

TOURISTS' SATISFACTION WITH SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA DURING THE HOLY YEAR 2010

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ABSTRACT: There are some empirical evidences that tourists' satisfaction is an indicator of their future behaviour, particularly of their intention to revisit and/or recommend the destination to others, that is, of their loyalty. Therefore, the analysis of tourist satisfaction is of singular relevance to those involved in the management of tourism. The main objective of this study is to analyze the satisfaction of the tourists who visited Santiago de Compostela during the Holy Year. The information was collected from a sample of 400 tourists in 2010. The survey concerned such aspects as the image of the destination, tourists' satisfaction and loyalty. The study shows that the level of satisfaction and loyalty is quite high. Nevertheless the analysis of the sample based on various segmentations (national-foreigners, male-female, first time visitors-repeaters, etc.) has revealed some significant differences between groups. The results also allow some conclusions about the influence of the Holy Year in tourists' experience. **Keywords:** Satisfaction, Loyalty, Cultural Tourism, Galicia, Holy Year.

RESUMEN: Hay datos empíricos que demuestran que la satisfacción de los turistas es un indicador de su comportamiento futuro, particularmente de su intención de visitar y/o recomendar el destino a otras personas, o sea, un indicador de lealtad. Por consiguiente, el análisis de la satisfacción de los turistas asume elevada relevancia en la gestión del turismo. El principal objetivo de este estudio es analizar la satisfacción de los turistas que visitaron Santiago de Compostela durante el Año Santo. La recogida de información trascurrió en el año 2011 y tuvo por base una muestra de 400 turistas. La encuesta incluyó los aspectos de la imagen del destino, la satisfacción y la lealtad. El estudio muestra que el nivel de satisfacción y la lealtad son bastante altos. Sin embargo, el análisis comparativo de los varios segmentos de la muestra (nacionales *versus* extranjeros, masculina *versus* femenina, primera visita *versus* visita repetida) desveló algunas diferencias significativas entre grupos. Los resultados también permiten recoger algunas conclusiones sobre la influencia del Año Santo en la experiencia de los turistas. **Palabras clave:** Satisfacción, Lealtad, Turismo Cultural, Galicia, Año Santo.

RESUMO: Há dados empíricos que demonstram que a satisfação dos turistas é um indicador do seu comportamento futuro, particularmente da sua intenção de visitar e/ou recomendar o destino a outras pessoas, ou seja, um indicador de lealdade. Por conseguinte, a análise da satisfação dos turistas assume elevada relevância na gestão do turismo. O principal objectivo deste estudo é analisar a satisfação dos turistas que visitaram Santiago de Compostela duran-

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te o Ano Santo. A recolha de informação decorreu em 2011 e teve por base uma amostra de 400 turistas. O inquérito abrangeu os aspectos da imagem do destino, a satisfação e a lealdade. O estudo mostra que o nível de satisfação e a lealdade são bastante altos. No entanto, a análise comparativa dos diversos segmentos da amostra (nacionais *versus* estrangeiros, masculina *versus* feminina, primeira visita *versus* visita repetida) revelou algumas diferenças significativas entre grupos. Os resultados também permitem extrair algumas conclusões sobre a influência do Ano Santo na experiência dos turistas. **Palavras chave:** Satisfação, Lealdade, Turismo Cultural, Galiza, Ano Santo.

INTRODUCTION

The study of consumer satisfaction has been a central goal in a modern approach of marketing, and many authors have investigated its background (Churchill Jr. and Surprenant, 1982; Oliver, 1980, Oliver and DeSarbo, 1988). We can analyze overall consumer satisfaction with the product and/or with its attributes. Some authors implicitly consider overall satisfaction as a kind of synthetic indicator obtained from satisfaction with various attributes of the product or service, while others indicate that overall satisfaction is a broader concept than the simple weighted sum of the assessments of individual attributes (Fornell, 1992; Gnoth, 1994). In any case, overall and attribute satisfaction are related constructs (Oliver, 1993). This theory also applies to tourism sector, since tourists' satisfaction with the components or individual characteristics of the target contributes to overall satisfaction (LD Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991, Danaher and Arweiler, 1996; Hsu, 2003). The tourists enjoy a variety of services and can assess each service separately. Satisfaction with various attributes of destination shall lead to overall satisfaction (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000). Overall satisfaction is therefore a function of the satisfaction with the individual elements/attributes of the products and/or services that are part of the tourism experience, such as accommodation, catering, weather, nature, social environment etc. The information about these aspects is usually gathered through surveys (see for example Chi and Qu, 2008).

Furthermore, a review of the literature on customer behaviour reveals that satisfaction leads to repeat purchases and/or positive Word of Mouth recommendations, which are the main indicators of loyalty, a strategic goal for businesses. The results of numerous studies confirm a positive and significant relationship

between these two variables (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993, Taylor and Baker, 1994; Cronin Jr *et al.*, 2000). At the present time, the satisfaction is interpreted as the main determinant of loyalty: only a satisfied customer will be loyal. These considerations have led researchers of tourism to incorporate the concept of consumer loyalty in relation to tourist destinations, and to show that tourists' satisfaction is a strong indicator of loyalty (Yau and Chan, 1990; GF Ross, 1993; Juaneda, 1996; Beeh and Prentice, 1997; Bramwell, 1998, Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Bigne *et al.* (2001), Kozak, 2001; Yoon and Uysal, 2005, Chi and Qu 2008). Satisfied tourists are more likely to return to the same destination and are more willing to share their positive travel experience with friends and family. The loyalty, expressed as intentions to recommend the destination, through the Word of Mouth is a particularly important aspect in the field of tourism, in which the recommendations of previous visitors are considered the most reliable source of information by potential tourists (Murray, 1991; Gartner, 1994, Vazquez *et al.*, 2002, Yoon and Uysal, 2005). Due to its implications to the loyalty, the analysis of tourist satisfaction is particularly important for those responsible for the sector.

In the case of the Autonomous Community of Galicia, the tourism sector plays an important role in the economy of the region. Tourism activity generates a 10.9% of GDP and the employment linked to the sector accounts for 10.3% of total employment, slightly above the Spanish average for these items: 10.8% and 9.3% respectively (Exceltur, 2009). It is noteworthy that tourism in Galicia has experienced a significant growth since the early 90's, both in absolute terms and in their participation in the overall economy (Garin-Munoz, 2009).

The weather conditions in Galicia are less favourable than in other regions for the development of tourism known as "sun and beach". It has led to the utilization of other resources such as natural, gastronomic or heritage in order to generate tourism products that could attract the demand. Within tourist offer in Galicia a role of cultural tourism understood in a broad sense is of a particular relevance. The important role as a tourist attrac-

tion in Galicia plays the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela and the tomb of the Apostle St. James, being the city of Santiago de Compostela, the end point of the pilgrimage route. This icon can be used as a shuttle for the arrival of tourists to other parts of the community.

In recent years, and particularly since 1993, a brand Xacobeo, associated with the Holy Year has been consolidating. The Holy Year is celebrated when the Feast of the Apostle (July 25) matches on Sunday. The celebration of this event has been positively reflected in tourist inflow, with significant increases in visitor numbers and overnight stays in comparison to a "normal" year. Several studies indicate that the Holy Year have a considerable influence on tourism demand, acting as a major pull factor (Blanco and Garrido, 1994; Martinez Roget *et al.*, 2009) and affects not only the arrival of pilgrims but also the tourism in Galicia in general and particularly in Santiago de Compostela (Santos, 2006).

Jacobean Holy Year is a special case of recurring event and held at irregular intervals, since its frequency responds to a cycle of 6, 11, 6, and 5 years. The event includes an important agenda of cultural activities and performances that extends throughout Galicia. Although its beginnings are closely related to religious tourism, the event has gone beyond the purely religious scope to contribute decisively to the promotion of Galicia as a tourist destination and consequently, to attract millions of visitors.

The main objective of this paper is to analyze the satisfaction of the tourists visiting Santiago de Compostela. This analysis will include both overall satisfaction with the visit, and the satisfaction with the various aspects of the tourism experience. Since tourists' satisfaction is a major determinant of their loyalty, the study was completed with the evaluation of this variable. As the work is part of an investigation conducted in 2010, coinciding, therefore, with the Holy Year, the paper also examines the influence of the event in the tourist experience.

After this introduction, the following paragraph presents the methodology applied in the study, and following this, we analyze

the results of the investigation. The paper concludes with several key findings and references.

METHOD

The field work was developed in Santiago de Compostela during the third quarter of 2010. A survey has been conducted and addressed only to visitors who stayed overnight in the city (tourists) and not to day visitors, as the latter were unable to comment on some of the attributes of the destination, for example, the housing.

A 400 tourists were surveyed, which involves working with a sampling error of 5% for a confidence level of 95% and the maximum uncertainty ($p = q = 0.5$). Given the heterogeneity of tourists visiting Santiago de Compostela and the potentially different behaviours that may depend on its characteristics, the sample was segmented into two strata according to the origin of the tourists. The first stratum included tourists with Spanish nationality (*nationals*), while the second consisted of tourists of any other nationality (*foreigners*). In both cases the sample size was the same, 200. Among the foreigners the sample was representative of the weight of each nationality in the tourism of Santiago de Compostela. The information was collected through simple random sampling in the main tourist attraction points of the city.

The questionnaire includes questions that try to approximate the satisfaction of tourists with different aspects that make up the framework of the visit, their overall satisfaction with the visit and their loyalty to the destination. Responses were assessed through a five-point Likert scale where 1 represents “*strongly disagree*” / “*not satisfied at all*” and 5 “*strongly agree*” / “*very satisfied*”. Satisfaction with different aspects or attributes of the destination is defined through various items to assess tourism experience in relation to accessibility, signage, places of interest, cultural and leisure offer, trade, accommodation, gastronomy and environment. Overall satisfaction is assessed in two ways: directly, asking about the same and indirectly through two items, asking whether

the visit to Santiago was worth it and whether it exceeded their expectations. To assess the loyalty of the tourists they were asked about the intention to revisit and recommend the destination. Given that the study was carried out during the Holy Year, it included a series of questions in order to know how the event had affected tourists' experience.

Moreover, the survey also included questions about other variables such as the image of the destination, tourist motivation, their spending or their sociodemographic characteristics. Designing the survey, questionnaires used in similar studies were taken as reference (Yoon and Uysal, 2005, Huang and Chiu, 2006; Chi and Qu, 2008, Kolar and Zabkar, 2009) with the appropriate adjustments and modifications.

RESULTS

Attribute and Overall Satisfaction

The first remarkable result is that the tourists' satisfaction with some of the attributes of the city is very high, as listed in Table 1. The *environment* is found by tourists as the most satisfying aspect with average ratings higher than four in a Likert five-point scale on all items of this attribute. Visitors emphasize the peaceful and quiet atmosphere, street cleanliness and security.

Among the items of the attribute *accessibility and signage*, visitors are particularly pleased with the service offered by the tourist information offices with an average rating of 4.17, although it should be noted that almost half of respondents did not use this service. A probable cause of that could be that a high number of tourists have previously visited the city and therefore they have some prior knowledge of it.

Similarly, the satisfaction of visitors with the attribute *trade* is also high, being the wide variety of shops the most valued, around 3.97 points. Also the product quality and friendliness of personnel get high evaluations. The least valued is the quality/price rate.

It is also important the level of visitors' satisfaction with the *accommodations*. The prominent aspects of accommodation for tou-

rists are its variety, its singularity and historical interest or the quality of the service, since their ratings of these items are around 4 points. The quality/price rate has a lower value than other items.

Table 1. Satisfaction with Different Attributes of the Destination

Attribute /Statement	Average	SD
Accessibility and signage		
The city access is easy	3.71	0.95
The accesses to buildings and sites are easy	3.76	0.95
Mobility within the city is easy	3.66	0.95
The signage of buildings and places of interest is sufficient	3.67	0.95
There information at tourist offices is good	4.17	0.87
Places of interest and cultural and leisure offer.		
There is a wide variety of places and options of cultural interest	4.39	0.73
The prices of visiting and participating are reasonable	3.71	0.93
There is a wide variety of events / special festivals	3.46	1.06
There is a wide variety of nightlife	3.29	1.29
The prices of activities and events are reasonable	3.02	1.22
Trade		
There is a wide variety of shops	3.97	0.79
The quality of the products in stores is good	3.71	0.86
The quality/ price relationship is reasonable	3.49	0.88
The personnel are friendly.	3.69	0.91
Accommodation		
There are various accommodation options	4.03	0.80
The accommodation places are singular and of historical interest	3.95	0.84
The quality of the service is good	3.95	0.84
The quality/ price relationship is reasonable	3.76	0.90
Gastronomy		
It has a varied cuisine	4.13	0.71
The local cuisine stands out	4.15	0.80
The product quality is very good	4.22	0.80
The service of the restaurants is good	3.98	0.80
The price of the meals is reasonable	3.75	0.89
Environment		
There city has a peaceful and quiet atmosphere	4.15	0.68
The city is clean	4.06	0.74
The city is safe	4.24	0.62

Source: Authors.

The *gastronomy* is highly assessed by tourists as well, and especially the good quality of products, the variety of cuisine and the local cuisine. Also the service at the restaurants has a high average rating, with nearly four points. The price of the meals is the item the tourists are less satisfied with.

The tourists' satisfaction with *places of interest and cultural and leisure offer*, is not that high as with other attributes however their ratings cannot be described as low. Some aspects, such as the variety of places and options of cultural interest obtained, in fact, a high valuation, with an average score of 4.39 points. Nonetheless, the prices of the activity and the variety of nightlife are among the least valued in this attribute, while having a high percentage of non-response.

In line with the high level of satisfaction expressed by visitors with the different attributes of the destination, the overall satisfaction of visitors is also very high, reaching 4.45 average rating points, as shown in Table 2. It is very instructive as well, the fact that 96% of respondents report they are very or fairly satisfied with their tourist experience in Santiago de Compostela. Tourists also consider that the visit was worth it in terms of quality/price relationship and that in general, the experience was better than expected.

Table 2. Overall Satisfaction

Statement	Average	SD
What is your overall satisfaction with his visit to Santiago?	4.45	0.58
The visit to Santiago was worth it (quality/price relationship)	4.38	0.63
Generally, the visit to Santiago was better than expected	4.06	0.87

Source: Authors.

Satisfaction in Terms of Different Segmentations

After this integral assessment, the results have been analyzed also in relation to different segments. The criteria used to define homogeneous groups were the following: the nationality of the

tourists (national or foreigners), sex, motivation, income level or whether it was the first-time visitor or not, among others. Considering the sample size a nonparametric Mann-Whitney U test was performed to examine if differences between these groups were statistically significant. Some important differences between segments have been found in relation to some aspects.

Contrasting the level of tourists' satisfaction depending on the nationality of the tourists, we note that foreign visitors often express a greater satisfaction with almost all the attributes of the destination. The differences become significant in relation to several items of attribute *places of interest and cultural and leisure offer*. As shown in Table 3, differences in the evaluations concerning the friendliness of personnel, quality and quality/price relationship within the attribute *trade* are also statistically significant. The superior purchasing power of foreign tourists might be the factor that accommodation prices get better ratings by this group.

Table 3. Mann-Whitney U Test. Domestic and Foreign Tourists

Statement	Mann-Whitney U Test	Z	Asymptote Sig. (2-tailed)
There is a wide variety of places and options of cultural interest	17875.0	-1.953	0.051
The prices of visiting and participating are reasonable	12480.5	-4.212	0.000(*)
There is a wide variety of events / special festivals	10226.5	-1.880	0.060
There is a wide variety of nightlife	6886.0	-2.903	0.004
The prices of activities and events are reasonable	6855.5	-3.725	0.000
There is a wide variety of shops	18030.5	-0.776	0.438
The quality of the products in stores is good	14310.5	-2.980	0.003
The quality/ price relationship is reasonable (trade)	13033.0	-4.169	0.000
The personnel are friendly.	13392.5	-3.814	0.000

(*) Value below 0.05 indicates that the differences between groups are statistically significant.

Source: The authors.

In line with previous results, the overall satisfaction of foreign tourists is also superior to that manifested by the nationals. The difference between the evaluations of both groups is only signi-

ficant, however, when comparing the visit in relation to expectations before the trip.

As shown in Table 4, the major differences, which are also statistically significant, are detected when comparing the level of attribute satisfaction between men and women. Women are usually more satisfied with all the attributes of the tourist experience and, in particular, items that describe the attributes *accessibility* and *accommodation*. The overall satisfaction level of women is also significantly higher.

Table 4. Mann-Whitney U Test. Men and Women

	Mann-Whitney U Test	Z	Asymptote Sig. (2-tailed)
The city access is easy	17614.5	-2.070	0.038
The accesses to buildings and sites are easy	15634.0	-3.819	0.000
Mobility within the city is easy	17691.5	-1.813	0.070
The signage of buildings and places of interest is sufficient	16603.0	-2.922	0.003
There information on tourist offices is good	4379.0	-2.071	0.038
There are various accommodation options	15735.0	-2.645	0.008
The accommodation places are singular and of historical interest	13166.0	-3.335	0.001
The quality of the service is good	13173.0	-4.465	0.000
The quality/ price relationship is reasonable	14980.5	-2.206	0.027

Source: Authors.

Segmenting in terms of motivation, we distinguished between tourists who came to town motivated by its cultural attributes and those who came for other reasons, then compared those who came for religious reasons to those who did not and finally, distinguished among tourists who made the Camino de Santiago (Way of St. James pilgrimage) and those who did not. Following, some of the most outstanding results are highlighted. First, the tourists with cultural motivations are less satisfied with the variety of events and the variety of nightlife, than those who do not

come on these grounds. Nevertheless they are more convicted that the visit has turned out better than expected. Tourists who come for religious reasons have greater satisfaction with the accessibility and mobility within the city, with the variety and uniqueness of the accommodation and the variety of places of interest compared to those who do not come for this reason. At the same time, their satisfaction with the variety of nightlife, events, prices and quality of trade is lower. In addition, their conviction that the visit was better than expected is stronger. Tourists who did the Camino de Santiago are more satisfied with the accessibility and mobility within the city compared with those who did not, however satisfaction with the quality and price of accommodation is lower. This could be related to the type, quantity and characteristics of the accommodation addressed to pilgrims. Similarly, Camino walkers are less satisfied with several items of attribute gastronomy, such as service, price, and the presence of the local cuisine on the menu (see Table 5). As a possible consequence of these assessments, it is observed that the level of overall satisfaction of tourists who make the Camino is significantly lower than those who do not.

The results of segmentation based on income level (higher than 1,200 euros vs. equal or lower than that) did not show significant differences in levels of satisfaction as well as the distinction between first-time visitors and repeaters.

Table 5. Mann-Whitney U Test. Tourists Who Made the Camino and Those Who Did Not

Statement	Mann-Whitney U Test	Z	Asymptote Sig. (2-tailed)
It has a varied cuisine	15926.0	-1.873	0.061
The local cuisine stands out	15514.0	-2.144	0.032
The product quality is very good	16074.0	-1.662	0.096
The service of the restaurants is good	15387.0	-2.204	0.028
The price of meals is reasonable	14390.0	-3.107	0.002

Source: The authors.

Loyalty and Influence of the Holy Year

Given the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty, consistent with the results for the first of the variables, the research also shows a high degree of loyalty of the tourists who visited the city during 2010. It was assessed by asking if the tourists would visit the city again, if they would recommend Santiago de Compostela and Galicia to family and friends and if they would revisit both the city and the region in the future. The average assessment of the items mentioned was of 4.3 points. It is remarkable that between 87% and 90% of tourists surveyed fairly or strongly agreed with those statements, reflecting a very high tourists' loyalty with Santiago de Compostela and Galicia.

Although overall and attribute satisfaction levels are, as mentioned, slightly higher for foreign tourists compared to nationals, foreign tourist show lower loyalty. In any case, the differences are not significant. There are no significant differences in loyalty to the destination between men and women, although their levels of satisfaction are also different.

Tourists who repeat their visit to Santiago turn out to be more loyal than those who come for the first time. Those who come for cultural reasons show a higher level of loyalty than those that do not come on these grounds. However, no significant differences were detected in the loyalty of the tourists who arrived in the city motivated by the Camino de Santiago in comparison with those who did not come for that reason, nor between expressed by the tourists who came with a religious motivation and those who did not come for those reasons.

The study results allow us to qualify as moderately positive influence of the Holy Year in the tourist experience. The item most valued on average (3.71 points) was the statement that the tourist experience in the city was enriched by the atmosphere of the Holy Year. Other elements positively assessed were that the Holy Year had added a bonus to the visit and that commenting the fact of visiting Santiago de Compostela during the Holy Year with friends will add a bonus to the visit (3.57 and 3.44, respec-

tively). As expected, significant differences were found between tourists who came for religious reasons and those who did not, evaluating religious motivated tourists more positively the influence of the Holy Year in tourism experience.

CONCLUSIONS

The research results show that the level of tourist satisfaction with various attributes of Santiago de Compostela is quite high and slightly higher for foreign tourists compared to nationals. The environment and gastronomy are among the most valued attributes. Possibly related to the economic crisis, the aspect that tourists in general show a lower level of satisfaction is the price. Spanish tourists, with a lower level of income, are also less satisfied with this aspect compared to foreigners. In turn, the study confirms the positive relationship between the high satisfaction expressed by tourists in Santiago de Compostela with the various attributes of the destination and their overall satisfaction, which are also reflected in a high degree of loyalty, measured as the intention to return to visit and / or recommend the destination to others.

The sample analysis based on different segments has revealed some significant differences, generally related to satisfaction with any of the attributes of the destination. Significant differences were found between men and women, both in overall and attribute satisfaction, being higher for women, however no differences have been detected in terms of loyalty. In the case of first-time visitors and repeaters no significant differences were found in levels of satisfaction, yet another in terms of loyalty, higher in repeaters. Differences in income levels of respondents seem to have significant influence neither in satisfaction levels nor in loyalty. Tourists generally consider that their visit was enriched by coinciding with the Holy Year, however, its influence on the tourist experience has been much more positive for those who arrived in the city driven by religious motivation.

As regards the implications of these results to those responsible for the sector, data on the level of satisfaction of tourists

with different attributes of the destination, provide information for managers to adopt measures and policies needed to improve those attributes less valued and in which tourists perceive more deficiencies. In this line special attention should be paid to the care of places of interest and improve cultural and leisure offer. At the same time, the analysis of the sample under different segmentations feasible, allow the adoption of concrete measures aimed at specific segments of tourists. In general, the necessary actions should be carried out by agencies, institutions and private sector, in order to maintain the high level of tourist satisfaction with the visit and to increase their loyalty so that they would revisit the city and other destinations in the region in the future or to recommend Galicia to others. It's a matter of vital importance in Santiago de Compostela, given the role of that destination as the end point of the Way or as the main gateway to the region.

Finally, another aspect that should be taken into account is the influence of the Holy Year, since tourists consider it the plus added to their travel experience. While it is a bit far in the future thinking about the next Xacobeo 2021, the efforts should be redoubled to present a sufficiently wide tourist offer, which would enable the event to generate additional value to the visits of tourists from different segments. This plus would result in greater satisfaction, greater loyalty, more promotion, more tourists and consequently a greater economic impact for the city and the region.

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Submitted: 15th October, 2011

Final version: 28th February, 2012

Accepted: 24th April, 2012

Refereed anonymously