

ANOTHER LOOK AT FACTORS DETERMINING TOURISTS' SATISFACTION: DESTINATION KNOWLEDGE AND VACATIONAL ACTIVITIES

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Abstract

In this paper we analyze the factors affecting perceived satisfaction of foreign tourists visiting the Spanish Mediterranean coast through the years 2004-2009. In doing so, we explore the relationship between their declared overall satisfaction levels, the tourist profile and the features of the trip. Our main objective is to take stock of the role played by the sum of experiences characterizing tourism in defining individuals' perception of the travel. In running the econometric exercise we apply an ordered logit model to a data set of more than 120,000 visitors arriving at these destinations. Results of the investigation show the relevance of tourists' knowledge of the destination, country of origin and the type of activities developed in explaining the bulk of the satisfaction during their stays. All of these results are of great importance in fostering destinations' revenue and sustainability, and can easily be transferred to other coastal world destinations.

Keywords: tourist satisfaction, ordered logit model, destination knowledge, trip activities.

JEL classification: L83, C35.

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1. Introduction

The tourism sector has become one of the main wealth generating activities in the world economy. At the beginning of the 21st century, this sector accounts yet for more than 10% of the world GDP (World Travel and Tourism Council). Moreover, the Mediterranean coast is one of the world's leading markets for sun and sand tourism in recent times. Forecast studies carried out by WTO estimate that international tourist arrivals to the Mediterranean coast will amount to 346 millions in 2020 (in 2000 around 200 million foreign visitors per year). Inside this geographical area, Spain is the second country in the world in terms of tourism revenues (61.628 million of USD in 2008), just beside the USA. France has the third position with (55.600 million in the same year). As well Spain is occupying the third position in terms of total tourist arrivals, in 2010 received a total of 52.7 million international tourists, a 1% increase in a compare of 2009. This allows us to consider 2010 as the year of the tourism recovery, since it breaks with two consecutive years of decline, reaching number of arrivals higher than in 2004. This has been possible in a context of economic crisis and selected international externalities affecting the Spanish tourist activity, as Icelandic volcano ashes in the first part of year, forced to cancel many flights, the conflict of drivers, which reached its peak in December and weather inclement that have forced even the closure of certain European airports during the month of December. (IET, Balance del turismo año 2010). Tourism activities have become an important source of wealth for the national economy, providing more than 11 per cent of total GDP and employment compared to the slightly percentage in the EU aggregate (UNWTO, 2009). As one should expect, Southern EU

countries, particularly those in the Mediterranean, show a similar development of their tourism sector in comparison.

As we have shown, tourism activities are increasingly important in driving Southern European countries and, of course, in Spain. Nowadays, tourism activities spill over all around the globe. Several products are yet well established and consolidated as sun and sand supply, but others are now configuring new growth experiences in cities (cultural, urban, gastronomic, etc.), country-side destinations (hunting, nature, birds sight, etc.), and other locations, increasingly attracting the attention of private and public agents as a source of welfare for their societies (Lim, 1997). Unlike most other products, a tourist destination is a mixture of products and experiences that combine to create a unique experience (Murphy, Pritchard, & Smith, 2000). Given the relevance of such product in generating wealth and welfare, competition is becoming increasingly strong in this sector of the economy. Destinations compete in terms of improving their supplies, providing better infrastructures for the visitors and developing new sensations for the tourist. Therefore, at this point, information on main advantages characterizing our destination is a key point for both public and private agents belonging to the sector. Sustainability of the product, and on a wider basis for the entire supply, depends on a correct management of such destination's assets.

Tourism is an activity comprising supply and demand characteristics as every market activity. Supply-side destination studies comprise the analysis of different aspects, such as the development of infrastructures, natural advantages, existence of different tourist products that even complement each other, then making the destination increasingly attractive for the visitor. Demand-side studies increasingly include the use of detailed data sets containing more and more characteristics linked to the tourist profile. Those can be quantitative ones, as their age, marital status, sex, etc., but qualitative ones are becoming the most important in this type

of studies. These features of the visitor allow the researcher to observe important aspects of the individual that finally determine their holiday choices.

This paper then is directed to start a research line for the Spanish Mediterranean destinations following such demand-side approach. Given the ambitious character of the investigation, we will focus in this study on characterizing the main profiles of tourists visiting such sun and sand destinations, together with observing the existence of some differences between defined groups of tourists, according to their individual profiles and visiting destinations.

In this paper we are going to start by focusing on the psychological variables of tourists that affect their satisfaction when they are traveling around the Spanish Mediterranean coast. This study explores the relationship between the perceived overall satisfaction levels and the tourist profile features, together with the features of the trip. Our main objective is to take a stock of the subjective features of tourism, given its relevance for destinations' revenue and sustainability.

The remainder of the study is organized as follows. The first part includes a wide description of the data set to be employed in the present study. In the second part, the profile of the tourists who come to visit The Mediterranean coast including the Balearic Islands during the years 2004-2009 is estimated (origin, age, income level, the length of stay, accommodation type etc.). In the third part, a microeconomic ordered logit model is carried out among overall satisfaction as the dependent variable with the explanatory variables, and then, we will identify the most important segments of tourists and see whether there are significant statistical differences between the segments of tourists identified and their overall declared satisfaction, given the destination they visit or the differences between their own individual characteristics. Finally, the last part includes the conclusions of the investigation and point to the natural future research extensions of this study.

2. Literature review

The literature about the satisfaction states that it is possible that the answers given by the tourists concerning the destination may be influenced by the consumers' characteristics (Pizam and Ellis, 1999; Yu and Golden, 2006). More complex models have the advantage of allowing a better understanding of tourist behavior since more variables and their interactions can be taken into account. However, for more effective marketing interventions it is important to assess whether the destinations also consider the tourist's personal characteristics (Woodside and Lysonski, 1989; Um and Crompton, 1990). In fact, despite the use of more comprehensive models, so far, they have left unspecified the main personal characteristics (socio-demographic and motivational) of the more potentially loyal and satisfied tourists, with these type of variables just recently being included in marketing and consumers studies of tourism destinations.

Recent contributions of the literature build on a new approach for assessing both the positive and negative features of a destination from a comprehensive approach (Alegre, 2003). All of them recommend developing qualitative measures of tourism locations by conducting surveys on tourist perceptions capturing their revealed satisfactions. Overall satisfaction is the extent of overall pleasure or contentment left by the visitor, resulting from the ability of the trip experience to fulfill the visitor's desires, expectations and needs in relation to the trip. (Ching-Fu Chen, DungChun Tsai, 2006) Although tourist satisfaction is a personal judgment, it does provide crucial direct information about a destination's performance (Zairi, 1996; Kozak, 2004).

This matter can be especially important when different destinations are compared, because for example, a higher proportion of tourists of a certain nationality in a specific destination can cause the average opinion of a destination to be bias. In their conclusions,

Dwyer et al. (2004) point to the need to obtain measurements of competitiveness that incorporate the tourists' point of view. Following Kozak and Rimmington (2000), in this study, tourist assessments were considered to be a valid instrument for measuring competitiveness. These assessments not only include an overall assessment of the holiday, but their opinion of the destinations' different attributes or characteristics. Information can also be compiled about the tourists' socio-demographic characteristics and their motivations. Firstly, overall satisfaction with a holiday is only partly the result of a destination's good performance or a positive assessment of its different attributes. Ryan and Cessford (2003) emphasize that overall satisfaction can be high even if different aspects of the service do not come up to the tourist's expectations. Secondly, given tourists' strong personal involvement in the holiday experience, the satisfaction ratings tend to present a certain asymmetry. This asymmetry can occur to a lesser extent when the destination's specific attributes are assessed. However, in the survey that was conducted by Alegre and Garau (2010), this asymmetry occurred for most of the attributes and so it cannot be guaranteed that this effect was not also transferred to the weighted indices. On other occasions, the variables are difficult to measure due to the strong personal involvement that the consumption of tourist products entails.

A first conclusion from these studies is that there is a wide range of socio-demographic variables and other resources that have a significant and consistent correlation with the subjective satisfaction expressed by the individuals themselves (Krueger and Schkade (2007)).

3. The data set

One of the strongest points of this study is a huge database that we dispose of. The study has been based on the Tourism Expenditure Survey, EGATUR onwards, surveyed by

the Spanish Institute of Tourism Studies or IET that is the statutory body in charge of researching the factors that impact on tourism and the development, and in charge of the preparation, compilation and assessment of statistics, information and data relating to tourism.

Several filters were applied to the data set. The sample that was finally used comprised a total of 124 410 observations, it means foreign tourists visiting the Spanish Mediterranean coast (including Catalonia, Valencia, Murcia region, Andalusia and Balearic Islands) and participating in leisure holidays through the years 2004-2009 compiling information on socio-demographic profiles of visitors and features of the trip, among others.

We then exploit such rich data by employing a combination of software: Excel 2007 and STATA 11.1. The first one allows us to deurate the data set, while the second one is of great help in conducting the statistics of the study. So, data analysis was performed in STATA, while Excel was used to store data and generate reports and tables. The cross-sectional surveys is used, tourists are different each year. The sample means are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 *Sample descriptive statistics*

	Variable	Mean	S.D.
<i>Dependent variable</i>			
Overall satisfaction	OSAT(0-10)	8,460	1,120
	OSAT (0,1,2)	1,420	0,560
<i>Independent variables</i>			
sex	man	0,650	0,480
	woman	0,350	0,480
age	less24	0,080	0,270
	bt2544	0,460	0,500
	bt4564	0,360	0,480
	more65	0,100	0,300
studies	prim	0,090	0,290
	sec	0,420	0,490
	sup	0,480	0,500
occupation	occup	0,800	0,400

	retir	0,140	0,340
	njob	0,010	0,080
	stud	0,060	0,230
income	low	0,060	0,230
	medium	0,670	0,470
	high	0,280	0,450
company	alone	0,150	0,360
	couple	0,500	0,500
	family	0,230	0,420
	friends	0,120	0,320
origin	france	0,210	0,410
	benelux	0,100	0,310
	great_brit	0,350	0,480
	germany	0,130	0,330
	italy	0,070	0,260
	r_eu	0,090	0,290
	america	0,040	0,190
	r_world	0,010	0,110
pvisits	pv_0	0,160	0,360
	pv1_3	0,210	0,400
	pv4_9	0,230	0,420
	p_10	0,410	0,490
stay	sstay (1-3)	0,160	0,370
	mstay(4-6)	0,270	0,440
	lstay (+7)	0,570	0,500
activities	sport	0,140	0,340
	culture	0,620	0,490
	gastronomy	0,940	0,240
	amenities	0,360	0,480
	d_trips	0,420	0,490
	fam_visits	0,130	0,340
destination	andalusia	0,210	0,410
	balearic	0,150	0,360
	catalonia	0,440	0,500
	valencia	0,180	0,380
	murcia	0,020	0,150
year	y2004	0,140	0,340
	y2005	0,170	0,370
	y2006	0,180	0,380
	y2007	0,210	0,410
	y2008	0,210	0,410
	y2009	0,110	0,310
accommodation	hot	0,490	0,500

	pr_fam	0,350	0,480
	rent	0,080	0,280
	cam_o	0,080	0,270
transport	flights	0,730	0,440
	ocar	0,260	0,440
	rcar	0,010	0,080
	other	0,000	0,060
Observations	124.410		

A first look at our results reveals that foreign tourists arriving to Spanish Mediterranean coast come mainly from the United Kingdom, France and Germany. The total number of visitors from Europe is about 95%. Among male tourists, those aged 25-44 years account for the largest share. The greatest share of the tourists most commonly travel with their couples and families. Tourists have superior education and they are occupied with an average income. Catalonia and Andalusia are visited by at least two quarter of all travelers to the Mediterranean. While Catalonia has nearly doubled the number visiting Andalusia, it reflects the pattern of international flights servicing Spain, most of which use Barcelona as a gateway. Travelling by air services, such as regular flight or charter, is the most frequently used option. The means of transport to travel to Spain is closely related to the distance to the destination. If the data are analyzed by country of origin, it is seen how this behavior is similar for practically all countries, because, in at least seven out of ten arrivals, flying is the most used travel to Spain. Only from France and Portugal, bordering countries, the car is used more than the aero plane (IET, Informe anual 2010). International visitors predominantly choose hotels as their type of accommodation followed by stay in their proprietary or places of their relatives. Another feature of the tourist profile is the high degree of loyalty of those who visit these areas. It should be noted that the majority has already visited Spain before, and a very high percentage, 41%, have been to Spain ten times or more than ten. The annual frequency of such travel is not very high, it means less than once a year. International visitors

participate in a wide range of attractions and activities while in the Spanish Mediterranean coast. We decided to create five main groups, each one including other type of activities. The groups defined are sport (golf, snow, sailing, other water sports, hunting, hiking, adventure sports), culture, gastronomy, amenities (spa, theme parks, casinos, clubs and discos), day trips and family visits. Clearly the strongest position obtain culture activities and gastronomy. Generic activities such as land-based sightseeing, culture performances and scenic/natural attractions are the most popular. These are followed by gastronomy, including gastronomical activities, bars and cafes. The majority of the travelers are highly satisfied with their trip.

4. Econometric issues

The need to deepen the study of tourist satisfaction suggests the hypothesis of work on whether there are significant differences in the profiles and reviews these tourists make. The null hypothesis proposes the existence of homogeneity, no significant differences with respect to a particular variable to study (in our case it is the satisfaction), among groups or segments defined by explanatory variables. We will try to find out if the rating varies depending on the characteristics of the tourist profile studied and features of the trip. The aim of this part of the study is to statistically specify the veracity of this hypothesis, providing new evidence for the realization of strategies that improve the satisfaction of tourists visiting these destinations.

Research hypothesis:

H1: *The socio-demographic profile* of the tourists does not influence their overall satisfaction.

H2: *Travel experience* with the destination doesn't influence overall satisfaction.

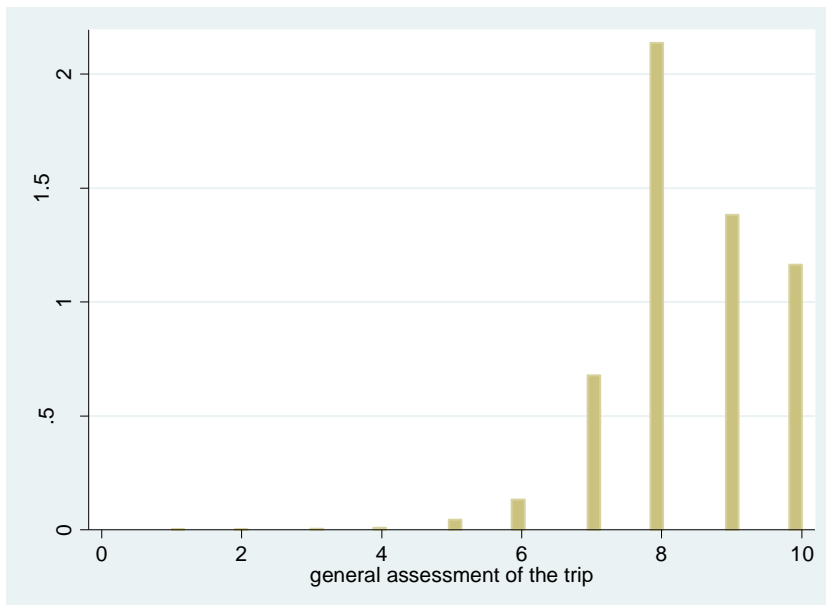
H3: *The length of stay* in the destination doesn't influence overall satisfaction.

H2: *Accommodation* of the tourists does not influence overall satisfaction.

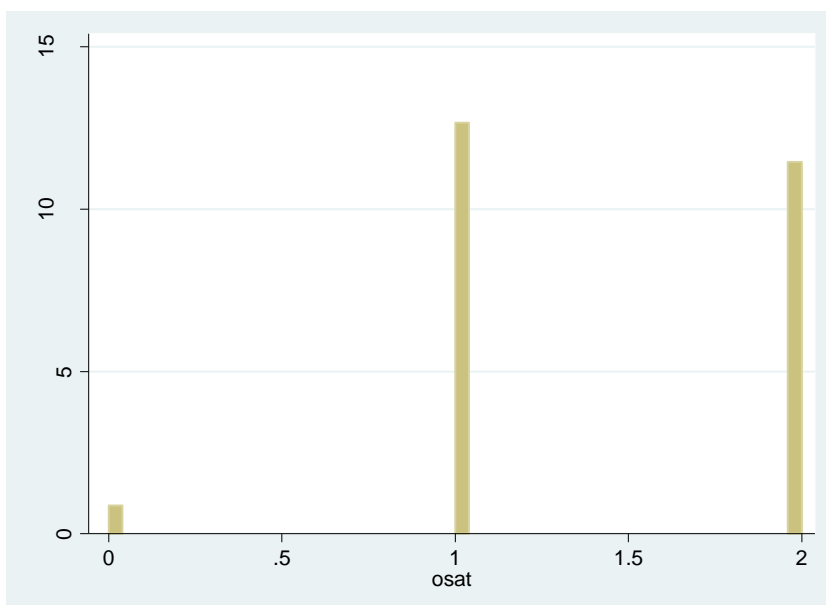
H5: *The activities developed during the travel don't influence overall satisfaction.*

The dependent variable is the degree of satisfaction of tourists with their journey. Satisfaction was assessed at 10 intervals in the survey and turned it into 3 intervals to avoid too few cases in some intervals. In the survey, the satisfaction takes one of the following three categories: dissatisfied (Y=0), average (Y=1) and satisfied (Y=2).

Graph 1 *Distribution of the raw overall satisfaction*



Graph 2 *Distribution of the codified overall satisfaction*



Given the categorical and ordinal nature of the dependent variable (the degree of satisfaction with the trip), the estimation method we apply is an ordered logit. This method considers only the orders in the degree of satisfaction but no cardinal differences in that satisfaction. In our case the level of satisfaction takes values between 0 (dissatisfied) to 2 (satisfied).

To explain the level of satisfaction of tourists has come to a wide range of explanatory variables [Layard (2005)]. All our explanatory variables are recoded into dummy variables that take the values of only 0 or 1. The analysis presented below is done by grouping these variables into two broad categories. On one side are analyzed might be called general variables that includes socio-demographic variables such as sex, age, studies, occupation, income and origin and a second group include a number of variables we call variables of the features of the trip such as company, travel experience, length of stay, accommodation, kind of transport and realized activities. Control variables are considered destination visited and year of the visit. The selection of these variables was performed taking into account the information contained in the survey that we use as reference database. Our reference category is man, between 25-44 years old, from United Kingdom, with education superior and medium income level, traveling with his couple, have been visited Spain more than ten times, length of stay more than seven days, stay in hotel, travel by plain, enjoy Spanish gastronomy and came to Catalonia in 2007.

This first approach to the topic, will lead us to analyze overall satisfaction, because our database limitations. EGATUR database we employ along the whole study just includes one general question regarding tourists satisfaction level, the one is going to be used and compared with other tourists and features of the trip. In future researches we will employ new emerging databases from IET as for example HABITUR, one data set that involves richer information on tourists' psychological attitudes regarding different attributes of the destinations visited. Unfortunately, in the moment of carrying out this investigation, we have

not such data available. Estimation of the tourist satisfaction will then be our research line now and in the future, the one we are going to pursue in further works, which first step is the one we present in this paper.

We were limited by the information available in the surveys used in our analysis; we cannot include all relevant variables in the face of the satisfaction of individuals. Given this circumstance, we must consider the possibility of overestimation of the effects of the variables included, to add the effect of other variables correlated but not included [for a more comprehensive overview, see Argyle (1999) and Frey and Stutzer (2002b)]

Another limitation of the analysis is derived from the data used as a transverse. Cross-sectional data do not allow us to control the dynamic effects of variables such as adaptation to new circumstances [Brickman and Cambell (1971)] or delayed effects.

5. Results for the Spanish Mediterranean coast

The empirical analysis is performed in blocks. In the first part, we study the impact of socio-demographic variables on the satisfaction of tourists. A second block of variables includes the feeling of the importance of the features of the trip as the travel experience, the length of stay, activities realized during the trip, accommodation, the relevant year (years 2004-2009), the incidence of the destinations (Catalonia, Valencia, Murcia, Andalusia, the Balearic Islands), and so on.

5.1 Full sample of explanatory variables

In the first category of variables are analyzed the relationship with the overall satisfaction with a wide range of socio-demographic variables and the variables of the features of the trip, that show a rejection of the null hypothesis of equality in the overall assessment by

the same. Last three columns present the marginal effects calculated after ordered logit regression for all explanatory variables (except the reference category) is done. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Ordered logit model and marginal effects for outcomes 0, 1, and 2

	VARIABLES	full	z	0	1	2
sex	woman	0.193***	[0.0127]	-0,006	-0,042	0,048
age	less24	-0.0287	[0.0289]	0,001	0,006	-0,007
	bt4564	0.0215	[0.0142]	-0,001	-0,005	0,005
	more65	0.167***	[0.0291]	-0,005	-0,037	0,042
studies	prim	-0.312***	[0.0229]	0,011	0,065	-0,076
	sec	-0.251***	[0.0129]	0,008	0,054	-0,062
occupation	retir	0.0135	[0.0241]	0,000	-0,003	0,003
	njob	-0.116	[0.0744]	0,004	0,025	-0,029
	stud	0.131***	[0.0335]	-0,004	-0,029	0,033
income	low	-0.162***	[0.0276]	0,005	0,035	-0,040
	high	0.0719***	[0.0142]	-0,002	-0,016	0,018
company	alone	-0.0661***	[0.0183]	0,002	0,014	-0,016
	family	0.124***	[0.0153]	-0,004	-0,027	0,031
	friends	0.167***	[0.0201]	-0,005	-0,037	0,042
origin	france	-0.465***	[0.0213]	0,016	0,097	-0,113
	benelux	-0.358***	[0.0213]	0,012	0,075	-0,087
	germany	-0.217***	[0.0194]	0,007	0,046	-0,053
	italy	-0.187***	[0.0250]	0,006	0,040	-0,046
	r_eu	-0.171***	[0.0222]	0,006	0,036	-0,042
	america	0.262***	[0.0344]	-0,007	-0,058	0,065
	r_world	-0.100*	[0.0563]	0,003	0,022	-0,025
pvisits	pv_0	-0.178***	[0.0205]	0,006	0,038	-0,044
	pv1_3	-0.146***	[0.0181]	0,005	0,031	-0,036
	pv4_9	-0.188***	[0.0163]	0,006	0,040	-0,046
stay	sstay	-0.276***	[0.0184]	0,009	0,058	-0,068
	mstay	-0.0826***	[0.0148]	0,003	0,018	-0,020
activities	sport	0.162***	[0.0179]	-0,005	-0,036	0,040
	culture	0.0902***	[0.0134]	-0,003	-0,020	0,022
	amenities	0.109***	[0.0129]	-0,003	-0,024	0,027
	d_trips	-0.00357	[0.0127]	0,000	0,001	-0,001
	fam_visits	0.125***	[0.0191]	-0,004	-0,027	0,031
destination	andalusia	-0.211***	[0.0180]	0,007	0,045	-0,052
	balearic	-0.00552	[0.0210]	0,000	0,001	-0,001
	valencia	0.591***	[0.0192]	-0,015	-0,132	0,147

	murcia	0.173***	[0.0428]	-0,005	-0,038	0,043
year	y2004	-0.218***	[0.0207]	0,007	0,046	-0,054
	y2005	-0.237***	[0.0188]	0,008	0,051	-0,058
	y2006	-0.203***	[0.0185]	0,007	0,043	-0,050
	y2008	-0.0929***	[0.0178]	0,003	0,020	-0,023
	y2009	-0.0300	[0.0221]	0,001	0,007	-0,007
accommodation	pr_fam	0.142***	[0.0162]	0,001	-0,031	0,035
	rent	0.113***	[0.0226]	-0,003	-0,025	0,028
	cam_o	0.0809***	[0.0239]	-0,002	-0,018	0,020
transport	ocar	-0.219***	[0.0208]	0,007	0,047	-0,054
	rcar	0.231***	[0.0724]	-0,006	-0,051	0,058
	other	-0.167	[0.109]	0,005	0,036	-0,041
	Constant	-3.692***	[0.0327]			
	Constant	-0.0880***	[0.0291]			
	Observations	124402				
	Log Pseudolikelihood	-98073,644				
	AIC	196243.3				
	BIC	196710.4				
	Prob > chi2	0.0000				

*Robust standard errors in brackets ***p<0.01, ** p<0.05, *p<0.1*

According to available studies the differences between men and women are very small [Theodossiou (1998) and Gerdtham and Johannesson (2001)]. The results for Spain are consistent with the above; the fact of being woman slightly increases the probability of answering that she is satisfied (level 2), reduce the probability of assessing worse and reduce a bit less the probability of assessing bad.

Young people are much less satisfied than the tourists of more than 65 years. The probability of answering “satisfied” increases with age and the same thing happen with the primary and secondary studies with respect to the education superior. Higher level of education means decrease of dissatisfaction

On the other hand there are no differences due to occupation in regard to subjective satisfaction of retired people and people without job. But the fact of being student increases

the probability of answering that he is “satisfied” and decreases the probability of answering that he is unsatisfied with respect to the reference category occupied.

Overall satisfaction increases with income (at a decreasing rate). People with low income level have probability to assign their satisfaction as “bad” with respect to the reference category medium income level.

Overall satisfaction is positively related with the length of stay. Longer stay tends to make people more satisfied, as well as higher number of previous visits to the destination. Although it’s curious that the group of 4-9 previous visits tends to show more probability to be worse assessed than the group of the first visit, but the difference is really small. On the other side, people that have been visited the Spanish Mediterranean more than ten times are the most satisfied.

With respect to accommodation, we find that those who stay in hotel, in general, are significantly less satisfied than those staying in their proprietary, rented type of accommodation or camping. It can be explained by more expectations of tourists that stay in hotels.

Similar negative effects are shown with respect to the travel by own car. Realization of some activities during their holidays also shows some effects. Specifically, those who practice sport, visit their families and enjoy amenities appear to be more satisfied than others.

Tourists from Great Britain have more probability to be satisfied than the rest of the Europe. The significant bad assessment showed tourists from France and Benelux. America shows superior probability to be satisfied than tourists with the European origin, even the British tourists, but we dispose of too few observations in our sample. Rest of the world is similar to the reference category, there are no significant differences.

Valencia and Murcia region are evaluated better than the reference category Catalonia.

Foreign tourists visiting Andalusia have more probabilities to be dissatisfied.

5.2 Getting more information from some interesting variables of the model

The most relevant segments that show significant differences in assessing the satisfaction were chosen. Firstly, we employed ordered logit regression for the sample of rich people and then for the sample of poor people. Secondly, the marginal effects of satisfied people (level 2 of satisfaction) were utilized. Finally, the most significant explanatory variables were compared. This consideration is made only for those variables that are appropriate, since in other cases, such as age or sex does not make sense. Results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Significant differences between segments

VARIABLES		Income level		Travel experience		Lenght of stay	
		rich/poor	poor/rich	pv0/pv10	pv10/pv0	sstay/lstay	lstay/sstay
sex	woman		*				*
studies	prim			*			-
	sec	--			*		-
occupation	retir						
	njob						
	stud				+		
income	low						
	high			+		+++	
company	alone	*					
	family						
	friends		*		+		
pvisits	pv_0						
	pv1_3						
	pv4_9						*
stay	sstay	*		-			

	mstay			-			
activities	sport		+	+			+
	culture						+
	amenities		+	++		*	
	d_trips						
	fam_visits			*		*	
accommodation	pr_fam		+++				+
	rent						
	cam_o				*		
transport	ocar				--		
	rcar						
	other						
Fixed effects							
Origin dummies		YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Year dummies		YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Destination dummies		YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Observations		34.380	7.091	19.462	51.442	20.407	70.868

(+++/--): high positive/negative impact ; (++/--): medium positive/negative impact ; (+/-): low impact.

Rich people with secondary education assess their trip more negative than poor people. They have more probability to evaluate their trip as “satisfied” when they come with family and to evaluate it as “dissatisfied” when they stay just 1-3 days. Longer they stay in the destination, decrease the probability to be unsatisfied. If they have previous experience with the destination, value better.

Poor people have much more probability than rich people to be satisfied when they stay in their proprietary or family’s place. Another importance plays family visits, practicing sport activities and amenities (spa, theme parks, and casinos). Slightly differences in a positive assessment of the trip between poor and rich people showed poor women coming with friends.

In the case of first visitors the relevant factors for evaluate very good are high income level, sport activities and amenities. Factors like short stay (1-3) and medium stay (4-6 days) reduce the probability to be satisfied.

Tourists that repeated their visit more than ten times and have more probability to declare themselves as satisfied in comparison with first visitors are students, coming with their friends and staying in camping. What decrease their level of satisfaction is the fact of use as the king of transport their own car.

For the tourist staying in destination just 1-3 days is high level of income much more important than for tourists with longer length of stay to assess their trip as “satisfied”. Tourists from Great Britain have more probability to be satisfied than the rest of the world.

Foreign tourists staying more than seven days in destination have more probability to be dissatisfied if they have primary and secondary education and more probability if they enjoy culture and sport activities.

6. Conclusions

Employing a sample of more than 120,000 questionnaires about foreign tourists arriving to the Spanish Mediterranean coast, in this paper we have analyzed the role played by trip characteristics and tourists ´profiles in explaining the perceived level of satisfaction within their vacational experience.

Main factors improving satisfaction of tourists appear to be those that provide greater knowledge on destination characteristics. These include places to be visited, accommodation to choose, activities to be developed and leisure supply in general. The origin of tourists, the year of visit and other variables related to the destination of knowledge accumulated by visitors, as experience in coming to this particular destination, property of one apartment or villa in the place, etc., hardly improve the perception of satisfaction of the tourist for every destination in the sample.

The econometric results are statistically valid and economically important, since they uncover significant and heterogeneous responses which vary according to the tourists' socio-demographic profiles, as well as trip features, among other factors. In summary, these results will help us to improve our knowledge of tourists' attitudes and perceptions affecting their vacational choices, allowing in this way policymakers and tourism economic agents to tailor policies aimed at increasing tourist satisfaction, repeated visitation and fidelization actions for these important holiday destinations. The results are equally important to improve marketing tools in other EU southern locations, opening interesting knowledge-transfer activities with those vacational areas.

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