

Satisfaction and Loyalty to a Destination of the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil

*Satisfação e Fidelidade a um Destino da
Copa do Mundo FIFA 2014*

*Satisfacción y Fidelidad a un Destino de la
Copa Mundial de Clubes de la FIFA 2014*

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to identify the relationship between the main indicators of the loyalty construct, to verify the effects of behavioral and demographic variables on satisfaction and on the tourist loyalty indicators, and to verify the relationship between satisfaction and these indicators. Beyond the theoretical references, a research was carried out with 513 tourists in the city of Curitiba during the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil. Data were collected by assistant researchers with a structured questionnaire and analyzed with χ^2 tests, Contingency Coefficient and Spearman correlation. Besides other results, the research shows that the indicators intention to return to destination and recommend it to others are statistically different and have low correlation between them; that satisfaction has a significant association with both indicators of loyalty; that although the number of visits has no statistical significance on satisfaction, prior knowledge has; and that Curitiba has a significant potential for leisure tourism. Managerial and academic implications are discussed at the end of the work.

Keywords: Tourism Management; Destination; Loyalty; Satisfaction; Tourism demand.

Resumo

Os objetivos deste estudo foram conhecer o relacionamento existente entre os principais indicadores relativos ao construto fidelidade, verificar os efeitos das variáveis comportamentais e demográficas sobre a satisfação e sobre os referidos indicadores de fidelidade dos turistas, e verificar a relação entre satisfação e esses indicadores. Além do referencial teórico, foi realizada uma pesquisa com 513 turistas da cidade de Curitiba durante a Copa do Mundo da

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FIFA2014. Os dados foram coletados com base em um questionário estruturado, por assistentes pesquisadores, e foram analisados com testes χ^2 , Coeficiente de Contingência e Correlação de Spearman. Entre outros resultados, a pesquisa mostra que os indicadores intenção de retornar ao destino e de indicá-lo a outras pessoas são estatisticamente diferentes e possuem correlação fraca entre si; que a satisfação tem associação significativa com ambos os indicadores da fidelidade; que embora o número de visitas não tenha significância estatística sobre a satisfação, o conhecimento prévio possui; e que Curitiba tem importante potencial para o turismo de lazer. Implicações gerenciais e acadêmicas são discutidas ao final do trabalho.

Palavras-chave: *Gestão do Turismo; Destino; Fidelidade; Satisfação; Demanda turística.*

Resumen

Los objetivos de este estudio fueron conocer la relación entre los principales indicadores del constructo lealtad, verificar los efectos de las variables comportamentales y demográficas en la satisfacción y en los indicadores de fidelidad de los turistas, y la relación entre la satisfacción y estos indicadores. Allá del marco teórico, se llevó a cabo una encuesta con 513 turistas de Curitiba durante la Copa Mundial de Clubes de la FIFA 2014. Los datos fueron recolectados en base a un cuestionario estructurado por asistentes de investigación, y se analizaron con pruebas de χ^2 , Coeficiente de Contingencia y la correlación de Spearman. Entre otros resultados, la investigación muestra que los indicadores de intención de regresar al destino y recomendarlo a otros son estadísticamente diferentes y tienen una baja correlación entre sí; que la satisfacción tiene una asociación significativa con ambos indicadores de lealtad; que, si bien el número de visitas no tiene significación estadística en la satisfacción, esa tiene con el conocimiento previo; y que Curitiba tiene un potencial importante para el turismo de ocio. Las implicaciones gerenciales y académicas se discuten al final del trabajo.

Palabras clave: *Gestión del Turismo; Destino; Fidelidad; Satisfacción.*

1. Introduction

Tourism contributes significantly for the economic and social development of many countries (LEA, 1988; ALEGRE; JUANEDA, 2006), and worldwide it has grown faster than other economic sectors (BANSAL; EISELT, 2004; BLANKE; CHIESA, 2013). As the public and private organizations that are part of the sector are aware of these facts, strategies and actions are developed so that tourists and potential visitors feel satisfied and become loyal, which ends up increasing competition among touristic destinations (BUHALIS, 2000; RAJESH, 2013).

Even though companies that work in the tourism sector have different goals and offer many products and services, such as air transportation, vehicle location, entertainment and catering, business enhancement relies mostly on the attractiveness and success of the destinations (BUHALIS, 2000; LYNCH; TINSLEY, 2001; FORGAS-COLL et al., 2012). Thus, the relationship between

the many participants is interdependent, since the success of the attractiveness, the services and tourist satisfaction depends on the whole (MILL; MORRISON, 1985).

In spite of this complexity and the increasing competitiveness among destinations, much of what is known about satisfaction, loyalty and its relationship was developed by marketing studies and focus on relatively simple physical products (GALLARZA; SAURA, 2006; SANCHEZ-FERNANDEZ; INIESTA-BONILLO, 2007; MILFELNER; SNOJ; KORDA, 2011).

Opperman (2000) also states that in spite of research about customer loyalty being abundant in marketing, the attention it gets in tourism publications is small. However, tourism and marketing literature share the consensus that satisfaction is one of the main determinants of loyalty (DONNELLY, 2009; BAKER; CROMPTON, 2000), since many studies have been finding significant results in the relationships between these constructs (OH, 1999; HESKET, 2002; SUHARTANTO, 2011).

Indeed, a significant increase was observed in the number of studies in tourism about these topics and their relationships over the last years (BUHALIS, 2000; ALEGRE; JUANEDA, 2006; CHEN; PHOU, 2013; CHI; QU, 2008; GALLARZA; SAURA, 2006; LEE; SHEN, 2013). Nevertheless, the same did not occur with the “loyalty” construct, which is extremely important due to the particularities of the sector. In other words, few research focused on loyalty (a latent variable, not directly observed). They usually approach factors that have implications on loyalty, and not the observable variables that allow it to be measured, as well as the relationship between them.

In the perspective of Barros (2008), the concept of loyalty is still being discussed, and McMullan (2005) mentions that there is no single definition for loyalty, nor a clear way to measure it.

Based on the theoretical review of the relevant subjects and on a field research requested by the Ministry of Sports through the CNPq (National Council for Scientific and Technological Development), carried out with tourists in the city of Curitiba during the FIFA Football World Cup, following the details presented on the topic about the method, this work aimed at:

- Knowing the existing relationship between the main indicators of the “loyalty” construct (intention of returning to the destination and intention of recommending the destination to others).
- Verifying the effect of behavioral and demographic variables on satisfaction and on indicators of tourist loyalty.
- Verifying the relationship between satisfaction and the indicators of tourist loyalty.

2. Theoretical References

2.1. Loyalty

The importance of loyalty is based on the high costs involved in winning tourists over (VAVRA, 1992; ALEGRE; JUANEDA, 2006; CHEN; PHOU, 2013) and in the possible benefits that loyal tourists provide, working as partners and contributing with direct financial results and information that help set the destination apart from the competition (CHI; QU, 2008; RAJESH, 2013).

Although some authors define loyalty as the frequency of repeated purchase or the relative volume of purchase of a same brand (TELLIS, 1988; OPPERMANN, 2000; SUN, CHI, XU, 2013), Jackoby and Chestnut (1978) had already stated that the concept of loyalty needs to include behavioral and attitudinal components. Oliver (1997) also reinforces this position by affirming that loyalty has a strong attitudinal component.

Owing to its importance, many authors have conceptualized loyalty since the 1970s. Some of the main conceptualizations from literature are shown in Box 1.

For Oliver (1997, p. 372), full loyalty is attained when the client develops an

extremely assured conviction of repeating the purchase in the future or constantly recommending the favorite product or service, in spite of influences that may exist in certain situations and marketing offers that could potentially cause a behavioral change.

To reach it, three stages must be followed (OLIVER, 1997):

- cognitive, related to the evaluation of the attributes;
- affective, related to taste;
- conative, related to intention.

Day (1999) also proposes an evolutionary process in terms of loyalty, composed of five stages which are shown in Figure 1, going from a situation of low commitment to willing to pay a premium price.

Author	Concepts	Approach
Newman and Werbel (1973)	Repurchase from a brand, with no need to seek information.	Behavioral
Hawkins, Best and Coney (1995)	Current behavior or intention of repeating the purchase of certain products and services.	Behavioral and Attitudinal
Oliver (1997)	Strong commitment to repurchasing or supporting a favorite product or service, regardless of marketing efforts aimed at altering the behavior.	Behavioral and Attitudinal
Jones, Mothersbaugh and Beatty (2000)	Interest of the client in maintaining a relationship with a particular provider and keep purchasing from them.	Behavioral and Attitudinal
Dick and Basu (1994)	Relationship between attitude and adoption.	Attitudinal
Bloemer and Kasper (1995)	Behavioral measures expressed throughout time or repurchase patterns.	Behavioral
Tellis (1988)	Frequency of purchase or volume of repurchase from a same brand.	Behavioral

Box 1 – Concepts on loyalty

Source: Authors, based on the theoretical references

For Day (1999), loyalty is related to feeling affinity with products and brands, which goes beyond merely repeating a purchase. However, he also defends that other indicators should be considered to measure the real degree of loyalty of a consumer, such as convenience, inertia and the level of concentration of a specific market (DAY, 1999).

As it was mentioned in the introduction, it is pertinent and necessary to understand the loyalty construct in tourism (BARROS, 2008; MACMULLAN, 2005), especially since although two indicators have been used more often (return of the tourist to the destination and recommending the destination to others) (YUKSEL; YUKSEL; BILIM, 2010), some studies used more complex scales which were equally accepted (YOON; UYSAL, 2005; ZHANG et al., 2013).

Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: The indicators of the loyalty construct “intention of returning” and “recommendation to others” are complementary.

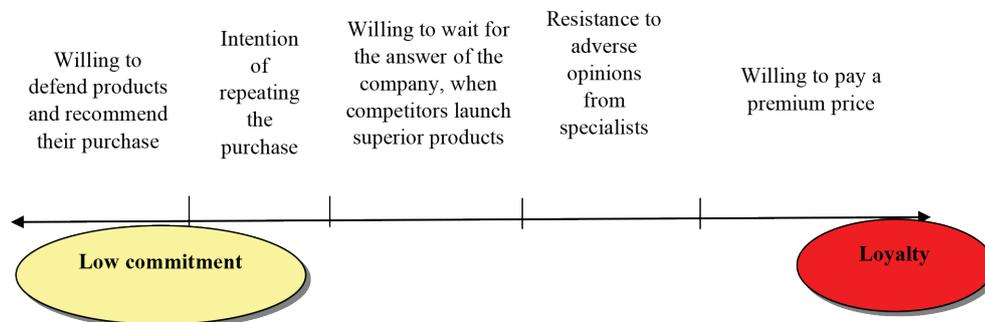


Figure 1 – Client behavior, from low commitment to loyalty

Source: Day (1999, p. 147)

2.2. Expectation and satisfaction

Studies single out the destructive power of unsatisfied clients (WOODUFF, 1997; OLIVEIRA; TOLEDO; IKEDA, 2004; ZHANG et al., 2014), as they pass on their dissatisfactions to a higher number of potential clients than satisfied customers do, not to mention that many do not file complaints against the companies that caused the dissatisfaction – making it difficult to obtain information so they can improve their relationships with the market (VAVRA, 1992; WOODRUFF, 1997; LAMBIN, 2000).

Given the relationship of satisfaction with loyalty highlighted by marketing studies, competitive companies usually measure it systematically (KOTLER; KELLER, 2012; SUDHARSHAN, 1995; LAMBIN, 2000). In tourism research, it also stands out as a key topic (KOZAK; RIMMINGTON, 2000; YOON; UYSAL, 2005; ZHANG, et al. 2014). According to Kozak and Rimmington (2000), tourist satisfaction is an important variable for the success of a competitive business, for it affects the choice of the destination as well as the consumption of products and services.

The study of satisfaction was significantly stimulated by the expectation disconfirmation theory of Oliver (1981), which proposes that it is a result of the comparison made by the client between expectations and perceptions. Hence, the model he created directly asks if the perception of a product is better or worse than expected, using an ordinal scale (OLIVER, 1981).

Many authors conceptualized satisfaction as well, as Box 2 shows. The definitions show two different approaches: a generalist-experiential approach, which takes into account the process and its effects, and an approach aimed at the result, which focuses on the feeling caused by consumption. Expectation is the main component of satisfaction, since satisfaction is considered a result of meeting expectations or not. According to Kotler, Bowen, Makens (2010), the expectations related to the feeling of satisfaction are formed and influenced by a previous purchase experience, recommendation of friends, information from the market and promises of the provider.

Author	Concept	Approach
Oliver (1981)	Evaluation of the surprise inherent to the acquisition of a product and its consumption experience; the psychological state resulting from the comparison of the feeling before the consumption experience and the feeling after it.	Generalist-experiential
Tse and Wilton (1988)	The response to a specific consumption experience based on the discrepancy between the previous experience and the performance of the product after the purchase.	Focused on the result
Westbrook and Oliver (1991)	The evaluation of a specific purchase, after the consumption.	Focused on the result
Oliver (1997)	The response of the consumer to his level of contentment with a product or a service.	Generalist-experiential
Kotler and Keller(2012)	Feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from the comparison between the expected or real result and the expectations.	Focused on the result
Kim, Kim and An (2003)	Attitude formed by mentally comparing the expected quality of the product or service with what was realized after the consumption.	Generalist-experiential

Box 2 – Definitions of satisfaction

Source: Authors, based on the theoretical references

Due to the complexity of tourism, many factors influence the expectation of the tourist, such as the image of the destination, their personal involvement and their own overall satisfaction (PRAYAG; RAYAN, 2011; PRAYAG, 2012).

Woodruff (1997) highlights the strong relationship between the value for the consumer and their satisfaction, for when the value of the product is perceived as adequate, satisfaction ends up being a natural consequence. Hence, the critical factor for clients to purchase the

same good many times and therefore follow the path to loyalty is the satisfaction they obtain from its use.

Consequently, to achieve loyalty means to obtain a long-lasting relationship – which depends on delivering value to the client, creating a virtuous circle (OLIVEIRA; IKEDA; TOLEDO, 2004; DAY, 1999).

Although Schulz (1998) affirms that the fact that the client is satisfied does not necessarily imply the existence of loyalty, we should consider that dissatisfaction will most certainly lead to the loss of the relationship if the client can choose and has similar consumption conditions – which also depends on their level of dissatisfaction.

Berry and Parasuraman (1991) explain that consumers have two levels of expectations: the desired level and the adequate level. The first is related to what the consumer would like to receive, and the second indicates what is acceptable to receive. Moreover, between the two levels there is a zone of tolerance.

The zone of tolerance varies for each consumer and for each transaction of a same consumer, since the level of expectation is dynamic and depends on many factors such as individual needs and previous experiences (BERRY; PARASURAMAN, 1991; PARASURAMAN; ZEITHAML; BERRY, 1994).

In addition, the most recent version of the expectation disconfirmation paradigm considers that satisfaction can also be predicted by the direct effects of expectations and performance, not mediated by disconfirmation (OLIVER, 1997), corroborating even more the importance of managing the expectation.

According to Santos (2013, p. 524), “recommendations to relatives and friends, the intention to return and fidelity (or loyalty) are post-purchase behaviors strongly influenced by the satisfaction with the visit experience”.

Although many studies have discussed the relationship of satisfaction with the intention of behavior, with loyalty and even with service quality (CRONIN; TAYLOR, 1992; GONZÁLEZ; GÂNDARA; BREA, 2006; CHI; QU, 2008), research show important differences regarding the strength or even the direction in which the relationship occurs. Therefore, exploring the

relationship of these constructs within contexts and with the profiles of different publics contributes to a wider and more complete comprehension.

However, it should be mentioned that the quality construct is not part of the proposal of this study.

Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2: The intention of **returning** to the destination is associated with tourist satisfaction.

H3: The intention of **recommending** the destination is associated with tourist satisfaction.

2.2.1. The effect of repeating visits on tourist loyalty

Some studies point out that there are differences between the tourists that visit a destination for the first time and those who repeat the visit (GITELSON et al. 1984; FAKEYE; CROMPTON, 1991; CHON, 1991), and that previous experiences influence the choice of the future destination. However, few studies analyzed the issue of how the repetition of visits affects the behavior of tourists (CHI, 2012).

Among them, the study of Gitelson and Crompton (1984) conclude that visitors that repeat the same trip are looking for rest, while tourists visiting a destination for the first time are seeking variety. Fakeye and Crompton (1991) also point out the differences in the motives of those who never visited, those who visited for the first time and visitors who repeat the same trip, with the physical attractions of the destination being the main motives of visit for those who never visited and those visiting for the first time, and those repeating the trip consider individual socio-psychological needs more important.

Gitelson and Crompton (1984) identified five reasons why people return to a familiar destination:

- 1) Satisfied with a particular destination (risk reduction);
- 2) Meeting the same type of people (risk reduction);
- 3) Emotional connection to a particular destination;
- 4) Future exploration of the destination;
- 5) Showing the destination to different people.

Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4: The intention of **returning** to the destination is influenced by the number of visits the tourist already made to the destination;

H5: The intention of **recommending** the destination to others is influenced by the number of visits the tourist already made to the destination;

H6: The intention of **returning** to the destination is influenced by the motive of the future trip;

H7: The intention of **recommending** the destination is influenced by the motive of the future trip;

H8: There is a correlation between the number of visits the tourist made to the destination and their satisfaction;

H9: There is an association between the motive of the future trip of the tourist and their satisfaction.

3. Method

3.1. Type of research and operationalization

The research conducted was quantitative, consisting of the application of a questionnaire to tourists present in the city of Curitiba, in days where there were matches of the Football World Cup of FIFA, in the circulation area restricted to those who had a ticket to watch the games, moments before the matches.

The questionnaire considered the theoretical references gathered and the formulated hypotheses, from which we defined the scales and questions about the profile of the respondent. Data collection was carried out in the month of June 2014, with the participation of 15 researchers, students and professors of the Master's in Tourism course of the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR). A total of 513 questionnaires was obtained, and there were missings in some questions, but this number did not harm the analyses in any situation.

3.2. Scales and measures

Considering that loyalty can be measured in behavioral terms (repurchase in real time, usually verified through observation) and attitudinal terms (repurchase intention, usually verified through survey) (RUNDLE; MACKAY, 2001), we chose attitudinal measures due to the problem of research, the goals and the hypotheses to be tested.

Based on Oliver (1981;1997) and Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1994), satisfaction was measured in a three point ordinal scale, based on the following question: “Regarding your expectations, your overall experience in the city: (1) did not meet your expectations; (2) met your expectations; (3) exceeded your expectations”.

The choice to examine satisfaction through expectations was decided due to the pre-test of the instrument, carried out with 25 people fitting the same profile of the interviewees – tourists that were visiting Curitiba -, which indicated that directly asking how satisfied the tourist was raised doubts about the meaning of satisfaction, as mentioned before (OLIVER, 1981; 1997). In addition, the pre-test indicated that the tourists understood this concept better. The question to be answered was: “In general terms, your visit to Curitiba...” (1) is below your expectations; (2) is meeting your expectations; (3) is exceeding your expectations.

Loyalty was measured by the two indicators that are commonly used in tourism research: the intention to return to the destination and the intention of recommending it to others (SUN; CHI; XU, 2013; HAWKINS; BEST; CONEY, 1995; CHI; QU, 2008). The measurement was carried out in a dichotomous scale, in which the respondent chose “yes” or “no” for each of the questions.

3.3. Analyses

The nine hypotheses proposed by the exposed bibliographical review were analyzed with different techniques, as Box 3 indicates.

Hypotheses	Technique used in the analysis
H1: The indicators of the loyalty constructor “intention of returning” and “recommendation to others” are complementary	Contingency coefficient
H2: The intention of returning to the destination is associated with tourist satisfaction	χ^2 Test
H3: The intention of recommending the destination is associated with tourist satisfaction	χ^2 Test
H4: The intention of returning to the destination is influenced by the number of visits the tourist already made to the destination	χ^2 Test
H5: The intention of recommending the destination to others is influenced by the number of visits the tourist already made to the destination	χ^2 Test
H6: The intention of returning to the destination is influenced by the motive of the future trip	χ^2 Test
H7: The intention of recommending the destination is influenced by the motive of the future trip	χ^2 Test
H8: There is a correlation between the number of visits the tourist made to the destination and their satisfaction	Spearman’s Rho
H9: There is an association between the motive of the future trip of the tourist and their satisfaction	χ^2 Test

Box 3 – Hypotheses and techniques of the used analyses

Source: Authors, based on the theoretical references

The variables considered in the analyses and their respective measurement scales were:

- Intention of returning: nominal dichotomous scale (yes or no);
- Intention of recommending: nominal dichotomous scale (yes or no);
- Satisfaction: three-level ordinal scale (did not meet expectations; met expectations; exceeded expectations);
- Number of visits: interval scale;
- Variables of profile: nominal for origin (dichotomous scale – Brazilian or foreigner), gender (dichotomous scale – male or female) and education.

Figure 2 shows the variables and their relationships based on the proposed hypotheses.

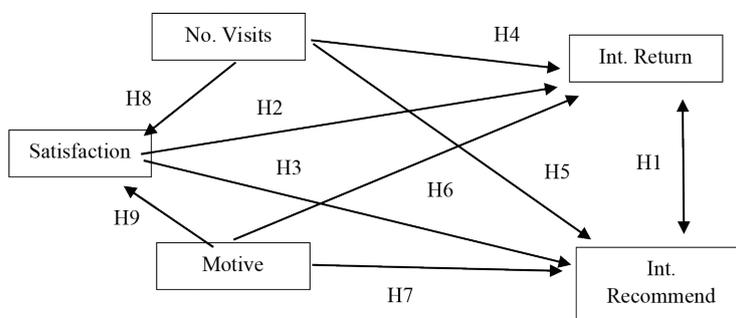


Figure 2 – Theoretical relationship of the variables and the researched constructs

Source: Authors, based on the theoretical references

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive

Of the 513 interviewees, 275 (53.6%) were Brazilian and 238 (46.4%) were foreigners. Of the 507 interviewees that gave answers about satisfaction, 23 (4.5%) said that their expectations were not met, 205 (59.5%) said that their expectations were met and 179 (34.9%) said that their expectations had been exceeded.

A total of 492 interviewees provided answers about recommending the destination to others, from which 473 (96.1%) said yes and 19 (3.9%) said no. As for the intention of returning to Curitiba, from the 507 interviewees that answered the question, 88 (89.2%) said that they had that intention and 55 (10.8%) said that they did not.

Of the 508 valid answers regarding gender, 395 (77.8%) men and 113 (22.2%) women were interviewed. The average age of the interviewees which answered the question (505) was 35 years old.

From the 505 interviewees which provided answers regarding their education, 344 (68.1%) had at least an university degree.

As for having been to the destination before, from the 502 people who answered the question, 278 (54.2%) had visited it already, and in the last three years, 85.6% (of the 209 respondents) had visited it up to 10 times.

By crossing the data about the indicators of loyalty to the destination of 486 respondents, we obtain that:

- 433 (89%) aim at returning and recommending the destination to others;
- 7 (1%) aim at returning, but wouldn't recommend the destination to others;
- 35 (7%) have the intention of recommending, but not of returning to the destination;
- 11 (2%) do not aim at recommending neither returning to the destination.
- From the respondents which wanted to return to the destination, 390 mentioned their motives, which were:
 - 286 (55.8%) for leisure or rest
 - 37 (7.2%) for business or professional motives
 - 37 (7.2%) to visit relatives and friends
 - 13 (2.5%) to study
 - 17 (3.3%) others

4.2. Inferences

The association measured by the Contingent Coefficient among the indicators of the loyalty construct (intention of returning and intention of recommending the destination) is low (32.7%) and significant ($p < 0.01$), as expected for indicators used to measure a same construct.

Separately, the variables age, gender, education and number of visits to the destination did not present a significant association ($p > 0.05$) with the loyalty indicators (intention of returning and of recommending the destination). However, the variables satisfaction, motive of the supposed return and origin presented a significant association ($p < 0.01$).

We should highlight that although there is no significant association between the number of visits and the indicators of loyalty, as mentioned above, a significant association was observed between a prior knowledge of the destination and the intention of returning ($p < 0.01$), but no relationship is seen for the intention of recommending the destination.

As for satisfaction, no association was seen with the number of visits the tourist made in the past ($p > 0.05$), but the association existed with a prior knowledge of the destination ($p < 0.01$).

Satisfaction also showed significant associations with the intention of recommending the destination to others ($p < 0.01$) and with the intention of returning to the destination ($p < 0.01$). Nevertheless, an association was not observed between satisfaction and the alleged motive of the return ($p > 0.05$).

Box 4 shows a summary of the result of each of the tested hypotheses.

Hypotheses	Results
H1: The indicators of the loyalty constructor “intention of returning” and “recommendation to others” are complementary	Accepted
H2: The intention of returning to the destination is associated with tourist satisfaction	Accepted
H3: The intention of recommending the destination is associated with tourist satisfaction	Accepted
H4: The intention of returning to the destination is influenced by the number of visits the tourist already made to the destination	Rejected
H5: The intention of recommending the destination to others is influenced by the number of visits the tourist already made to the destination	Rejected
H6: The intention of returning to the destination is influenced by the motive of the future trip	Rejected
H7: The intention of recommending the destination is influenced by the motive of the future trip	Accepted
H8: There is a correlation between the number of visits the tourist made to the destination and their satisfaction	Rejected
H9: There is an association between the motive of the future trip of the tourist and their satisfaction	Rejected

Box 4 – Hypotheses and results

Source: Authors, based on the collected data

5. Discussion and implications

The indicators of the loyalty construct (intention of returning to the destination and intention of recommending the destination to others) do not overlap ($p < 0.01$), and the correlation between them is low, which implies that the use of both is adequate. Moreover, the research presented high rates to both.

Most of the interviewees (55.8%) that want to return to the destination intend to do so for the motive of leisure or rest, which indicates a large potential for the destination of Curitiba, which has focused its efforts in business tourism – the most important of the destination -, compatible with the vocation of large urban centers (INSTITUTO MUNICIPAL DE TURISMO DE CURITIBA, 2013).

The profile variables, except for origin, did not present separate relationships with the indicators of loyalty. As for origin, it was observed that Brazilians were more loyal than foreigners – which can be explained by the high costs of international travel, especially in Brazil.

Since separately the number of visits did not present an association with the indicators of loyalty, but having or not prior knowledge of the destination did, we may infer that prior knowledge of the destination is more important than the number of visits made to it.



Additionally, the association of the prior knowledge with only one of the indicators of loyalty, when they are considered separately (intention of returning), confirms that the indicators of the construct measure different things, which justifies the use and the analysis of both.

Although literature mentions that satisfaction does not necessarily imply loyalty, the data indicate that it is significantly related to the intention of repurchase, contributing to the return of the tourist to the same destination.

6. Final considerations

Seeking to obtain the loyalty of tourists is essential for the destination and all organizations involved in the sector to reap the benefits of a developed tourism, similarly to what has been happening in many places worldwide.

With that purpose, meeting their expectations is crucial, for the results are satisfaction and loyalty. However, we should highlight that it is not enough to create products and services that the provider considers adequate for the expectations, and knowing them is not enough either. They should be managed and deeply understood so that appropriate strategies and actions can be developed, even to alter them if necessary, in order that the current and potential capacities of the destination can be explored.

This study aimed at reaching three goals, which were presented in the introduction and are listed below:

- Knowing the levels of relevance of each indicator of the “loyalty” construct (intention of returning to the destination and intention of recommending the destination to others).
- Verifying the effect of behavioral and demographic variables on tourist satisfaction and on indicators of tourist loyalty
- Verify the relationship between tourist satisfaction and indicators of tourist loyalty.

Since all were achieved, this work contributes both for managing the demand of destinations and for the academic community. For management, because it identifies the relationships between the considered variables, and in the specific case of the analyzed destination, because it indicates that leisure tourism is latent and has a great potential. For theory, because it corroborates the results of other studies which considered different contexts, in addition

to bringing up important issues that need a more detailed discussion in future works, so that together they are significant for the management of touristic demands.

Given the specific context in which the field research was conducted, the results should be taken into consideration with caution, because if on one hand they offer contributions, on the other hand they bring restrictions that make generalizations difficult. Thus, works that carry out similar research with a different public profile, or even in a different context, will enable a stronger progress of the discussions made in this work, so that the academic community and the management community may be benefited.

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