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Research Article

Segmentation and Perceived Value of a Tourist Destination: The Case of Dominican Republic

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Abstract

The main objective of this paper is to make an analysis of the relationships between three fundamental constructs in every tourist destination - the perceived value of the attributes of destination, satisfaction and loyalty. Taking into account the perceived value of the tourists who visit this country, three types of visitors have been identified that are considered valid and useful for segmenting the Dominican Republic as a tourist destination: a high perception tourist, a tourist average and a low perception tourist. The attributes valued by the tourists reveal that the perceptive dimension relates to the tourism services and infrastructures of a destination discriminate in a significant way in the degree of satisfaction and attitudinal loyalty declared by the visitors. The conclusions show the need to consider the perceived value of the satisfied and loyal tourist as an essential tool for the Dominican Republic to continue to grow as a tourist destination.

Keywords: Perceived value, segmentation, satisfaction, loyalty, Dominican Republic

1. Introduction

Tourism has been identified by researchers as one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world (AbbasiDorcheh, 2013) and as an economic, social and cultural activity that operates as a source of opportunities for the modernization of cities, as long as sustainable management models are developed (Caro-González et al., 2015). It is a phenomenon of great economic, social and cultural importance and for a better use of tourism in relation to development it is important to understand its volume, trends and meaning for the different developing countries (Cànoves et al., 2016). It should be added that according to the publication of the World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2015), the most popular Caribbean destinations for foreign tourists include the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Cancun, Jamaica, the Bahamas and Puerto Rico (Rettinger and Wójtowicz, 2014).

This paper seeks to establish the relationship between three determinant variables in the decision making process of tourists arriving in the Dominican Republic: perceived value, satisfaction and loyalty to the destination. The perceived value of a destination is defined as the process by which a tourist receives, selects, organizes, and interprets the information in relation to it, in order to create a meaningful image of the value of that destination (Prebensen et al., 2012). According to that, Alén and Fraiz (2006) indicate that it is not clear if service quality is a precedent or a consequence of satisfaction, for which Gómez et al. (2017) propose that there is an intermediate position in which to relate both concepts, so that they serve as a basis for the competitiveness of the tourist destination studied. In this way referring to the reasons that motivate a tourist to choose the destination for one's trip can be said that they are related to the attributes that are perceived from this one (Pulido-Fernández and Navarro, 2014) and that they are also related to aspects like age, personality, cost of travel, distance, potential risk and tourists personal motivations (Kozak, 2002), being the tourist's motivation for visiting a destination, his satisfaction with respect to the experience and his emotions as a visitor elements widely addressed by scientific literature (Anderson et al., 2009, Prayag et al., 2013, Zhang et al., 2009).

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Perceived value by tourist with respect to the destination

The perceived value is the general evaluation of the service net value, based on what the customer receives and what he gives in return (Hellier et al., 2003). With regard to tourism, perceived value is related to the personal evaluation of travel products, such as price, quality, lived emotions and social factors (Chiu et al., 2014). Prebensen (2013) defined several factors that intervene in the tourists valuation of the tourist experience, these being the quality services, the perception of the surrounding nature, other guests and tourist resources such as participation, money, time and effort, relying the value of a tourist trip on the sum of various experiences.

Several authors have studied the effects that the perceived value has on different aspects related to the tourists behaviour, such as satisfaction and behavioural intentions (Bajs, 2015) and loyalty to the destination (Gallarza and Gil, 2006). The positive influence of perceived value on satisfaction has been confirmed in different destinations (Chiu et al., 2014, Kim et al., 2015).

The quality of experience can be defined as "a constant flow of thoughts and feelings during moments of consciousness that occur through very complex psychological, sociological and cognitive interaction processes" (Kang and Gretzel, 2012: 442) and the quality of service is related to a series of attributes of this one. Both have influence on the experience and loyalty to a particular destination (Altunel and Erkut, 2015) being the intention of re-visiting a destination the most commonly used measure for tourist loyalty (Zhang et al., 2014). In the Dominican Republic, Orgaz-Agüera et al. (2016) confirmed a high valuation by tourists towards the different aspects of travel and destination, confirming the relevant relationship between these ratings of visitors and their satisfaction.

2.2 Segmentation of the sample according to the perceived value

In Social Sciences segmentation refers to the classification of the population to be studied in heterogeneous groups, but formed by homogeneous individuals within each group, with respect to a set of multiple variables (Estivill-Castro, 2002) and visitors classification from a tourist destination based on segments of individuals has become object of study in many tourist destinations (Collado et al., 2007). The results of previous studies suggest that groups of tourists can be differentiated according to their emotions, similarly to other criteria of market segmentation (Liljander and Standvik, 1997) and it is considered relevant the use of questionnaires for their measurement as these allow a direct access to the emotions with questions about real emotional experiences that fellows remember and also because verbal measures are considered as an effective and efficient method of evaluation (Alcañiz et al., 2005).

The present study aims to segment a sample of tourists arriving in the Dominican Republic based on the perceived value, taking into account the valuations they make of a series of proposed aspects related to the destination and then justify with the results a series of hypotheses based on the scientific literature. A related study is that of Ricolfe et al. (2008) who are based on a factorial analysis and a cluster analysis, group the tourists in different segments with different profiles and behaviours, depending on the valuations made with respect to the perceived tourist service. On the other hand, Meiriño et al. (2016) indicate that the global evaluation of a destination arises from a set of aspects or components of the service relevant to the consumer and also identify different segments of visitors taking into account the valuation that they make of their overall satisfaction. Another example is the contribution of Vega et al. (2015), who start from a factorial analysis to analyze the tourists' perceptions about the tourist services received, based on a Likert scale, obtaining the series of attributes about the proposed destination is an adequate instrument for its measurement, being considered as reliable the results; and Kau and Lim (2005) carried out in their study a segmentation that identifies five groups of tourists in Singapore based on a series of motivational scores, analyzing the differences between conglomerates for different objective (travel characteristics and socio demographic aspects) and subjective aspects (satisfaction and fidelity).

In another island destination, Díaz et al. (2003) make a segmentation of tourism demand, contrasting an initial hypotheses with the results obtained from a survey and conclude that the cultural determinants associated with nationality are the strongest when determining consumption patterns of tourist services. In the Dominican Republic can be found studies such as that of Orgaz-Agüera et al. (2016), who analyze tourist aspects related to the province of Puerto Plata and which are valued by tourists with a Likert scale of 5 points, finding that the variables that have a greater influence on tourist satisfaction in this destination are place reputation, gastronomy, cultural activities and shows, quality of service and authenticity, although no studies have been detected that segment the tourist population according to the perceived value of the destination. Based on the above argument, we can establish the following research hypothesis:

H_1: According to the perceived value of a particular tourist destination there are different types of tourists.

2.3 Relationship between perceived value, tourist satisfaction and loyalty to the destination

Several authors, such as Cole and Illum (2006), have investigated the relationship between service quality, quality of experience, general satisfaction and attitudes among tourists of a destination, finding that the quality of the experience contributes directly to overall visitor satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Other authors such as Meiriño et al. (2016) have studied the relationship between the variables "overall satisfaction", "intention to return to the destination" and "intention to recommend the destination", thus discriminating their sample between segments and corroborating that the groups generated differed mainly among them for their motivations, the stay characteristics, the intention to return, their satisfaction with the signalization of destiny and for the sense of security.

On the other hand, Kozak et al. (2002) found that elements such as accommodation, weather, price and beaches are factors that motivate the choice of a destination by the tourist. These

variables, among others, are proposals for their study with respect to the Dominican Republic and its relationship with tourist satisfaction, perceived value and loyalty to destiny. Previous studies carried out in this country, such as that of Jimber del Río et al. (2017) about tourism in Dajabón (Dominican Republic), confirm that there is a direct relationship between the perceived satisfaction by the visitor and his loyalty, as well as his recommendation of the tourist destination.

2.3.1 Tourist satisfaction with destination

Satisfaction can be understood as the consumer compliance response (Razavi et al., 2012), referring to an evaluation of a posteriori purchase (Sun et al., 2013). Devesa and Palacios (2004) explain that the satisfaction will depend on the expectations that the consumer-visitor has and on the valuation that makes of the product-destination once he has consumed it, being a complex concept that depends on numerous variables that affect both the consumer (personal, cultural, economic, motivational factors, previous experiences or attitudes), as well as to the product or service itself (characteristics, attributes, quality, costs, among others). Therefore, what are the push factors and forces of attraction that require tourists to choose the Dominican Republic and the way in which they want to experience the country has to be considered. The tourist satisfaction in relation to the destination generates information related to the needs that the tourists have with respect to a destination, being able to promote an improvement of the quality of the products and services that are offered and that can interest the visitor (Fang et al., 2008). Thus, it is essential to carry out an analysis of tourist satisfaction for the management of the tourist destination (Castellanos-Verdugo et al., 2016), since the greater the degree of satisfaction the greater the probability that the visitor will repeat the purchase of the product or service and to recommend the destination to his family and friends.

In reference to the tourist activity, the role that agents and managers of the destination play in order to reach the loyalty of the tourists is crucial and getting satisfied tourists must be a priority for the destiny, being that a job which corresponds to all the sector agents (Gil Et al., 2002). In the Dominican Republic, Moreno et al. (2002) detected with their investigation a high level of satisfaction on the part of the tourists, who emphasized the attention, the treatment and the facilities received. Also Orgaz-Agüera et al. (2016) concluded in their research that the degree of tourist satisfaction with their visit to the Dominican Republic was above 4 points out of 5 on a Likert scale, and that all variables analyzed in relation to destination showed a significant and positive correlation with tourist satisfaction. This review of the recent literature leads us to propose the following research hypothesis:

H_2: *Perceived value affects the satisfaction of the tourist experience, being the highest level of satisfaction among the tourists with greater perception.*

2.3.2 Loyalty of the tourist to the destination

Loyalty can be understood as the favorable attitude toward a brand or the intention to repurchase (Vargas-Sánchez, 2007), conforming itself in the field of tourism services as an indicator of the correct and successful management of the destination (Wu and Wall, 2016). Loyalty to the place can be measured by the intention of revisiting the site or recommending it positively (Kuusik et al., 2011). Some researchers have corroborated that tourists have a high propensity to be loyal, due to the intangible, heterogeneous and inseparable nature of tourism products (Campón-Cerro et al., 2016).

Tourist satisfaction and perceived value are posited as predictors of travelers' intentions to return to entertainment destinations (Petrick et al., 2001). Several studies have confirmed the positive effect that tourist satisfaction has on loyalty to a destination (Prayag and Ryan, 2012; Yoon et al., 2010), empirically demonstrating the ability that satisfaction has to predict loyalty through the consumption of products, services and the decision to return to the destination. An example is that of Moral et al. (2016) in reference to tourism on the Dominican-Haitian border, who confirmed the positive relationship between service experience and loyalty to the destination, showing how a quality experience positively influences a future intention to recommend the destination.

Thus, from the above and the contribution of Minciu et al. (2012), it can be concluded that the choice of a certain destination and additional consumption results from the provision of characteristics, motivation and image with respect to the expectations of tourists. Based on previous studies conducted in the Dominican Republic, a very positive attitude can be expected, since the Central Bank of the Dominican Republic (2016) obtained with its survey of opinion, attitude and motivation to non-resident foreigners in 2015 that 97% of them would repeat the trip. Therefore, based on previous research (Chi and Qu, 2008, Yuskel et al., 2009) we can propose the following research hypothesis:

H_3: *Tourist satisfaction is an indispensable requirement of every tourist destination for a good positioning in the market.*

3. Description of the Geographical Area

The Dominican Republic is considered a leading tourist destination in the Caribbean (Rettinger and Wójtowicz, 2014), outstripping its competitors, and it is an outstanding example of a developing country that has experienced a rapid increase in international tourism from Europe , United States and Canada (Pardavila and Navarro, 2014). The strong growth of Dominican tourism in the last decades has been accompanied by a greater dependence on its development, being currently an indispensable part of the nation's economy (Pardavila and Navarro 2014). In terms of tourism competitiveness, according to information from the World Economic Forum through the 2015 Travel and Tourism Report, the Dominican Republic ranked 84 out of 141 countries analyzed. Table 1 shows the assessments made by the World Economic Forum (2015) and the Central Bank of the Dominican Republic (2016) of different aspects related to the country of the present investigation.

Table 1. Tourist valuation studies for Dominican Republic

World Economic Forum (2015)		Central Bank of the Dominican Republic (2016)	
Indicator	Score from 1 to 7 and rank among 141 countries	Elements	Weighted average of tourists who chose it
Competitiveness in prices	4,02 (110)	Reasonable prices	7,7%
Rigor of environmental regulations	3,9 (83)	Hospitality	15,8%
Infrastructure for tourist service	4,6 (56)	Golf Courses	0,2%
Quality of roads	4,4 (53)	Tranquillity	5,0%
		Historical wealth	0,6%
Protection and security	4,3 (120)	Night life	0,8%
Health and Hygiene	4,89 (89)	Quality of beaches	29,7%
Technological preparation	3,46 (93)	Weather	18,7%
Cultural Resources and Business Travels	1,51 (78)	Natural wealth	1,8%
Sustainability of the environment	3,23 (131)		
Natural Resources	2,59 (91)		

Source: Own elaboration based on the World Economic Forum (2015) and the Central Bank of the Dominican Republic (2016)

On the other hand, it has already been mentioned that the general satisfaction of tourists is decisive as data to be taken into account in future actions and that is why the Central Bank of the Dominican Republic offers data about the opinion of tourists in respect to meet their expectations of the trip to the country in 2015. Hence 96% said they had complied with European tourists being the most satisfied. The Central Bank of the Dominican Republic (2016) concludes that most of the tourists would repeat the trip to the country, indicating that 71.3% of them would return to the same place of the country, while 18.9% said they would return to the country, but to visit another area.

Table 2. Fulfilment expectations of foreign tourist travel as tourist destination 2015

Travel Expectations	Tourist Residence						Weighted average (%)
	America			Europe	Asia	Rest of the World	
	North	Central	South				
Yes	97,8%	90,9%	86,8%	98,3%	87,5%	83,3%	96%
No	2,2%	9,1%	13,2%	1,7%	12,5%	16,7%	4 %

Source: Own elaboration based on the Central Bank of the Dominican Republic (2016)

Sun and beach tourism generates a great volume of demand in the Dominican Republic, with few complementary activities and those that exist are commercialized in the country of origin of the visitor (Orgaz-Agüera and López-Guzmán, 2015). Studies such as that of López-Guzmán et al. (2016) and Agosín et al. (2009) show that the Dominican Republic is stagnant in the "all-inclusive" package, which contributes to low margins and little spill over the local economy, since tourists hire them in the country of origin (Alegre and Pou, 2006). The tourists who demand this offer do so mainly because of the prices, convenience and relaxation and security of the spending (Anderson et al., 2009) and usually have a lower purchasing power than those who reach other destinations (Dawson et al., 2011).

4. Methodology

4.1 Data collection

The data were obtained through a questionnaire to a representative sample of foreign tourists visiting the Dominican Republic. From an initial survey and through successive purges, which included a pre-test of 15 surveys to an initial sample of tourists of similar characteristics to the final sample through which the final format was reached. The final version of the questionnaire sought the maximum clarity of the questions, the greater adjustment of the answers to achieve the objectives set in the research and the maximum possible concretion for the interview to the visitors surveyed did not consume much time. The surveys were carried out by a team of interviewers trained for the occasion linked to the Iberoamerican University of Dominican Republic, coordinated and led by the authors of this research. The tabulation of the data was done by the collaborating team using the SPSS v. 22. A total of 537 surveys were completed on different days between October 2015 and January 2016. The questionnaires were conducted in different areas of the country, on different days and at different times, to try to collect a wide range of people and situations. It has been used a non-probabilistic technical sampling, commonly used in this type of research where respondents are available to be surveyed in a given space and time (Finn, Elliott-White and Walton, 2000). It was not stratified by gender, age, education, nationality, or any other variable, since there were no previous studies to support this stratification. The rate of rejections to the questionnaire was low and not significant in function of any variable. In no case, the duration for completing the survey was more than 10 minutes.

4.2 Survey design

The survey used is based on several previous studies (Prebensen et al., 2012, Chiu et al., 2014)

and was distributed in two languages (Spanish and English). In relation to the structure of this one, it is divided into three large sections. The first section collects the questions related to the characteristics of the trip, the length of stay, the type of establishment used to spend the night or the means by which it has had knowledge about the country as a tourist destination. The second section of questions focuses on the evaluation of a series of attributes related to the visit and the level of satisfaction achieved based on the experience lived. The third section of questions includes different socio demographic characteristics of the visitors, such as age, gender, economic level or degree of education, among others.

4.3 Sampling and sampling error

The specific framework of our study is the foreign tourism that reaches the Dominican Republic. The statistics provided by the Central Bank of the Dominican Republic include the number of non-resident visitors received through different airports in the country - excluding border workers, seasonal and short-term workers, students for long periods, etc. since they cannot be described as visitors - table 3-. Although the figures do not represent the total number of foreign tourists, not every traveler has to reach the Dominican Republic by air, at least allows us to get an idea of the possible size and evolution of the international tourist demand for this country.

Table 3: Tourism evolution in Dominican Republic

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total airport arrivals Dominican Republic						
Nationals	603.433	603.434	638.913	625.016	676.734	766.903
Foreign	3.521.110	3.702.997	3.923.693	4.064.754	4.464.643	4.832.956
Total travellers	**4.124.543**	**4.306.431**	**4.562.606**	**4.689.770**	**5.141.377**	**5.599.859**

Source: Own elaboration based on the Central Bank of the Dominican Republic (2016)

Taking as a reference the statistics of arrivals of foreigners to the international airports of the country can be inferred that the universe of study is 5,141,377 visitors. Taking this figure as reference, the sampling error for a 95% confidence level would be ± 2.02%. Table 4 presents the research data sheet.

Table 4: Research sheet

Total number of annual visitors (2014)	5.141.377 visitors
Sample	537 questionnaires
Process	Convenience Sampling
Period of realization	October 2015 to January 2016
Sample error	± 4,23 %
Confidence level	95,0%; p = q = 0,5
Control of the sample	Performing and supervising the work by the authors of the research

Source: Own elaboration

4.4 Data analysis

The data, results and conclusions presented in this paper refer to the part of the questionnaire that refers to the perceived value of certain attributes of the Dominican Republic as a tourist destination, the degree of satisfaction with the experience of the visit and the attitudinal loyalty - intention to return to visit it -. The tabulation and statistical analysis of the data was performed using the SPSS v. 22. Various statistical techniques have been used in the investigation. In this sense, statisticians have been used to assess the reliability and validity of the questionnaire responses (Cronbach's

alpha). Taking as a reference different attributes dimensions, the multivariate technique of clustering of cases (K-media conglomerates) has been applied with the objective of analyzing the similarity between the respondents. From the groups or segments of the K-means analysis have been used statistics that provide information necessary to study the possible association patterns between variables from a two-dimensional contingency table. Likewise, procedures have been applied to perform hypothesis tests on means from the analysis of variance (univariate ANOVA post hoc), allowing to determine which mean in concrete differs and to control the error rate.

5. Results of Research and Discussion

5.1 Perceived value

In the survey of this research was incorporated a question with different items that tried to collect the valuation of certain tourist attributes of Dominican Republic. After a pretest, a total of 16 items, measured on a Likert scale of 5 points (1, not important, and 5, very important) were selected to determine the perception of a series of attributes of the tourist destination - **table 5**-. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the final scale reaches a value of 0.930, which indicates a meritorious internal consistency between the elements of the scale. This coefficient reaches positive values between 0 and 1, where a zero indicates total absence of internal consistency and one indicates the total redundancy between the items. Morales et al. (2003) consider at least a value of 0.5 if it is a basic investigation and about 0.85 if it is a diagnostic investigation. The critical level (p) associated with the F statistic (158,112) of the analysis of variance to test the null hypothesis that all the elements of the scale have the same mean (ANOVA) is less than 0.001 and it is not possible to maintain the hypothesis that means of the elements are equal.

From the attributes provided in **table 5**, a grouping of the same has been realized in three perceptive dimensions that have been denominated: tourist services, natural resources and infrastructures. The analysis provides an indicator of the importance that travelers give to the different attributes of the Dominican Republic as a tourist destination. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the three perceptual dimensions reveals the reliability of the subscales.

Table 5: Perceived value tourist related to the Dominican Republic attributes

Touristic Attributes	Statistics			Perceptive Dimensions
	N	Mean	T. D.	
Accommodation	491	3,92	0,81	**Touristic Services**
Food	486	3,89	0,81	
Commercial Areas	481	3,24	1,14	
Catering	485	3,10	1,40	Cronbach alpha (0,803)
Cultural Activities	479	3,06	1,30	
Sun and Beach	499	4,33	0,89	**Natural Resources**
Flora and fauna	474	3,34	1,47	
Trekking	445	2,97	1,41	
Ecology	482	2,84	1,41	Cronbach alpha (0,880)
Environmental conservation	492	2,73	1,36	
Telecommunications	481	3,52	0,91	**Infrastructures**
Communications	488	3,28	1,01	
Security	486	2,82	1,26	
Information	489	2,67	1,28	Cronbach alpha (0,866)
Cleanliness	497	2,58	1,31	

Source: Own elaboration

5.2 Segmentation of tourists

The study of motivations provides a basis for establishing a segmentation of tourists arriving in the

Dominican Republic. Thus, a non-hierarchical cluster analysis was performed with the means of the items that integrate the three dimensions, under the criterion of maximizing the variance between typologies and minimizing the variance within each of them. The best solution that meets the criteria is the one that establishes three clusters to segment the tourists who visit the country. **Table 6** shows the cluster characterization from the means of the three perceptual dimensions. The F statistic of the ANOVA allows us to confirm that the averages compared are not the same, but it does not allow to specify where the detected differences are found. To determine which medium differs, a particular type of contrast called post hoc comparisons or a posteriori comparisons has been applied. In making the comparisons it cannot be assumed that the population variances are equal, the critical level associated with the Levene statistic is less than 0.05 in two of the dimensions and, therefore, the equality of variances is rejected. The ANOVA F statistic is based on the fulfillment of two assumptions: normality and homoscedasticity, and since it is not possible to assume that the population variances are equal, the Welch statistic is used as an alternative to the ANOVA F statistic (**table 7**). If the critical level associated to this statistic is less than 0.05, the assumption of equality of means can be rejected and we can conclude that the averages of the motivational variables of the three clusters compared are not equal.

The first cluster is composed of 27.6% of the respondents, being this the segment that records significant low registers in the three perceptual dimensions. For this reason, this segment has been called *tourist of low perception*. The second cluster, which includes 50.0% of the sample, is characterized by scoring intermediate scores in all three dimensions. This segment has been identified as a *medium-perception tourist*. The third cluster is the group that records the highest records. This is the smallest segment, representing 22.4% of the sample size, and could correspond to a *tourist of high perception*. The obtained segmentation allows contrasting the hypothesis of investigation raised: attending to the perceived value of a certain tourist destination there are different typologies of tourists (H_1).

Table 6: Characterization of clusters based on average perceptual dimensions

Perceptual Dimensions	Cluster of membership			ANOVA	
	Low	Medium	High	F	Sig.
Services	2,50[*]	3,53[*]	4,45[*]	489,399	< 0,001
Natural Resources	1,79[*]	3,53[*]	4,53[*]	1.299,226	< 0,001
Infrastructures	1,95[*]	2,97[*]	4,28[*]	764,525	< 0,001
[*]The values in bold show significant differences in two of the means of the three conglomerates in post-hoc analysis of ANOVA. The Games-Howell and Scheffé test were used to test the significant differences between the different means, depending on the case.					

Source: Own elaboration

Table 7: Robust tests homogeneity of variances and mean equality (perceptual dimensions)

Perceptual Dimensions	Homogeneity Variances (Levene)		Means of equality (Welch)	
Services	1,614	< 0,200	-----	-----
Natural Resources	9,072	< 0,001	1.547,796	< 0,001
Infrastructures	19,083	< 0,001	660,572	< 0,001

Source: Own elaboration

5.3 Segmentation of tourists and satisfaction with the visit

The satisfaction declared by the visitors after their tourist experience in the Dominican Republic is high - this was measured on a scale of 1 to 5, being 1, strongly disagree; and 5, strongly agree, starting from a single items related to the lived experience -. The results show that 90% of visitors were very satisfied - scores> = 4 -. Based on the fact that the visitors were happy in relation to their

experience, this important aspect is deepened by analyzing what relationship could exist with the perceived value of the destination, since this is fundamental for good management and tourism planning. The objective is to determine which perceptual dimensions affect the satisfaction that the visitor experiences when visiting this destination - **table 8** -. The correlation index, although not very high, reveals that the higher the perceived value in relation to attributes linked to tourism services and infrastructure, higher the level of satisfaction is declared. On the other hand, the dimension related to natural resources seems to have no impact on satisfaction.

Table 8: Differences degree of satisfaction and perceptual dimensions

Motivational Dimensions	ANOVA		Pearson's Correlation
	F	Sig.	
Services	3,134	< 0,001	0,12[**]
Natural Resources	4,029	< 0,001	0,02[**]
Infrastructures	3,183	< 0,001	0,12[**]

Source: Own elaboration

From the segmentation made, it is necessary to analyze the relationships that the groups or conglomerates identified could have with the satisfaction experienced. The results show a positive assessment by the three identified tourist clusters - **table 9** -. The valuation is significant different and smaller in the cluster with a lower perception, the satisfaction for the trip seems to increase as the perceived value of the destination is greater. In this case, the Levene statistic does not allow the assumption that the population variances are equal - **table 10** -, returning to the Welch statistic to validate that the averages of the items related to the satisfaction variable of the three conglomerates compared are not equal.

Table 9: Clusters characterization from the means of variable satisfaction

Satisfaction of the tourist experience	Cluster of membership			ANOVA		Mean
	Low	Medium	High	F	Sig.	
Degree of overall satisfaction	**4,04**[*]	4,45	4,58	34,901	< 0,001	4,27
(*)The values in bold show significant differences in two of the means of the three conglomerates in post-hoc analysis of ANOVA. In order to be able to contrast the significant differences between the different means, the Games-Howell test was applied.						

Source: Own elaboration

The results show that the tourists make a significant evaluation different from the lived experience as they are more or less related the perceived value of the destination and with this the research hypotheses are confirmed: the perceived value affects the satisfaction of the tourist experience, being the highest level of satisfaction among tourists with higher perception (**H₂**). This conclusion has a clear management implication for tourism companies and for the public sector of the country, initiatives aimed at increasing visitor satisfaction must start from an analysis of the perception that the tourist makes on the destination to influence the presence and correct delivery of the tourist product.

Table 10: Robust tests homogeneity variances and mean equality (satisfaction)

Satisfaction of tourist experiences	Homogeneity Variances (Levene)		Means of equality (Welch)	
Degree of overall satisfaction	15,471	< 0,001	37,106	< 0,001

Source: Own elaboration

5.4   Motivation and loyalty to the tourist destination

The interest of the satisfaction analysis derives from the relation that this variable keeps with other related concepts as it is the case of the loyalty. This can be defined as the visitor commitment to the tourist destination and is manifested through its intention to return to visit in the future and to recommend it to family, friends and/or acquaintances - loyalty attitude-. For this, an item was added to the questionnaire that measured the intention to return to the destination. In line with the stated satisfaction, the results show a high degree of loyalty of visitors to the Dominican Republic as a tourist destination. Hence 95% of the respondents said that after their current experience they would return in the future. The results again show that the attributes related to tourist services and infrastructures discriminate significantly in terms of the degree of declared loyalty - **table 11** -, the greater its presence the greater the degree of loyalty declared by the visitors.

Table 11: Differences degree of declared average loyalty and motivational dimensions

Motivational Dimensions	ANOVA		Pearson's Correlation
	F	Sig.	
Services	1,984	< 0,001	0,12[(**)]
Natural Resources	1,932	< 0,002	0,00[(**)]
Infrastructures	1,234	< 0,179	0,12[(**)]

Source: Own elaboration

As with satisfaction, the level of attitudinal loyalty is lower in the group of tourists with low perception, this allows to show evidence that tourist satisfaction is an indispensable requirement to improve the positioning in the market of every tourist destination (Chi and Qu, 2008; Yuksel et al., 2009) (**H$_3$**).

6.   Conclusions, Limitations and Future Lines of Research

The results of the study, besides providing a view of the analyzed variables, provide information about the type of visitor who travels to Dominican Republic from the perspective of the perceived value of this tourist destination. From the point of view of perceived value, the foreign tourist who visits the country values the tourism services offered and to a lesser extent the natural resources. Regarding the variable satisfaction, the results indicate that the visitors indicate that they enjoyed their stay in the country, in addition to expressing a high satisfaction with their experience. Likewise, it is evident that the visitors make a significant valuation different from the experience lived according to the greater or less perceived value of the tourist destination. This fact has a clear implication of management for tourism companies and the public sector of the country. Initiatives aimed at increasing visitor satisfaction should be based on an analysis of the perception of the tourist on the destination to influence the presence and correct delivery of the tourist product. Public Administrations, companies, tourism professionals and even the receiving population must make a coordinated effort and assume each of them their responsibility in the satisfaction of the tourist, an essential element of the success of any destination.

Regarding to the variable loyalty, the results reveal that almost all visitors will try to repeat the experience in the future. This information can be useful for the economic growth of the country, where tourism is the main source of activity and generation of income.

The present study makes an analysis of the perception, valuation and satisfaction of the tourist in the Dominican Republic, reason why it centers the attention forum in the tourist demand of the country. As the main limitation of the study we can point out the lack of information on the tourist offer in the country, this would allow us to verify the existence of a lack of adaptation between the demand and the tourism offers in the Dominican Republic. Therefore, as future lines of research, we consider that it would be necessary to carry out a study on the tourist response that the country makes on the demands of the demanding. As well as making a comparative analysis

between the results extracted in this research with other studies focusing on countries with similar tourist characteristics.

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