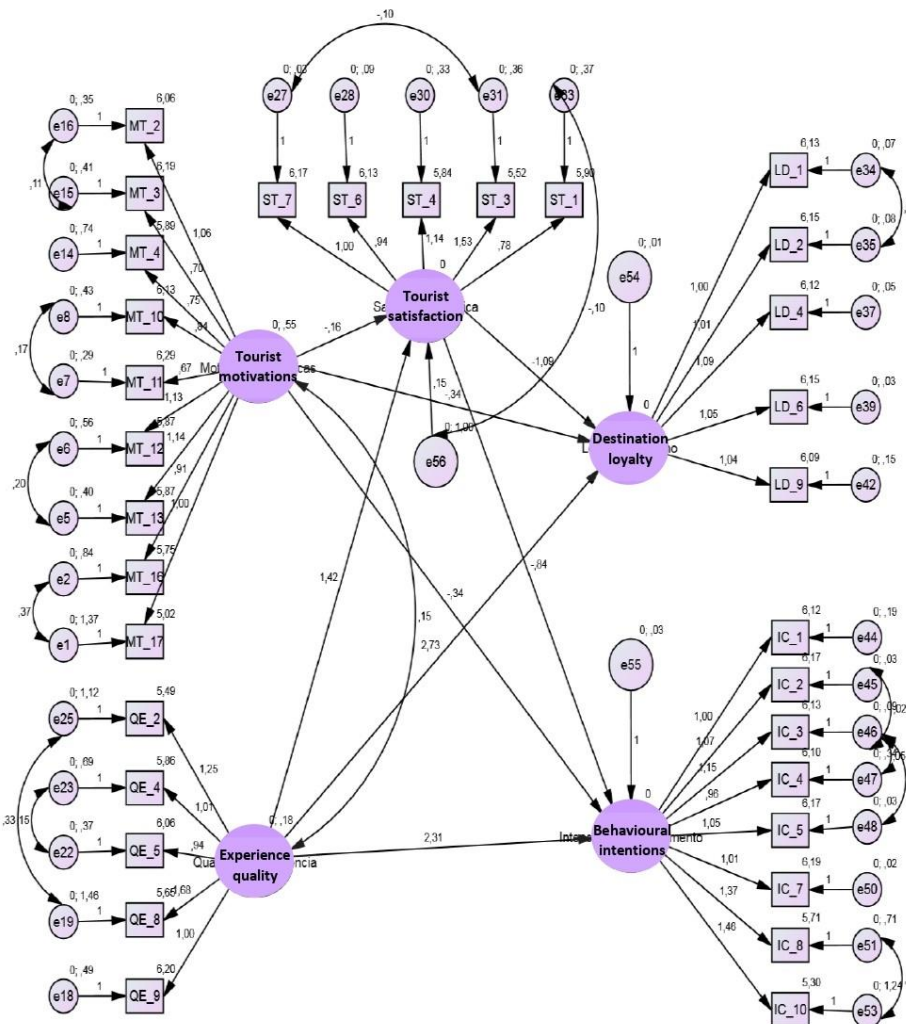


Figure 3: Final model resulting from the factorial analysis.
 Source: Own elaboration (2017).

All variables in the previous model are statistically significant and almost all variables have factor loads greater than 0.5. Analysis of the final model (Figure 3) shows that not all the items initially studied have significant values, which is why they were removed from this model. For example, among the seventeen items that evaluated tourism motivations, only nine were considered in the final model (MT_2; MT_3; MT_4; MT_10; MT_11; MT_12; MT_13; MT_16; MT_17). This option is used to adjust the model for a better fit.

In the case of experience quality, of the initial nine items, only five were significant (QE_2; QE_4; QE_5; QE_8; QE_9). Furthermore, in the assessment of tourist satisfaction, of the seven existing items, five were found to be the most significant (ST_1; ST_3; ST_4; ST_6; ST_7). Regarding destination loyalty, five of the ten items evaluated stood out in the final analysis of the construct (LD_1; LD_2; LD_4; LD_6; LD_9), and finally, with respect to behavioural intentions, eight items are presented in the final model (IC_1; IC_2; IC_3; IC_4; IC_5; IC_7; IC_8; IC_10), and two items were not considered significant. Without the items with less significant we increase the fit quality of the model.

Hypothesis test

The hypotheses were tested by evaluating the relationship (or regression coefficient) between exogenous and endogenous variables. In the assessment of the hypotheses, if value is positive it means that the research hypothesis is confirmed; when the value found is less than 0 (negative), the research hypothesis has not been confirmed.

We can thus conclude that Hypothesis 1 (*Motivation positively influences tourist satisfaction*) could not be confirmed, since motivation has a significant influence on tourism satisfaction, but negatively (coefficient of regression -0.209). Hypothesis 2 (*The quality of the experience lived positively influences tourist satisfaction*), is confirmed with a positive and significant coefficient of 1.05. Hypothesis 3 (*Tourist satisfaction positively influences tourist loyalty in relation to the destination*) is not confirmed, since the relationship is negative (coefficient of -1.25). Finally, Hypothesis 4 (*There is a positive relationship between tourist satisfaction and future behavioural intentions of tourists*) is confirmed, since there is a significant and positive relationship between these variables, as shown by the correlation between them (coefficient of 0.771).

Although it was not possible to confirm two of the research hypotheses, it should be noted that the correlations between all factors are positive, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation between the constructs of the research model

	Experience quality	Tourist motivations	Tourist satisfaction	Behavioural intentions	Destination loyalty
Experience quality	1				
Tourist motivations	0.496	1			
Tourist satisfaction	0.947	0.312	1		
Behavioural intentions	0.835	0.171	0.771	1	
Destination loyalty	0.892	0.253	0.795	0.895	1

Source: Own elaboration.

Conclusion

The findings of the study show us the most striking and significant aspects of the tourism experience in Portugal, which can be understood as a tool to help destination managers and strategy planners decide which aspects should be kept and which could be improved. In recent years, Portugal has won a number of European and world distinctions for its tourism potential. To cultivate this positive trend and to promote the image of the destination, efforts should be made to retain the loyalty of tourists who have already visited the country, encouraging them to recommend and return to the destination.

Based on the data collected and its interpretation, it has been possible to draw up a proposal with a view to improving tourist satisfaction levels and maintaining loyalty to the destination. It is suggested that marketing and tourist promotion campaigns should target specific groups. As the study shows, the Spanish are the second largest source market for tourists to Portugal, but it was found that they are the least satisfied compared with other groups. Since Spain and Portugal are next-door neighbours, which is a key element to be explored in this economic relationship, a specific strategy could be developed to spotlight the specific characteristics unique to Portugal as a destination, which cannot be found in the country of origin, in this case Spain. In addition to valuing national authenticity in this way, it would also be a good idea to create combined strategies which would bring the two territories closer together. For example, there could be cross-selling between accommodation services, restaurants and tourist experiences, which would include both countries and bring them closer together.

Another conclusion relates to the increase in visitors from non-European markets, such as the African, American and Asian continents. These same tourists have shown very high levels of satisfaction with the tourist experience and a strong loyalty to the destination, intending to recommend and possibly return to it. Given this situation, it

is felt that it would be very useful to invest in promoting destination Portugal in more remote parts of the globe. The marketing strategy could include references to the strong historical, economic and cultural links that Portugal has with certain countries, such as the former colonies and countries where the Portuguese left some influences from the sixteenth century onwards. These would include material heritage, with the buildings constructed, and intangible heritage, with aspects of oral tradition and the Portuguese language itself.

At the end of this research work, it is felt that the conditions have been met to answer the research question that guided the project - *What is the level of satisfaction of foreign tourists visiting Portugal with the overall tourist experience, taking into account their tourist motivations, the quality of the experience lived, loyalty to the destination, and future behavioural intentions (return and recommend)?* And in this context the answer is clearly positive, showing that the levels of satisfaction found in the responses to the surveys are enlightening and are in line with the findings of other studies on the tourist satisfaction of expressed by people visiting Portugal.

Limitations and suggestions for future studies

The main limitations found in this study concern aspects of the methodology used and the sampling instrument: some regions of the country were not covered by the study (the archipelagos of Madeira and the Azores); although the remaining regions are represented, the surveys were applied in only five cities, which is reductive considering the rest of the national territory; the sample size (384) is small; and also, given that a non-probabilistic sampling technique was used, it is not possible to draw general conclusions from the results.

Future research should be designed to continue the study of tourist satisfaction and replicate this work, taking other areas of the territory into account and extending the sample collection period, perhaps to one year, thus covering different tourist seasons. New research hypotheses could also be formulated to link the tourist satisfaction construct with others, such as the destination image, hospitality and authenticity, for example.

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