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THE EFFECT OF DESTINATION IMAGE ON AUTHENTICITY AND LOYALTY
THE CASE OF SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

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ABSTRACT: Image is a key factor in travellers' choice of destination and the assessment process. Image building can be achieved through various means such as books, films or images envisioned by the tourists themselves. The image of Santiago de Compostela, associated with the Way to Santiago (Camino de Santiago) and pilgrims, generates expectations and nostalgia that affect the authenticity of the destination in a positive manner. Generally speaking, authenticity is considered to be an antecedent of tourists' satisfaction and their future intentions. This study analyzes the impact of image in perceived authenticity and its role as a determinant of tourist loyalty. The empirical data were collected during the Holy Year 2010 in Santiago de Compostela, Spain. A total of 400 questionnaires were returned and analyzed using structural equation modelling. The results indicate that the image of the destination has a direct impact on authenticity and loyalty. The study provides some strategic management suggestions for Santiago de Compostela and other World Heritage Cities. **Keywords**: image, authenticity, loyalty, Santiago de Compostela, structural equation modelling

RESUMEN: La imagen es un factor clave en la elección del destino y en la evaluación de la estancia por parte de los viajeros. La imagen puede crearse a través de diferentes vías como pueden ser, la literatura, el cine o las visiones de los propios turistas. La imagen de Santiago de Compostela, asociada al Camino de Santiago y a los peregrinos, genera expectativas y nostalgia que afectan positivamente a la autenticidad del destino. Generalmente, la autenticidad se considera como un antecedente de la satisfacción y de las futuras intenciones de los turistas. En este trabajo se se analiza el impacto de la imagen en la autenticidad y la influencia en la lealtad. Los datos fueron recogidos en la ciudad de Santiago de Compostela durante el Año Santo 2010. La muestra final estuvo configurada por un total de 400 cuestionarios, que

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fueron analizados utilizando un modelo de ecuaciones estructurales. Los reulstados indican que la imagen del destino tiene un impacto directo en la autenticidad y en la lealtad. A partir de los resultados del trabajo, se pueden extraer importantes recomendaciones para los responsables de la gestión turística de Santiago de Compostela y de otras Ciudades Patrimonio de la Humanidad. **Palabras Clave**: Imagen, Autenticidad, Lealtad, Santiago de Compostela, Modelos de Ecuaciones Estructurales.

RESUMO: A imagem é um fator-chave na escolha de um destino e no proceso de avaliação por parte dos viajantes. A imagem pode ser criada através de meios distintos como livros, filmes ou imagens visionadas pelos próprios turistas. A imagem de Santiago de Compostela, associada ao Caminho de Santiago e aos peregrinos, cria expetativas e um sentimento de nostalgia que influenciam positivamente a autenticidade do destino. De um modo geral, a autenticidade é encarada como um antecedente da satisfação e futuras intenções por parte dos turistas. Este estudo analisa o impacto da imagem na autenticidade percebida e o seu papel determinante na fidelização do turista. Os dados foram recolhidos na cidade de Santiago de Compostela durante o Ano Santo de 2010. Um total de 400 questionários foram recolhidos e analisados utilizando um modelo de equações estruturais. Os resultados indicam que a imagem do destino tem um impacto direto na autenticidade e na fidelização. O estudo fornece algumas sugestões de gestão estratégica para Santiago de Compostela e outras Cidades Património da Humanidade. **Palavras-chave**: Imagem, Autenticidade, Fidelização, Santiago de Compostela, Modelos de Equações Estruturais

INTRODUCTION

Destinations that share similar attributes in terms of accommodation, restaurant and leisure options, etc. exert varying degrees of attraction on potential tourists. This indicates the existence of certain characteristics that set them apart and make them unique in the tourists' eyes, eventually leading them to select and visit such destinations (Qu, Kim, & Im, 2011). A number of authors attribute image as the reason for this differentiation and the key to survival in a global market in which competition between destinations is fierce. These authors claim that a single, strong image simplifies the information available and is the key factor in positioning a destination, due to its capacity to differentiate the destination from its competitors (Botha, Crompton, & Kim, 1999; Buhalis, 2000; Calantone, Benedetto, Hakam, & Bojanic, 1989; Chon, Weaver, & Kim, 1991; Crompton, Fakeye, & Lue, 1992; Fan, 2006; Go & Govers, 2000; Mihalic, 2000; Mykletun, Crotts, & Mykletun, 2001; Uysal, Chen, & Williams, 2000).

Changes in tourist demand have led to the appearance of new niches in tourism markets; examples include heritage tourism, which seeks a greater personal involvement in the tourism experience, immersing visitors in the local way of life (Hall, 1995; Urry, 1990). Likewise, heritage tourism has been the object of

growing attention in recent years, as shown in the considerable amount of recent scientific literature addressing this issue. Generally speaking, it can either be defined in terms of supply, according to the attraction exerted by socio-cultural assets (Fyall & Garrod, 1998) or in terms of demand, associated with tourists' motivations or perceptions (Poria, Butler, & Airey, 2001; Zepall & Hall, 1991). Fyall and Garrod, for instance, define heritage tourism as an economic activity that uses socio-cultural resources as a means of attracting visitors. In turn, Zeppal and Hall posit that heritage tourism is essentially based on a sense of nostalgia for the past and the desire to experience a range of cultural environments and figures.

Authenticity – or at least the perception thereof - is a key attribute of heritage tourism (Boniface & Fowler, 1993; Taylor, 2001; Waitt, 2000). Indeed, some authors go so far as to claim that authenticity should form the focal point of the development and commercialization of this type of tourism (Fischer, 1999). Authenticity is widely-acknowledged as a fundamental motivating force that encourages tourists to travel (Cohen, 1988a; MacCannell, 1973; Naoi, 2004). The search for authentic experiences is currently considered to be one of the principal trends in the tourist sector. In turn, this fascination for authenticity has also awoken a growing interest in tourism literature (Wang, 1999; Chhabra, Healy, & Sills, 2003; Reisinger & Steiner, 2005; Kolar & Zabkar, 2010; Buchmann, Moore, & Fisher, 2010; Robinson, & Clifford, 2012). Providing authentic experiences is widely considered as a means of increasing tourists' satisfaction and their desire to return to a destination (Chhabra, Healy, & Sills, 2003; Kolar & Zabkar, 2010; Robinson & Clifford, 2012).

Another widely-held claim in scientific literature is that authenticity is a means of strengthening and consolidating the quality of heritage tourism (Clapp, 1999; Cohen, 1988b). However, despite the growing interest in the consequences of authenticity, there is to date no proof or systematic validation in scientific literature for its alleged impact on satisfaction and loyalty. Indeed, only a

very small number of quantitative studies have addressed the relation between authenticity and motivation, satisfaction and loyalty.

Furthermore, and from a management perspective, there is not only a need to determine whether authenticity is a positive factor for a destination, but also to identify those aspects of a destination that affect visitors' perception of authenticity. One such aspect is the destination's image. A number of studies have shown that image impacts on tourists' destination choices and their future intentions (Chon, 1991, 1992; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Court & Lupton, 1997). It has also been claimed that destination image also exerts a positive influence on perceived quality and satisfaction (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 1996; Bigné, Sánchez, & Sánchez, 2001). In this case, expectations regarding the standard of service are linked to a perception of excellence. Quality is considered to be an overall opinion reached by the consumer based on the global superiority or excellence of the service provided (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988; Oliver, 1997). This may imply a certain relation with authenticity. However, no research to date has analyzed the impact of image on authenticity.

In the case of Santiago de Compostela, the principal attributes that contribute to its image and the differentiating characteristics that make it unique in the minds of tourists are first and foremost the Cathedral and the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago. We consider that this image has a clear impact on the authenticity perceived by tourists and their behaviour, both during their initial experience and any future visits. This is reflected in the tourism figures and means that even in times of difficulty, such as the present crisis, pilgrim arrivals continue to grow in comparison with previous years. One of the aims of this article is to analyse the way in which image impacts on authenticity and loyalty of tourists in the case of a city that boasts a magnificent historical heritage. This analysis shall be based on empirical research carried out in Santiago de Compostela, which was declared a UNESCO World Heritage City in 1985 and the European City of Culture in the year 2000.

The structure of the article is as follows: the next section includes the theoretical framework and an explanation of the specific hypotheses. The article then goes on to describe the research methodology and the results of the test carried out. Following a discussion of the implication of this study, it concludes with a series of strategic recommendations for heritage tourism managers.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The main aim of this article is to analyze how authenticity in heritage destinations can increase visitor intentions to revisit and/or recommend them to third parties; in other words, how it can impact on the loyalty shown by tourists towards a destination. In turn, the degree of authenticity experienced by tourists may also be affected by a destinations' image. Image, constructed through various sources, may generate expectations that eventually influence the tourists' vision of a destination, the perceived quality and the sense of authenticity experienced during the visit. Indeed, and by means of an example, a number of previous studies have revealed the influence of literary works on the creation of a mental image of the destination and expectations that lead to a sense of authenticity (Chhabra, Healy, & Sills, 2003).

Researchers in various fields and disciplines concur that the image of a destination is essentially built on two clearly differentiated types of factors, namely stimulus factors and personal factors. More specifically, in the absence of previous experience, a total of three factors affect the image of a destination: tourist motivation, sociodemographic considerations and information sources. The latter group are considered to be stimulus variables, whilst motivation and sociodemographic considerations fall within the scope of personal factors (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). A large number of studies have shown that the image of a destination exerts a major influence over tourists (Ashworth & Goodall, 1988; Mansfeld, 1992; Bigné, Sánchez, & Sánchez, 2001; O'Leary & Deegan, 2003). Furthermore, this influence occurs at different times. Initially, it takes place prior to travel, during the

selection process (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993; Gartner, 1989; Goodall, 1988; Kent, 1990; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Moutinho, 1987; Schmoll, 1977; Stabler, 1990). Those destinations with a strong positive image are believed to have a greater possibility of being included and selected during the decision-making process (Alhemoud & Armstrong, 1996; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Johnson & Thomas, 1992; Telisman-Kosuta, 1994). The second period is during the actual stay, when tourists decide their degree of satisfaction with the destination, and the third and final period corresponds to their post-trip assessment and future intentions (Ashworth & Goodall, 1988; Bordas & Rubio, 1993; Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, & Wanhill, 1993; Mansfeld, 1992; Court, & Lupton, 1997; Chi & Qu, 2008). The more positive the image of a destination, the more positive the tourists' assessment and the greater their degree of satisfaction will be. A positive image also increases the probability that they will recommend and/or return to the destination. In other words, image has a clear impact on tourist loyalty.

Tourist loyalty is also one of the key indicators in measuring the results of a marketing strategy. Studying and improving the customers' degree of loyalty will enable tourism principals to increase the number of visits and/or revenue. In keeping with the attitude approach (Yoon & Uysal, 2005), consumer loyalty implies a desire by tourists to move beyond the conduct they manifest outwardly and to express their loyalty in terms of a psychological commitment or declaration of preference. Loyalty therefore expresses the degree of affection tourists feel towards a particular destination.

Authenticity is another issue that has recently been the focus of considerable attention. Authenticity can also be considered an antecedent of tourist behaviour, generating value, motivation or interest (Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Leigh, Peters, & Shelton, 2006; Poria, Reichel, & Biran, 2006; Yeoman, Brass, & Mcmahon-Beattie, 2007). Authenticity motivates tourists to visit far-off destinations regardless of the travelling time involved. Despite the

controversy surrounding this issue, there is a growing consensus as to its subjective nature (Reisinger & Steiner, 2005; Robinson & Clifford, 2012). Constructivism and the post-modernist approach seem to agree on the idea that authenticity is not so much an intrinsic feature of products and services, but rather a personal interpretation generated through the relationship between tourists and the environment.

Tourism studies have shown that the interests held by destinations and authenticity may be mutually beneficial. The study carried out by Kolar and Zabkar (2010) into world heritage revealed that authenticity was a major factor in determining tourist loyalty. Similarly, Chhabra, Healy and Sills (2003) have proved the existence of a positive link between authenticity and tourist expenditure. Likewise, taking advantage of the commercial opportunities heritage tourism provides often contributes to the survival of traditional cultures and their customs that would otherwise have been lost. Nevertheless, other authors warn that initiatives created and offered for commercial purposes will inevitably lead to a loss of authenticity (MacCannell, 1973). Gotham (2002) stated that when public actors opted to promote the commercialization of the Mardi Gras, it was seen by local residents as an attempt to devalue the festival. In their analysis of the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago, Murray and Graham (1997) discuss the conflict between the various demands existing within the city and which complicate the commercialization of the Pilgrims' Way as a tourist product. Indeed, at certain times, the needs of pilgrims and tourists may clash. Pilgrims may encounter difficulty in accessing holy sites, and in turn the rituals, celebrations and overall quality of the experience may be overlooked in favour of mass tourism.

As discussed above, scientific literature has attempted to study the relation between destination authenticity and tourist behaviour (Chhabra, Healy, & Sills, 2003; Kolar & Zabkar, 2010; Robinson & Clifford, 2012). Analyses have also been carried out into the relation between destination image and the degree of satisfaction

and tourist loyalty (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Castro, Armario, & Ruíz, 2007; Chon, 1990, 1992; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Milman & Pizam, 1995; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). However, no research would appear to have carried out a joint analysis into the relation between tourist image and authenticity and tourist loyalty. This article therefore not only seeks to shed light on the role played by authenticity in the future intentions of tourists, but also represents an initial attempt to determine the way in which the image a destination projects can contribute to the appearance of authentic experiences.

HYPOTHESES

Certain authors hold that the image a destination projects can be defined as a global perception or a set of impressions generated by a place (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Phelps, 1986). Others, in turn, refer to a mental portrait of a destination (Alhemoud & Armstrong, 1996; Milman & Pizam, 1995; Seaton & Benett, 1996). It may therefore be claimed that tourist image is a subjective interpretation of reality, created by the tourist, in which both cognitive and affective factors will exert an influence (Moutinho, 1987).

There is a widely-held consensus amongst tourism researchers regarding the degree to which the destination of an image can influence tourists. Furthermore, this influence occurs at varying times. Prior to the trip, during the process of selecting the destination; during the actual stay, in terms of the degree of satisfaction obtained; and on completion of the trip, regarding the tourists' overall assessment of their trip and future intentions. Their degree of satisfaction could be improved if the destination benefits from a positive image. A number of studies have corroborated this link based on the assumption that satisfaction influences the degree of loyalty (Hui, Wan, & Ho, 2007; Kozak, 2001). However, Moreno, Mediana, Sierra and Rey (2010), in the light of previous studies, point out the need to consider that satisfaction acts as an antecedent in the intention to return to the desti-

nation in the short term, but not in the mid or long term, when other variables such as novelty may have a greater impact. Likewise, they also state that satisfaction may demonstrate a non-linear relationship with loyalty.

A number of authors indicated a direct relationship between destination image and the future intentions of tourists. Initially, it would seem that destinations with a positive image are more likely to be revisited and/or recommended by tourists. Court and Lupton (1997) and Bigné, Sánchez and Sánchez (2001) have shown that the image a destination projects impacts positively on both the intention to return and to recommend it to third parties, a concept known as destination loyalty.

Specifically, Bigné, Sánchez and Sánchez (2001) analyzed the relationship between image, perceived quality, satisfaction and loyalty. Their work led them to the conclusion that image was a direct antecedent to perceived quality, satisfaction and loyalty. In their analysis of the relationship between these three factors, Chi and Qu (2008) found that image impacts on loyalty through satisfaction. However, no research to date has provided a joint analysis for the causal relationship between image, authenticity and destination loyalty. In the light of these antecedents, we posed the following hypothesis:

H_1: Destination image has a positive impact on loyalty towards the city

Authenticity is a controversial issue that to date has been insufficiently explored, thereby causing difficulties in terms of its practical application (Wang, 1999). Indeed, not only do the approaches posited by various authors differ, but they also frequently appear to adopt opposing stances. There is also a tendency to differentiate between existential and objective authenticity (Kolar & Zabbar, 2010). Whatever the case, it would appear evident that authenticity is of vital importance for tourism in general and heritage tourism in particular (Apostolakis, 2003; Yeoman, Brass, & Mcmahon-Beattie, 2007). It is a key factor for consideration by heritage cities when determining their image as a tourist destina-

tion and their commercialization strategies. This is due to the fact that authenticity should be considered as an antecedent or input of tourist behaviour, as it is often seen, and a value or motivational force that drives tourists to visit a destination (Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Leigh, Peters, & Shelton 2006; Poria, Reichel, & Biran, 2006; Yeoman, Brass, & Mcmahon-Beattie, 2007). A large number of authors also consider that authenticity enhances the quality of heritage tourism (Clapp, 1999; Cohen, 1988a). Chhabra, Healy and Sills (2003) found a positive correlation between perceived authenticity and tourist expenditure. Likewise, Kolar and Zabkar (2010) found a significant positive link between authenticity and post-visit behaviour. Despite the widely-held acceptance of the importance of authenticity in the tourism sector, very little research has been carried out into the way authenticity relates to loyalty, and even less within the sphere of heritage tourism. As a result, our knowledge of the relationship between authenticity and loyalty is largely limited to indirect empirical arguments. This provides us with further justification for taking an in-depth look at these influences. We therefore put forward the following hypothesis:

H_2: *Authenticity experienced in the destination impacts positively on loyalty*

A wide range of studies have shown that destination image affects tourists' subjective perception and therefore their behaviour (Ashworth & Goodall, 1988; Bordas & Rubio, 1993; Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, & Wanhill, 1993; Mansfeld, 1992). A considerable number of studies have also demonstrated that a destination's tourist image has a positive impact on perceived quality and the degree of satisfaction with the experience (Bigné, Sánchez, & Sánchez, 2001; Font, 1997; Phelps, 1986). The concept of perceived quality refers to the comparison between expectations and the consumer's final perceived result. In this sense, quality is considered to consist of the overall opinion reached by the consumer in terms of the global superiority or excellence of the service provided. The tourist image shapes

the individual's expectations prior to the visit and has a positive impact on satisfaction and perceived quality, as these variables are dependent on the comparison between expectations and the actual experience in the destination (González, Sánchez, & Sanz, 2004). Current opinion holds that tourists' behaviour is influenced to a greater extent by the expectations generated and whether or not they are met, which is known as 'disconfirmation', rather than by satisfaction taken as an isolated concept. We therefore believe that our study should include the role played by the emotions. The initial hypothesis would therefore be that the image of a destination generates feelings of nostalgia and expectations that impact on the degree of authenticity experienced by tourists.

However, to date, very little work has been carried out into the link between the image of a destination and the degree of authenticity perceived by tourists. However, a small number of studies do refer to this relationship. Based on the results of a research carried out by Pocock (1992) in South Tyneside (United Kingdom), a city whose image was created as a result of a Catherine Cookson novel, Chhabra, Healy and Sills (2003) showed that an image constructed on the basis of literary sources may have a major impact on the way people perceive a destination. The image formed in tourists' minds on the basis of a novel generates certain expectations, and also enables them to experience a high degree of authenticity. It would seem clear that the image a destination projects shapes people's expectations prior to the visit. Evidence has also been provided for the role played by image as a means of generating expectations (Moreno, Mediana, Sierra, & Rey, 2010; Rodríguez, San Martín, & Collado, 2006; Rodríguez & San Martín, 2008). However, we are unaware of the existence of studies that analyze the relationship between destination image and authenticity. It is therefore necessary to consider the following hypothesis:

H₃: Destination image has a positive impact on the perception of authenticity

Figure 1 shows an overview of the conceptual framework.

Figure 1: The proposed theoretical model
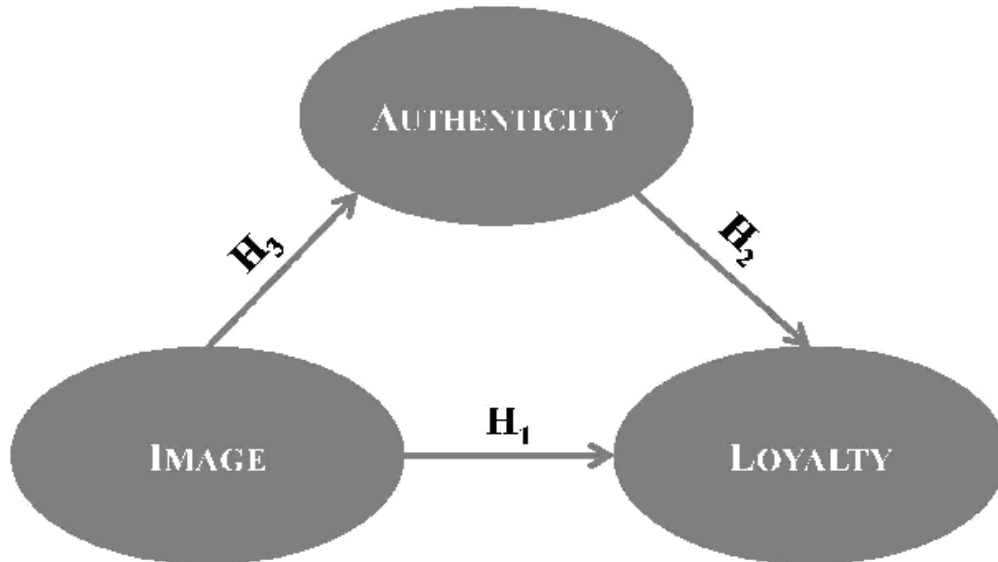
METHODOLOGY

Sample and data collection

The data used for this article come from a wider study carried out within the scope of the research project entitled "Un indicador de lealtad del turismo con destino Galicia"[1] ("*An indicator of tourim loyalty with destination Galicia*"). The survey universe was made up of tourists that visited Santiago de Compostela during 2010. A filter question was included in order to distinguish between tourists and day trippers, whereby visitors were asked whether they had stayed in the city for at least one night. Due to the lack of reliable data regarding the size of the target population, it was considered to be statistically infinite. The sample was obtained randomly and consisted of 400 tourists from all over the world. The study was carried out during a Holy Year. Holy Years are held when the festivity of the patron saint, James the Greater (25th July) falls on a Sunday. This event boasts a long-standing and deeply-rooted tradition, attracting millions of visitors to the city and is considered to be one of the world's most important religious celebrations.

In addressing the issue of the "non-response" bias, an analysis was made of the differences between the early and late responses (Armstrong & Overton, 1977). In accordance with Weiss and Heide (1993), the early responses correspond to the first 75% of the questionnaires received. The final 25% were classified as late responses and tourists that failed to answer the survey. A t-test was used to compare early and late responses for all variables, resulting in no significant differences (at a conventional significance level of 0.05). Based on these results, it was concluded that the non-response bias would not cause major difficulties for the purpose of this study.

Measurements

The survey used was drawn up following an exhaustive review of heritage tourism literature. Expert researchers within the project team assessed the contents and apparent validity of the survey. A pilot test was also carried out. A panel of tourism experts was asked to assess and provide their opinions regarding the contents of individual items, the clarity of the instructions provided and the response format.

The items used to represent each construct were selected in accordance with existing literature. In keeping with previous studies (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Lee, Lee, Lee, & Babin, 2008; Yoon, Lee, & Lee, 2010), loyalty was measured based on three statements given in a five point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 totally agree): "I will recommend Santiago de Compostela to friends and relatives", "I will visit Santiago de Compostela again in the future", "I will say positive things about the city to other people". In line with the work of Chi and Qu (2008), the city image was analyzed through five items ("Places of interest", "Activities and events", "Accommodation", "Access" and "Restaurants and food"). As in the previous case, they were assessed using a five point Likert scale (1 = very unfavourable and 5 = totally favourable). Perceived authenticity was measured using the scale developed by Kolar and Zabkar (2010) and the existential

element of authenticity in terms of its relationship with visitors' perceptions, feelings and emotions in the destination. The objective was to assess the uniqueness of the spiritual and religious experience; tourists' feelings when faced with the city's history and legends; or their sense of connection with religion and the pilgrimage. Existential authenticity was measured through three items expressed on a scale of five (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = totally agree): "During the visit I sensed the history, legends and historical figures", "I enjoyed a unique religious and spiritual experience", and "I liked the calm and peaceful atmosphere during the visit".

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Measuring the model reliability and validity

In order to assess construct validity, the items were studied using a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using the AMOS v.18 program. In keeping with the paradigm posited by Gerbing and Anderson (1988), the discriminant validity, convergent validity and scale reliability were assessed. Each item was related to its "pre-specified" factor, whilst each latent factor was freely correlated with the remaining factors in the measurement model. Table 1 shows the results obtained. The statistic χ^2 for this model was 141.4 (p = 0.074) on 67 degrees of freedom (gl). Four adjustment measurements were examined: the Comparative Fix Index (CFI= 0.983); the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI = 0.980), the Incremental Fix Index (IFI = 0.983) and the Root Mean Standard Error of Approximation (RMSEA = 0.030). The results indicate that the scale measurements have a satisfactory degree of internal consistency, with a discrimination capacity and good adjustment between the measurement and data.

A more detailed analysis of these results reveals that the items used to measure the constructs were both valid (convergent validity and discriminant validity) and reliable (compound reliability and extracted variance). More specifically, evidence of convergent validity can be found in the high and significant relationship (t>1.96; p<0.05) between the items in the respective constructs.

Table 1: Construct measurement models and reliability

Constructs and Items	Standardized Loadings	t-value
Image (CR* = 0.88 ; VE** = 0.65; $_c$*** = 0.88)		
Places of interest	0.694	
Activities and events	0.892	10.055
Accommodation	0.896	10.085
Access and facilities	0.727	8.438
Food	0.869	10.258
Authenticity (CR* = 0.81 ; VE** = 0.53; $_c$*** = 0.71)		
During my visit I sensed the related history, legends and historical figures	0.781	
I enjoyed a unique religious and spiritual experience	0.786	8.884
I liked the calm and peaceful atmosphere during the visit	0.577	6.720
Loyalty (CR* = 0.70 ; VE** = 0.45; $_c$*** = 0.77)		
I will recommend Santiago de Compostela to my friends & neighbours	0.489	
I will visit Santiago de Compostela again in the future	0.777	4.799
I will say positive things about the city to other people	0.714	4.832
Model fit indices: χ^2 = 141.4; GL= 67 (p =0.074); CFI= 0.983; TLI= 0.980; IFI= 0.983; RMSEA= 0.030		

Composite reliability (CR) (Bagozzi, 1980)
**Variance extracted (VE) (Fornell, & Larcker, 1981)*
*** Cronbach Alpha ()*
Source: Own elaboration from the model

In turn, discriminant validity was assessed by observing the construct intercorrelations. As shown in Table 2, these correlations were significantly different from 1 and the shared variance between each two constructs (i.e., the square of their intercorrelation) was lower than the average variance explained by the items in the construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 2: Convergent and discriminant validity tests

Construct		1	2	3
1.	Loyalty	0.72		
2.	Authenticity	0.072	0.78	
3.	Image	-0.023	0.089	0.61

Note: correlations in the lower triangle and average variance extracted on the diagonal
Source: Own elaboration from the model

Regarding construct reliability, Table 1 shows the results for composite reliability and extracted variance. Composite reliability, which fluctuates between 0.88 in the case of image and 0.70 for

loyalty, are higher than the level recommended by Bagozzi and Yi (1988), who situated it at 0.60. As for the extracted variance, only loyalty, at 0.45, falls below the recommended minimum (0.50). The other two constructs both exceed this recommended level. It can therefore be concluded that the indicators were sufficient in the case of all the constructs and appropriate for the measurement model specifications.

Structural model

Given the confirmatory nature of our research, a structural modelling equations technique was used by applying the Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE). The global c2 for the model shown in Figure 1 is significant (c2 = 141.4; GL = 67, p =0.074).

As in the measurement model, four adjustment measurements were considered: the Comparative Fix Index (CFI= 0.983); the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI = 0.980), the Incremental Index (IFI= 0.983); and the Root Mean Standard Error of Approximation (RMSEA= 0.030). As the adjustment measurements fell within conventional limits, it can be concluded that the model is appropriate as it reproduces the covariance structure of the population analyzed (Vandenberg & Lance, 2000). The relationships put forward in this model are considered below:

Table 3: Results

Determinants of	Hypothesis	Standardized estimates (λ)*	Assessment
Loyalty			
Image	H_1	0.320 (5.149)	S
Authenticity	H_2	0.283 (2.660)	S
Authenticity			
Image	H_3	0.420 (5.043)	S

Note: S = Supported
* The t-values from the unstandardized solution are given in parentheses.
Source: Own elaboration from the model

As shown in Table 3, and in keeping with hypothesis H_1, the results indicate that the higher the city's degree of authenticity, the greater the degree of loyalty shown by visiting tourists, as in-

dicated by the estimated parameter 0.283 (p<0.001). The results for hypothesis H_2 point to a positive and significant relationship between image and loyalty (0.320; p<0.01). Finally, and in relation to hypothesis H_3, the results obtained show that the city's image impacts positively on the authenticity perceived by tourists (0.420; p <0.01).

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Within the current context of restrictions, destinations in general and heritage tourism sites in particular are faced with the challenge of attracting the falling demand in tourism with resources that are also becoming increasingly hard to obtain. Destinations are therefore forced to engage in fierce competition and become highly effective in allocating their budgets in order to attract tourists affected by greater financial restraints in the light of the current economic crisis and who are therefore also forced to take effective decisions regarding their holiday and leisure time. Within such a context, a strong, unique and differentiated image could form the key to a destination's ability to position itself ahead of its competitors. This study has shown that Santiago de Compostela's tourist image, in which the Pilgrims' Way exerts a major influence, has the capacity to generate a certain degree of expectation amongst tourists, which in turn leads to an enhanced perception of authenticity in the destination. Similarly, it has also demonstrated that authenticity eventually has an impact on loyalty towards the city.

The search for loyal tourists should be the main objective adopted by managers of any destination for a series of reasons. Firstly, marketing costs are lower if the aim is to encourage tourists to return to the destination, rather than attracting first-time visitors; indeed, repeat visits are considered to be a positive indicator in terms of tourist satisfaction: frequent visitors are more likely to return to the destination, and tourists that demonstrate a high degree of loyalty are less sensitive to prices. We could add a number of other elements, however it must be stressed

that loyalty, expressed through the intention to recommend the destination by the well-known 'word-of-mouth' technique, is of particular importance in the tourist sector, as potential tourists consider that the recommendations made by previous visitors are the more reliable source of information.

Destinations essentially compete by comparing their perceived image with that of their rivals. It would therefore be necessary to analyze the process whereby image leads to loyalty. However, this issue has received only scant and inconsistent attention. A number of studies have shown that tourist behaviour when visiting heritage sites is influenced to a large degree by the expectations generated and the extent to which they are met once in the destination, through what is known as 'disconfirmation'. Our results would appear to indicate that the authenticity experienced by tourists is an excellent indicator of the degree of compliance with the expectations generated about the city through its image, and has a significant and positive impact on loyalty. In this sense, it would be necessary to study the image of a destination constructed by potential tourists and the role played by the emotions, as they create expectations and a sense of nostalgia that further enhances the authenticity experienced by tourists.

In an increasingly saturated and competitive market, the success enjoyed by destinations depends to a large extent on an exhaustive analysis of loyalty and the way it interacts with image and other variables such as authenticity. It is precisely for this reason that the results of this study are of major importance for the management and commercialization of a heritage tourism destination. Image is formed through associations that are generated by stimuli and gradually built up over time. The image will always be the result of experiences, beliefs, feelings or information obtained about a destination. An image is not only generated by tangible elements, but also intangible ones that contribute to creating perceptions. In the case of Santiago de Compostela, its inextricable links with the Pilgrims' Way and the atmosphere related to the pilgrimage experiences converge with other elements such as the city's cul-

tural and artistic heritage, its activities and events, accommodation and eating options to form an image that has a major impact on the authenticity experienced by tourists and their loyalty. It is therefore necessary to focus on projecting a clearly-defined image built up on these elements in order to consolidate and further increase tourist loyalty, which, as stated earlier, is the finest indicator of a destination's success.

In terms of the limitation of this study and possible areas for further research, it would be interesting to determine how tourist motivations impact on authenticity, their sociodemographic profile or other elements such as prior knowledge of the destination. Another potential line of research would be the reassessment of the model, differentiating between first-time and repeat visitors to the city. A number of studies that made this distinction revealed that repeat visitors tend to express greater satisfaction with their travel experiences and are more likely to return in the future (Chi, 2012). In light of the above, it could be assumed that direct experience with a destination is likely to modify associated perceptions or perceived authenticity.

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