

# SATISFACTION AND DISSATISFACTION WITH DESTINATION ATTRIBUTES: INFLUENCE ON OVERALL SATISFACTION AND THE INTENTION TO RETURN

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## **Abstract**

*Satisfaction surveys are one of the most essential tools used to gather information regarding tourists' opinions of a destination. Such surveys usually include evaluations of different destination attributes on an ordinal scale. On such a scale, the mid point of which is indifference, the tourist can express his/her satisfaction or dissatisfaction with each attribute. In this study we suggest that some of the tourist's negative or unsatisfactory experiences need to be defined within a specific context of evaluation. For such purpose we discuss the potential differences and the complementary nature of the concepts and measurements of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the holiday experience. With a sample of 2,423 sun and sand tourists, we examine both dimensions of evaluation. Furthermore, we estimate the impact of the satisfaction- and dissatisfaction-based evaluations on both the tourists' overall satisfaction and their intention to return to the destination. Our results show that the experiences of dissatisfaction lower the tourist's overall satisfaction, and that negative perceptions tied to over-commercialization, overcrowding and environmental deterioration considerably lower the visitor's intention to return to the destination.*

## **1. INTRODUCCION**

It is well established in the tourism literature that both the tourist's overall satisfaction and his/her intention to return are partially determined by his/her assessment of the destination's different attributes. In this respect, many studies explore the performance of a destination based on the study of the satisfaction expressed by its visitors regarding different factors that describe the destination. These studies presuppose that to find out how the tourist feels about a place it is enough to examine his/her satisfaction, as measured on an ordinal scale (highly dissatisfied – indifferent – highly satisfied).

However this approach may not be enough, at least in two senses. First of all, the tourist is usually asked about attributes that include the destination's features of attraction, in other words, attributes that are considered to be positive and which are often associated with the very reason that the tourist has chosen the destination. These lists of attributes generally exclude any possible negative features of the experience at the destination. It may be the case that certain situations, experiences or even occasional negative impressions cannot be evaluated based on a list of a destination's attractive attributes. Nevertheless, tourist surveys do not create a space for the evaluation of possible negative attributes. Implicitly this approach presupposes that the tourist's satisfaction is determined by the

attributes associated with his/her reason for selecting the destination. This means ignoring the existence of negative features which, if known beforehand, could lead to the decision not to select a particular holiday destination. Similarly, once at the destination, these negative features could become determining factors of the tourist's overall satisfaction or his/her intention to return. Among others, crowding and congestion, or over-commercialized places are possible examples of such negative features.

Secondly, many studies assume satisfaction to be a one-dimensional concept in such manner that a single factor can generate both satisfaction (in the case that everything goes well or works properly) and dissatisfaction (when things do not go well or do not work properly). From this perspective, if we wish to evaluate the tourist's opinion of the peace and quiet of the destination, we need only ask him/her for his/her opinion of the "peace and quiet" attribute on a bipolar or Likert scale. The inclusion of an evaluation of negative attributes such as "noise" or "overcrowding" would be considered redundant or even confusing for those surveyed. All the same, there are a number of reasons why it would be advisable to ask the visitor to evaluate negative attributes:

To begin with, studies on the impact of the different factors or attributes of a product or service on consumer satisfaction indicate that one-dimensional consideration of satisfaction can be insufficient. Studies that associate the factors or attributes of the product with consumer satisfaction show that the presence of certain factors generates satisfaction, yet their absence does not necessarily generate dissatisfaction. The reverse can also occur, where certain factors or situations can only generate dissatisfaction, whereas their absence does not necessarily lead to satisfaction. This is the approach proposed by Herzberg et al. (Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman, 1959; Herzberg, 1966), which treat "satisfaction" and "dissatisfaction" as different dimensions. Under this hypothesis, both of these dimensions ought to be provided for on satisfaction surveys. Similarly, Kano's model of consumer satisfaction (Kano, 1984; Kano, Seraku, Takahashi, and Tsuji, 1984) modifies the one-dimensional model, as it considers that the quality of the features of a product or service can have different impacts on consumer satisfaction. In this model a distinction is made between those attributes that have a one-dimensional effect (if they work properly, they generate satisfaction; if they are absent or do not work properly they generate dissatisfaction) and those that have an asymmetrical effect. Some of the factors, referred to as "basics" or "musts", can generate dissatisfaction if they are not present, yet their presence does not generate additional satisfaction. Others, referred to as "excitements factors", do not generate dissatisfaction if they are absent, however their presence or correct operation produces great satisfaction. Kano's original proposal was to evaluate each attribute through two questions: the first aimed to get the respondent's reaction in the case of the proper functioning of the attribute (functional form of the question), and the second question sought his/her reaction when the same attribute did not work properly (dysfunctional form of the question). Whilst Kano's questionnaire does not directly ask about the consumer's satisfaction with the attribute, his approach suggests the need to determine whether the use of a single bipolar dimension on satisfaction surveys is enough.

Secondly, the consideration of two different dimensions, one emphasizing satisfaction with the attributes and the other emphasizing dissatisfaction, is by no means an unknown tool in studies on services. For example, this premise is the base of the critical incident technique. Some researchers have analysed the standing of a destination based on dissatisfaction or negative incidents that could affect the holiday experience as a whole (Jackson, White and Schmierer, 1996; Callan, 1998; Chung and Hoffman, 1998; Wang, Hsieh and Huan, 2000; Ravenscroft and Rogers, 2003; Pritchard and Havitz, 2006; Petrick, Tonner and Quinn, 2006; Crofts and Pan, 2007). For these scholars, the study of the dissatisfaction, discontentment, displeasure or negative incidents that a given service can generate is also an effective and necessary tool in finding out how well a company or tourism destination is performing. Understanding the origin and causes of dissatisfaction can help improve the service that is being offered. For this reason, the study of dissatisfaction is believed to be complementary to the study of satisfaction: both approaches give us more insight into the aspects that can affect a holiday experience.

The aim of this paper is to determine whether, in addition to a tourist's stated satisfaction with different attributes, certain negative situations or characteristics can have a bearing on his/her overall impression of a destination. In particular, this study has two specific objectives. The first one is to examine whether attribute survey responses are coherent regardless of whether the question underscores a degree of satisfaction or a degree of dissatisfaction. In other words, we want to ascertain whether tourists rate the aspects of a destination the same way, irrespective of whether such aspects are evaluated by means of questions pertaining to satisfaction or which explicitly ask about the things that they did not like. The lack of concordance between the two types of evaluations would make it necessary to use different dimensions to gather the expressions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The second objective of this study is to determine the influence of dissatisfaction dimensions on tourists' overall satisfaction and on their intention to return.

For this purpose, we conducted a survey with 2,423 European citizens who had spent their past few summer holidays at any of the main international sun and sand destinations. The rest of the study is structured into three parts. The second section offers a review of published research on dissatisfaction, its measurement and the causes of negative incidents at the holiday destinations. Next, based on the information collected in the survey, we analyze the coherence between satisfaction-based evaluations and dissatisfaction-based evaluations. Subsequently, we apply two statistical models to test if the explicit dissatisfaction-based evaluations has enough explanatory power on the tourist's overall satisfaction and on the visitor's expressed intention to return to the destination for another holiday. The article concludes commenting the main conclusions and suggestions for future research.

## **2. DISSATISFACTION AS A DIFFERENTIATED DIMENSION FROM SATISFACTION**

Satisfaction surveys are one of the most essential tools used to gather information regarding tourists' opinions of a destination. The methodology usually adopted consists of first identifying the most important attributes that define the attraction of a type of destination, and secondly asking the tourists to evaluate them on a symmetrical and one-dimensional scale. On such scale, the lowest value indicates the most dissatisfaction with the attribute, and the highest value represents the greatest satisfaction, while a midpoint marks a position of neutrality or indifference. Based on the above information, the estimation of statistical models of causality would enable us to find out how satisfaction with different attributes affects the tourist's overall satisfaction or even his/her intention to return to the destination. As we have mentioned above, some of the studies published to date suggest that this methodology can be erroneous, as it places satisfaction and dissatisfaction on opposite sides of a single coin.

Studies on critical incidents have asserted that not all of the attributes of a product or service affect overall satisfaction the same way. Cadotte and Turgeon (1988) analyze the content of the complaints and compliments recorded by a sample of restaurants. Based on their results, they divide the attributes into four categories: *satisfiers*, meaning factors that generate satisfaction when present yet which do not generate dissatisfaction when not present; *dissatisfiers*, which are the factors that can generate dissatisfaction if they do not work properly, yet which do not generate praise when they work properly or above a certain standard level; *critical* attributes, which can generate both complaints and praise; and *neutral* attributes, which do not receive either many complaints or much praise. Bitner et al. (1990) apply the *critical incident method* to the services sector, to determine precisely which occurrences generate satisfaction in consumers, which generate dissatisfaction and to what degree the two types of occurrences are diametrically opposed or reverse mirror images. These authors suggest that it is unlikely that the same occurrences or generic behavior can be considered the underlying causes of pleasing or displeasing encounters. The same conclusion is shared by Bleuel (1990), who holds that there is no one-to-one correspondence between satisfaction and dissatisfaction, suggesting that the attributes or sources that generate satisfaction are not the same as those that generate dissatisfaction. The overall conclusion reached in the studies on "critical incidents" (Johnston, 1995) is

that the sources of dissatisfaction are not necessarily the reverse of the causes of satisfaction. Making reference to the work of Cadotte and Turgeon, Pizam and Ellis (1999) assert:

“If Cadotte and Turgeon's findings are confirmed by other studies, we might indeed revise the prevailing theory about the nature of customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction and reject the notion that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are two extremes on one continuum. Instead, we might accept a modification of a theory that was advanced some years ago on the subject of job satisfaction. In this theory, Herzberg et al. (1959) proposed that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are two extremes on two continua.” Pizam and Ellis (1999; p. 332).

Though the critical incidents technique was initially designed to analyze a specific type of experience<sup>1</sup>, it has also been used in more extensive scopes. Ravenscroft and Rogers (2003) apply it to study an outdoor recreational activity, analyzing the relationship between the hikers and the environment around them. Pritchard and Havitz (2006) apply the critical incidents method to a tourism destination (Western Australia) to analyze the attributes of the destination, given their belief that the quantitative information gathered in satisfaction surveys can be insufficient in attaining an adequate evaluation of the holiday destinations. In this sense, rather than using bipolar or Likert scales to score evaluations, Pritchard and Havitz propose a different qualitative approach based on an open-question evaluation of the destination. Along the same lines, Crofts and Pan (2007) believe that ordinal scales are not precise enough in evaluating the attributes of a destination. Rather, open answers on satisfaction and dissatisfaction give more important information for the destination. Beyond the discussion as to the best possible tool to learn about a destination, the collection and analysis of qualitative information can be problematic in terms of cost and time.

The job satisfaction studies of Herzberg (1966) and Herzberg et al. (1959) have also been applied to the study of consumer satisfaction. From Herzberg's perspective, satisfaction with the workplace is only attained under certain conditions, and the situations that generate dissatisfaction are different. In his surveys, Herzberg asks the worker for a list of moments or circumstances during his/her work in which he/she was happy, and then requests a separate list of the situations and times when he/she was unhappy. Following an analysis of the answers, Herzberg would come up with two types of factors. The factors which he refers to as “motivating” are associated with the “exceptionally positive” responses, while those known as “hygienic” are associated with the “exceptionally negative” responses. The two types of factors are not the opposite of one another, but rather of a different nature: a condition that generates satisfaction cannot generate dissatisfaction, just as a condition associated with dissatisfaction cannot generate satisfaction. Herzberg thus upholds the notion that the two factors are independent. Nevertheless, some authors (Fournet, Distefano and Pryer, 1966; Wood and LeBold, 1970) have suggested that the methodology used by Herzberg's group, which is similar to the critical incidents technique, could be the cause of the detected dichotomy, alleging that it generates an artificial classification of factors. Using Herzberg's methodology, Swan and Combs (1976) claim that satisfaction regarding certain attributes is relatively important for high overall satisfaction, whereas other attributes are associated with dissatisfaction when rated low. The first group of attributes was given the name *instrumental performance*, and would be associated with the product's physical features. The second group was referred to as *expressive performance* and would be associated with a psychological or emotional dimension of the product. Herzberg's proposals have been applied by Crompton (2003) and Jensen (2004) in the context of the tourism sector. Whilst Crompton does not attain conclusive results, Jensen supports the hypothesis, albeit in a limited sphere of application.

Satisfaction factors have been classified still differently in studies on consumption (Matzler and Sauerwein, 2002), following the works of Kano (1984), Kano et al. (1984), Brandt (1987) and Vavra (1997). This approach groups the attributes of a product or service into three categories, depending on the different ways in which their performance can influence consumer satisfaction. Thus a distinction

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<sup>1</sup> According to Bitner et al. (1990), an incident must meet four criteria: it must entail interaction between the employee and the customer; it must give the customer a great deal of satisfaction or dissatisfaction; it must be a discreet episode; and it must be something that the customer sees.

is made among basic factors, excitement factors and performance factors. *Basic factors* are those that only lead to the consumer's dissatisfaction; they are factors that generate great dissatisfaction if not up to expectations, yet if they are satisfied, they do not increase consumer satisfaction. *Excitement factors* are factors that increase the consumer's satisfaction when offered, however they do not generate dissatisfaction when absent. *Performance factors*, on the other hand, work in both directions, generating satisfaction when they work well and dissatisfaction when they do not. Thus, whereas performance factors have a symmetrical effect on consumer satisfaction, the basic and excitement factors have asymmetrical effects. This model has been applied to different types of services, including those of the tourism sector (Deng, 2007; Erto and Vanacore, 2002; Fuchs and Weiermair, 2003, 2004; Füller and Matzler, 2007; Füller, Matzler and Faullant, 2006; Matzler, Renzl and Rothenberger, 2006; Pawitra and Tan, 2003; Tan and Pawitra, 2001). In applying this model, the operation of the attributes can be evaluated differently, although the consumer is often asked about his/her degree of satisfaction with each of the attributes by means of a Likert scale. A different tool applied is the Kano questionnaire. In this questionnaire, each attribute is evaluated by means of two questions: the first records the respondent's reaction in the case of the attribute's proper working order (functional form of the question), and the second elicits his/her reaction in the case that the same attribute is in poor working order (dysfunctional form of the question). The combination of the two answers enables the classification of each attribute into one of the three groups.

The direct implications of satisfaction-based models are associated with the consumers' reactions to improvements in product performance. These models acknowledge that the answer can be nonlinear and asymmetric, with different answers for situations of the correct or incorrect performance of the attribute. The debate at hand firstly relates to how satisfaction or dissatisfaction with an attribute affects the user's overall satisfaction with a product or service (Oliva, Oliver and MacMillan, 1992). Nevertheless, this can also support the need to contemplate the possible advantages of having two different evaluations for each attribute: one to evaluate the degree of satisfaction with the attribute and the other to evaluate the degree of dissatisfaction.

Mittal, Ross and Baldasare (1998) use the previous argument when analyzing the asymmetric impact of attribute performance on overall satisfaction and the intention to repurchase. Mittal et al (1998) use Oliver's study (1993) as a base. Oliver (1993) in turn builds on the previous models of Westbrook (1987) and Westbrook and Oliver (1991), which explore the emotional source of satisfaction. To evaluate satisfaction with the attributes of a product or service, Oliver (1993) separately asked the consumers about their levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction on two six-point scales ranging from "not at all" to "very much". The consumers were invited to indicate their degrees of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the same attribute. The results of the study indicate that both satisfaction and dissatisfaction have a significant effect on overall satisfaction with a product or service. The variables of satisfaction/dissatisfaction used in the study by Mittal et al. (1998) were obtained based on open telephone interviews in which the consumers were asked about their experiences regarding different features of the service analyzed. The answers were subsequently coded, making for different service feature categories. The categories were then classified as positive or negative. In the case of some features, both a positive and a negative version of the same event or feature were generated. For example, "the doctor listens to the patients" vs. "the doctor is not interested in /does not listen to his/her patients". In other cases, the positive and negative categories did not have the same reference point. For example, "very friendly with the children" or "does not follow up /does not explain the results".

With regards to the tourism sector, Tribe and Snaith (1998) propose a tool to measure tourist satisfaction with the holiday destination, which they refer to as HOLSAT. In this case, the concept of satisfaction is defined as the degree to which the tourist's evaluation of a destination's attributes exceeds his/her expectations. Within the context of our study, the important feature of this model is that it enables the tourist to express satisfaction/dissatisfaction by evaluating both positive and negative attributes. Positive attributes are features that convey good impressions of a destination, whereas negative attributes are those that transmit unfavorable impressions. The inclusion of negative

attributes is one of the main advantages of the HOLSAT model, as it allows for an overall evaluation of the destination that is more complete than the evaluation obtained by means of tools used to measure service quality. This model was applied in Varadero (Cuba) by Tribe and Snaith (1998), and in Vietnam by Truong (2005) and Truong and Foster (2006). Among the attributes considered to be negative, the former group of researchers includes “too much construction”, “street prostitution”, “industrial pollution in the resort”, “lines and waits for services”, “shortage of certain drinks or foods” and “power failures”; whereas the second group of researchers includes “crowds at tourism attractions”, “too many beggars and vendors in the street”, “no public toilets”, “trouble getting money with a credit card”, “having to be careful with what you eat or drink”, “trouble changing money”, “pollution in the cities”, “slow customs clearance”. In all of these cases the negative attributes are negative features that the tourist can expect to find at the destination and which after the holiday he/she may evaluate as either present or absent from his/her experience<sup>2</sup>.

Less systematically, the studies on services offer other arguments that support the need to gather information on satisfaction and dissatisfaction on a separate basis. First of all, studies on satisfaction quite often show a vast majority of satisfied customers. In other words, the distributions of the ratings display negative asymmetry (Danaher and Haddrell, 1996). Peterson and Wilson (1992) offer a number of explanations, including the methodological problem inherent in the context and the form of the question. In this sense, the measurements of satisfaction should also be aimed at detecting the opinions tied to negative experiences at the destination. This is an important problem when analyzing the situation of a tourist destination in comparison with its competitors, for example. Oh (2001) and Ryan and Huyton (2002) have pointed out that the surveys aimed at measuring tourist satisfaction show a bias towards positive ratings for many of the destination’s attributes. Specifically, it was seen that the greater the tourist’s motivation regarding the attribute of the destination, the greater the tendency to evaluate it positively. This fact is tied to the tourist’s personal and emotional involvement in taking the trip. The tendency to positively rate the attributes of the destination reduces the efficacy of a satisfaction survey as a means to convey objective information to the agents or administrators of the destination. Moreover, when the measurements of satisfaction with the attributes are put to use as explanatory variables of overall satisfaction or the intention to return, the limited variability of some of the ratings hinders their use as reliable predictors.

Secondly, numerous studies on the causes of tourists’ disappointment reveal that such displeasure stems from the overcrowding of the destination and environmental deterioration: too many tourists and people, commercial overdevelopment, regional overdevelopment, too much construction, too much traffic and congestion, etc. (Kozak and Rimmington, 1999; Saveriades, 2000; Garrod, Fyall and Leask, 2002; Hovinen, 2002; Ryan, and Cessford, 2003; Dickinson, Calver, Watters and Wilkes, 2004; Bultjens, Ratnayake, Gnanapala and Aslam, 2005; Alexandros and Jaffry, 2005; Needham and Rollins, 2005; Rodrigues, Friedrich, Allner-Kersanach and Fillmann, 2005; Law and Cheung, 2007)<sup>3</sup>. These are aspects of the destination with a “negative” profile that tourists usually find undesirable. For these sorts of situations it is difficult to ask for an evaluation in terms of satisfaction. Given that the impact on the tourist is clearly negative, the most natural way to approach the tourist is to ask about his/her degree of dissatisfaction in such regard.

In view of the arguments analyzed it is therefore advisable to use two different dimensions when evaluating the attributes of a destination, firstly because the ratings of certain attributes of a destination can only be evaluated from the perspective of dissatisfaction. Secondly, because even some of the attributes that can be evaluated in terms of satisfaction can be interpreted negatively (satisfaction with the cleanliness of the destination vs. dissatisfaction with the destination’s dirtiness), leading to

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<sup>2</sup> The questionnaires used a Likert scale to score both positive and negative attributes. A five-point scale was used, ranging from -4 (totally disagree) to 4 (totally agree), 0 being the value for “no opinion”.

<sup>3</sup> These are often situations caused by the negative impacts generated by tourism activity itself (Briassoulis, 1995; Butler, 1980; Buhalis and Fletcher, 1995; Glasson et al, 1995; Kirkby, 1996; Priestly, Arwel Edwards and Coccossis, 1996; Priestley and Mundet, 1998; Tantrigama, 1999; Saveriades, 2000; Garcia and Servera, 2003; Butler, 2004; Burak, Dogan, Gazioglu, 2004; Patterson, Niccolucci and Marcettini, 2007).

different evaluations of the destination. This paper analyses both of these issues and presents results that support the benefits of this approach. As a part of this study, we have examined the influence of such negative situations on tourists' overall satisfaction and on their intention to return. Tourism satisfaction research has reached two clearly distinct results. The first one states that the visitor's overall satisfaction largely depends on his/her satisfaction with the destination's many attributes (Alegre and Cladera, 2006; Baker and Crompton, 2000; Crompton and Love, 1995; Danaher and Arweiler, 1996; Kozak, 2002; Kozak and Rimmington, 1999; Murphy, Pritchard and Smith, 2000; Pizam and Ellis, 1999; Yoon and Uysal, 2005). The second result shows that one of the main determining factors for the return of the visitor (if not the most important) is his/her satisfaction with previous stays at the destination (Ross, 1993; Juaneda, 1996; Appiah-Adu, Fyall and Singh 2000; Baker and Crompton, 2000; Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Kozak, 2001, 2003; Bigné, Sánchez and Sánchez 2001; Caneen, 2003; Yoon and Uysal, 2005; Alegre and Cladera, 2006). These studies, however, do not include "negative" evaluations of the destinations. It may be the negative experiences at the destination, expressed as dissatisfaction, that explain in part the overall satisfaction or intention to return (Truong and Foster, 2006). Some authors suggest that negative situations can have a greater impact than positive situations on a visitor's overall degree of satisfaction and intention to return (Chung and Hoffman, 1998; Petrick et al., 2006). In other words, customers are more likely to recall – and are more influenced by – mistakes or things that have disappointed them than things that have satisfied them. Lutz (1975) affirms that in people's cognitive structure, negative information has a greater impact than positive information (cited by Kelley et al. (1993)). Thus, the inclusion of explicit dissatisfaction-based evaluations can give more accurate results regarding the ability of the destination to satisfy its visitors and spur them to return.

### 3. SURVEY DESIGN

As we have pointed out, this paper has two objectives. First, to determine whether tourists' evaluations through dissatisfaction-based questions as opposed to satisfaction-based questions allow to ascertain them as different dimensions, at least for certain destination attributes. The second objective is to evaluate the added value of including such dimensions of dissatisfaction in explanatory models of tourists' overall satisfaction and intention to return.

To attain such objectives we conducted a survey among tourists at one of the Mediterranean's main sun and sand tourist destinations, the Island of Majorca in the Balearic Islands. In designing the survey the primary challenges resided in determining what attributes of the destination needed to be evaluated, and among them, which ones should be presented in terms of satisfaction and which in terms of dissatisfaction. Moreover, the measurement scale of both dimensions needed to be established. In making the first selection of both "positive" and "negative" attributes, we consulted different studies on satisfaction with holiday destinations. The studies on sun and sand products typically cover attributes such as the climate, the beaches, the landscapes, the quality of the hotels, the safety of the destination, etc. (Aguiló et al, 2005; Alegre and Cladera, 2006; Kozak, 2001; Mangion et al, 2005; Yoon and Uysal, 2005). These attributes, along with others such as the familiarity with the destination and the presence of friends or family, were included for the satisfaction-based evaluation<sup>4</sup>. To establish the attributes to be evaluated in terms of dissatisfaction, we turned to studies that explicitly analyze dissatisfaction or negative incidents that might affect a tourist's overall experience of a destination (Bardolet, 1999; Kozak and Rimmington 1999; Hovinen, 2002). Next, we ran two pilot surveys at the Airport of Palma (Balearic Islands) (in March and June 2006, with 106 and 88 people surveyed, respectively), to check the suitability of the selected factors<sup>5</sup>. In the end, the

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<sup>4</sup> Specifically, the attributes rated in terms of satisfaction were as follows: beaches, climate, cleanliness and hygiene, landscape, peace and quiet, lodging, safety, historic sites or places, cultural activities, interesting towns or cities, contact with nature, presence of friends and family, interaction with other tourists, nightlife, sports activities and practice, tourism attractions, visited the destination before, easy to access, facilities for children and /or the elderly, easy to get information and make arrangements for the destination, local cuisine, local lifestyle, feasible budget, most inexpensive destination.

<sup>5</sup> The results of these pilot tests were discussed in work sessions with tourism scholars from the University of the Balearic Islands and at three international conferences on the study of tourism: *15th International Leisure and Tourism Symposium ESADE* (Barcelona, 2006),

following characteristics were evaluated in terms of dissatisfaction: too much construction /destruction of the landscape, too much development /too commercial, too many people, noise, too much traffic, lack of nature, expensive, sports facilities and infrastructure, problems at the airport, pollution (beaches, street, etc.), signposting on highways and /or places of interest, lack of professionalism in services outside of the hotel, and road conditions. Though independently selected, most of the attributes presented in terms of dissatisfaction have their counterparts in the satisfaction dimension. Table 1 below displays the connection that can be established between the two groups. This correspondence makes it necessary to find out whether the evaluations in both dimensions are statistically different.

**Table 1.** Attributes of the destination

Aspect of satisfaction	Aspect of dissatisfaction
Cleanliness and hygiene	Pollution (beaches, street, etc.)
Most inexpensive destination	Expensive
Easy to access	Problems at the airport
Sports activities and practice	Sports facilities and infrastructure
Peace and quiet	Too much traffic Too many people Noise
Contact with nature	Too much development / too commercial Too much construction / destruction of the landscape Lack of natural environment

As regards the tourists' response scale, in the first pilot survey a 5-point Likert scale was used for attributes of both satisfaction (1- not at all satisfied; 5-highly satisfied) and dissatisfaction (1-not at all dissatisfied; 5-highly dissatisfied). To express dissatisfaction, the 5-point scale generated problems of interpretation for the respondents, while at the same time presenting results with very little difference in the answers. For this reason, this section was redefined for the second pilot survey. Under the heading of "dissatisfaction with the destination", the survey asked for "an evaluation of the aspects that you disliked the most and/or the aspects that you felt were the most negative" for each destination contemplated. The evaluation was made on a 3-point scale (1-Did not find it disturbing; 2- Negative or unpleasant; 3- Highly negative or highly unpleasant). Given the success of this scale in the pilot test, we used it in the final survey. The survey questionnaire first asked for a rating of the 25 attributes defined in the satisfaction dimension, followed by the 13 attributes that enabled the respondents to express their discontent or a negative opinion of the destination.

Furthermore, the survey asked respondents to rate their overall satisfaction with the stay in each destination evaluated using the same 5-point scale, as well as the destinations that the visitor would be likely to choose to spend the following 2 or 3 summers (with up to 3 probable destinations).

The tourists surveyed belonged to the three main nationalities that visit the Balearic Islands: Germans, British and Spanish. These three nationalities account for 81% of Mallorca's tourists (Govern de les Illes Balears, 2006). The surveys were conducted in the native languages of the respondents at the departure gates of Palma Airport, once the passengers had checked their baggage and gone through airport security. The survey selection process was random, based on the departure and gate information of all scheduled flights for this period, which was provided by the airport authorities. Moreover, the surveyors had to follow a specific protocol to select the tourists at each boarding gate. For each flight, a maximum of three surveys were conducted. Each tourist could evaluate a maximum

of three sun and sand destinations (including the Island of Majorca) where they had spent their most recent summer holidays (2004, 2005 and 2006). Tourists who had not been to at least three destinations were not selected to take part in the survey<sup>6</sup>. Finally, 2,423 people participated in the survey. Table 2 lists some of the characteristics of those surveyed.

**Table 2.** Selected characteristics of the survey respondents

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>%</b>
German	39.88	No completed education	1.16
British	41.39	Primary school education	3.60
Spanish	18.74	Secondary school education	38.05
Total	100	Non-university higher education	22.12
		University education	31.55
		Unknown/No answer	3.52
<b>Age</b>		Total	100
18 – 29	20.45		
30 – 44	34.88		
45 – 59	34.88	<b>Accommodation</b>	
60 and over	9.80	Hotel	70.39
Total	100	Rented apartment/villa	11.00
		Own apartment/villa	5.34
		Home of friends/relatives	8.55
<b>Income</b>		Rural tourism	1.78
No income	8.06	Other	2.94
Less than 12,000 euros	4.50	Total	100
12,000 – 21,000	10.55		
21,000 – 30,000	13.54		
30,000 – 39,000	17.76		
39,000 – 48,000	13.18	<b>Package holiday</b>	
Over 48,000 euros	14.65	Yes	68.90
Unknown/No answer	17.76	No	31.10
Total	100	Total	100

#### 4. DISSATISFACTION IS NOT THE OPPOSITE OF SATISFACTION

As mentioned above, the list of attributes evaluated in terms of dissatisfaction was separated from the list of satisfaction-based attributes. It is worth noting that the vast majority of the attributes on the first list have their counterpart attributes on the second list (see Table 1). The first task at hand was to determine whether or not the information gathered on the two lists was redundant. To do so, we began by analyzing the concurrence of the assigned ratings.

Table 3 reports the percentages corresponding to the satisfaction ratings with a score of 4 or higher (satisfied or highly satisfied) and those corresponding to dissatisfaction ratings greater than 1 (unpleasant/ negative rating or highly unpleasant /highly negative rating). The lack of concordance

<sup>6</sup> Given that some of the destinations had been evaluated by very few tourists, we decided to include in our study only the destinations that met a minimum number of evaluations. In addition to the Balearic Islands, sun and sand destinations in the following regions were also rated: Peninsular Spain, the Canary Islands, the French coast, the Italian coast, Croatia, Greece, Tunisia, Turkey, Egypt, Morocco, Bulgaria and the Caribbean.

between the two answers was detected by cross-comparing the information in the corresponding responses. The last column of the table shows the percentages of tourists that rated the attribute “from a positive perspective” as satisfactory or highly satisfactory, while at the same time rating the attribute “from a negative perspective” to be unpleasant /negative or highly unpleasant /highly negative. As an example, in this column the percentage of 23.5 indicates that this proportion of tourists were both satisfied or highly satisfied with the cleanliness and hygiene of the destination, while disturbed or disappointed in some way by the pollution of the destination. As can be seen, there are relatively high degrees of displeasure or dissatisfaction among those that stated their satisfaction with the attributes.

**Table 3.** Satisfaction- and dissatisfaction-based ratings

Destination attributes	Percentage of satisfaction $\geq 4$	Dissatisfaction at destination	Percentage of dissatisfaction $> 1$	Percentage of dissatisfaction $> 1$ and satisfaction $\geq 4$
Cleanliness and hygiene	80.0	Pollution (beaches, streets, etc.)	28.1	23.5
Most inexpensive destination	64.6	Expensive	43.4	39.8
Easy to access	80.1	Problems at the airport	16.8	15.5
Sports activities and practice	56.8	Sports facilities and infrastructure	16.7	11.3
Peace and quiet	77.8	Too much traffic	34.8	31.8
		Too many people	36.8	33.2
		Noise	24.3	19.4
Contact with nature	61.2	Too much development / too commercial	38.8	32.3
		Too much construction / destruction of the landscape	45.3	41.6
		Lack of natural environment	22.9	17.1

In order to assess the consistency of the answers between the two types of variables, three statistics of association (*gamma*, *C of contingency* and  $R^2$ ) were calculated to measure the concordance of the evaluations. In the case of the *gamma* statistic, which is applied to two qualitative variables, its theoretical range is -1 (maximum negative association) to 1 (maximum positive association between the variables). In our case, concordant satisfaction- and dissatisfaction-based evaluations ought to lead to a *gamma* statistic close to  $-1$ . As it can be seen in Table 4, this statistic gives negative values for all groups of variables, yet with values very close to zero, thus suggesting that there is not a high degree of concordance between the satisfaction- and dissatisfaction-based responses. The same conclusions can be extended to the other statistics of association.

The above analyses confirm the lack of concordance between the two types of evaluations: tourists rate the attributes of the destination differently depending on whether they are presented on a scale of satisfaction or on a scale of dissatisfaction or displeasure. As a result, we must consider the bearing that these feelings of discontent have on the tourist’s ultimate satisfaction and his/her intention to return.

**Table 4.** Statistics of association between attributes rated in terms of satisfaction and attributes rated in terms of dissatisfaction.

Satisfaction vs. dissatisfaction	Gamma	C of contingency	$R^2$
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Cleanliness and hygiene vs. Pollution (beaches, streets, etc.)	-0.284	0.295	0.047
Most inexpensive destination vs. Price	-0.164	0.163	0.015
Easy to access vs. Problems at the airport	-0.068	0.094	0.003
Sports activities and practice vs. Sports facilities and infrastructure	-0.344	0.219	0.035
Peace and quiet vs. Too much traffic	-0.219	0.172	0.072
Too many people	-0.221	0.169	
Noise	-0.358	0.293	
Contact with nature vs. Too much development / too commercial	-0.203	0.187	0.033
Too much construction / destruction of landscape	-0.080	0.107	
Lack of natural environment	-0.235	0.166	

## 5. SATISFACTION/DISSATISFACTION WITH THE ATTRIBUTES AS DETERMINING FACTORS OF OVERALL SATISFACTION AND THE INTENTION TO RETURN

### 5.1 Analysis of principal components principals

As a prior step to the incorporation of the tourist's ratings in the explanatory models for overall satisfaction and the intention to return, we carried out two analyses of the principal components in each of the corresponding groups of ratings. The main objective of this analysis was to obtain new variables that would allow us to prevent problems of multicollinearity in the estimations of the models, thus reducing redundant information. The components obtained from these analyses were used as explanatory variables of the two causal models.

Principal components analysis was performed on the 24 attributes evaluated in terms of satisfaction, enabling us to reduce the number of variables to six components (those with eigenvalues greater than one). The results of an initial solution then underwent varimax rotation. Table 5 shows only the correlation coefficients between the original variables and the principal components with values higher than 0.4. The same table also provides the percentage of explained variation for each of the components, with a total explained variance of 52.74%.

**Table 5.** Matrix of rotated components based on the 24 attributes

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Beaches	.660					
Climate	.614					
Cleanliness and hygiene	.611					
Landscape	.579					
Peace and quiet	.576					

Lodging	.561					
Safety	.547					
Historic sites or places		.789				
Cultural activities		.707				
Interesting towns or cities		.645				
Contact with nature		.609				
Presence of friends and family			.693			
Interaction with other tourists			.636			
Nightlife			.629			
Sports activities and practice			.538			
Tourism attractions			.520			
Been to destination before			.473		.451	
Easy to access				.695		
Facilities for children and/or elderly				.636		
Easy to get information and make arrangements for the destination				.581		
Local cuisine					.715	
Local lifestyle					.539	
Feasible budget						.807
Most inexpensive destination						.684
Percentages of explained variation	11.57	10.81	10.58	6.93	6.53	6.33

The first principal component takes in those attributes that define the basic sun and sand product (i.e., beaches, climate, cleanliness and hygiene, landscape, peace and quiet, lodging and safety). The second component is primarily associated with features of the destination that are more distant from the basic sun and sand, yet which prompt the selection of a tourism destination (i.e., visits to historic places, cultural activities, interesting towns or cities, contact with nature). The third component is more linked to variables of activity and social interaction (i.e., interaction with other tourists, nightlife, practice of sports, specific leisure/tourism attractions, been to the destination before). The fourth component can be interpreted as a dimension of the ease of selecting the destination (i.e., easy to access, facilities for children and /or the elderly, easy to get information and make arrangements). The fifth component is more tied to the cuisine and local lifestyle, as well as the fact of having been to the destination before. Finally, the sixth component is associated with price-related aspects (feasible budget of the destination and viewing the destination as inexpensive).

The second principal components analysis was performed on the thirteen dissatisfaction-based attributes. The results showed two components with eigenvalues greater than one. Once selected, a varimax rotation was performed. Table 6 shows the correlation coefficients between the original variables and the principal components with values higher than 0.4. This table also shows the percentages of explained variation for each of the components, with a total explained variance of 40.39%.

**Table 6.** Matrix of rotated components for the 13 elements of dissatisfaction

	Component
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	1	2
Too much construction/destruction of the landscape	.808	
Too much development /too commercial	.774	
Too many people	.767	
Noise	.447	
Too much traffic	.432	
Lack of natural environment	.419	.407
Expensive		
Signposting of roads and /or places of interest		.688
Sports facilities and infrastructure		.662
Lack of professionalism in services outside of hotel		.630
Road conditions		.519
Problems at the airport		.485
Pollution (beaches, streets, etc.)		.453
Percentages of explained variation	21.17	19.22

The first principal component is associated with the variables of too much construction/destruction of the landscape, too much development/too commercial, too many people, noise, too much traffic and lack of a natural environment. Thus, these are variables tied to the overcrowding of the destination and environmental deterioration. The second component is more linked to the other aspects that can generate dissatisfaction (poor signposting of roads and /or places of interest, lack of sports facilities and infrastructure, lack of professionalism and cordiality of service staff outside of the hotels, poor road conditions, problems at the airport and the existence of pollution).

Using the two groups of principal components obtained, we were able to evaluate the lack of association between the dimensions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Table 7 shows the correlation coefficients between the two components of dissatisfaction and the six components of satisfaction. The results confirm the lack of association between the variables of satisfaction and those of dissatisfaction, with correlations below 0.2.

**Table 7.** Correlations between the six principal components of satisfaction (PC1-PC6) and the two principal components of dissatisfaction (PC1-PC2).

	Displeasure or dissatisfaction	
	PC1	PC2
PC1	-0.115	-0.180
PC2	-0.110	-0.103
PC3	-0.101	-0.142
PC4	0.058	-0.123
PC5	-0.045	-0.062
PC6	-0.062	-0.096

## 5.2. Model of satisfaction

The model of satisfaction is aimed at examining whether there is a relation of dependency between overall satisfaction and the stated satisfaction or dissatisfaction regarding different aspects of the destination. In order to control for specific characteristics of tourists the model includes some variables of the tourist's socio-demographic profile: country of residence (Germany, United Kingdom, Spain), age groups (18 to 29, 30 to 44, 45 to 59, and 60 and older), income level (in seven intervals) and educational level (in five intervals). Dummy variables referring to the destination being evaluated were also included. The satisfaction- and dissatisfaction-based evaluations were included in the model as principal components (six and two, respectively), in keeping with the results of the components analyses described in the section above. The regression coefficient of determination equals 0.45. The statistical significance of the model's variables can be seen in Table 8. The components of both satisfaction and dissatisfaction included in the analyses are all statistically significant at the standard 5% level (see Table 8).

**Table 8.** Results of the model of overall satisfaction

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Destination	10.917	7	1.560	5.135	.000
Country residence	.795	2	.398	1.309	.270
Age	3.520	3	1.173	3.863	.009
Income	3.993	7	.570	1.878	.069
Education	3.108	5	.622	2.047	.069
Satisfaction PC1	505.952	1	505.952	1665.786	.000
Satisfaction PC2	84.878	1	84.878	279.451	.000
Satisfaction PC3	56.576	1	56.576	186.270	.000
Satisfaction PC4	25.222	1	25.222	83.041	.000
Satisfaction PC5	76.380	1	76.380	251.472	.000
Satisfaction PC6	45.923	1	45.923	151.197	.000
Dissatisfaction PC1	1.861	1	1.861	6.127	.013
Dissatisfaction PC2	2.894	1	2.894	9.530	.002

The estimated coefficients of the principal components are displayed in Table 9. The results suggest that the ratings of displeasure are statistically significant and present the expected negative sign. Nevertheless, their effect on the dependent variable is far lower than the effect estimated for the components of satisfaction. The partial correlation coefficients, for example, take negative values of around -0.04, whereas the lowest value of the components of satisfaction is 0.14.

The results of the previous estimations, therefore, suggest that the displeasure-based evaluations influence the tourist's global satisfaction, yet their influence is very low and in absolute terms far lower than the dimensions of satisfaction.

**Table 9.** Estimated coefficients of the components of satisfaction and dissatisfaction

	Unstandardized Beta Coefficients	Standardized Beta Coefficients	Partial Correlation	Sig.
Satisfaction PC1	0.381	0.514	0.543	0.000
Satisfaction PC2	0.156	0.212	0.256	0.000
Satisfaction PC3	0.144	0.197	0.244	0.000
Satisfaction PC4	0.080	0.149	0.193	0.000

Dissatisfaction PC7	-0.022	-0.031	-0.038	0.013
Dissatisfaction PC8	-0.029	-0.039	-0.049	0.002

### 5.3. Model of intention to return

To estimate the impact of the dissatisfaction-based evaluations on the intention to return, only the information corresponding to the Island of Majorca was used. The estimated model was a binary logit model, and its dependent variable took the value of 0 if the respondent pointed out that he/she had no intention of returning to this destination in the next two or three summers (53.9% of those surveyed), and a value of 1 in the opposite case (46.1%). The variables included were the same as those used in the above model of satisfaction, with the addition of a variable referring to the number of previous visits to the archipelago. This variable measures the number of visits during the most recent five years leading up to the survey, with a maximum value of “more than four”. The percentage of correct assignment of the estimated model was 68.04%, and coefficients of  $R^2$  of Cox and Snell and of Nagellkerke equal 0.160 and 0.213.

**Table 10.** Estimations of the logit model on the intention to return to the Balearics

Variable	B	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	Marginal Effect	Elasticity	% StdX
Repetition		55,491	3	0,000				
Country residence		13,859	2	0,010				
Age		3,662	3	0,300				
Income		14,132	7	0,049				
Education		7,950	5	0,160				
Satisfaction PC1	0,242	11,971	1	0,005	1,2737	0,060	,051	25,9
Satisfaction PC2	0,061	0,822	1	0,365	1,0633	0,015	,013	6,2
Satisfaction PC3	0,128	3,279	1	0,070	1,1366	0,032	,027	13,3
Satisfaction PC4	0,041	0,399	1	0,528	1,0421	0,010	,009	4,1
Satisfaction PC5	0,260	14,613	1	0,000	1,2974	0,065	,055	29,1
Satisfaction PC6	0,057	0,791	1	0,374	1,0584	0,014	,012	5,8
Dissatisfaction PC1	-0,241	13,580	1	0,000	0,7861	-0,059	-,051	-21,9
Dissatisfaction PC2	-0,124	3,265	1	0,071	0,8836	-0,031	-,026	-11,4
Constant	0,755	1,129	1	0,288				

Table 10 shows the Wald tests of joint significance of the groups of dummy variables as well as of the satisfaction/dissatisfaction principal components. In all cases they are statistically significant at the 5% level. Among all the components, the one with the highest explanatory capacity of the intention to return is the fifth component of satisfaction. This component is associated with the local lifestyle and cuisine, as well as with the fact that the tourist has already been to the destination before. These variables are linked to the previous experience with and knowledge of the destination. On the other hand, the significant influence of the first component (pertaining to the sun and sand product), is in accordance with the results of other studies (Aguiló et al., 2005; Alegre and Cladera, 2006). A high degree of satisfaction with the attributes typical of a sun and sand destination (beach, climate, landscape, etc.) guarantees a greater probability of return. The first component of dissatisfaction also has a high explanatory power. The importance of this variable confirms the need to include these types

of explicit questions pertaining to dissatisfaction when analyzing the tourist's future behavior. Moreover, the meaning of this component, which is associated with the destination's overdevelopment and crowding, suggests how essential it is for the administrative organizations of such destinations to consider the importance of initiatives that preserve the natural environment and the peaceful, undisturbed feeling of the destination.

## **5. Conclusions**

The first issue that the results of this study point to is the need to reconsider the usual structure of tourist satisfaction surveys, for a number of reasons. First of all, because these types of surveys primarily focus on the positive attributes of the destination, which are usually associated with the very reasons that spur the tourist to select the destination. As a result, the researcher remains unaware of the tourist's opinion of the destination's other features, including negative characteristics or those that are not associated with the reasons for the selection of the vacation spot. The results of this study illustrate that tourists evaluate the attributes of a destination differently, depending on whether the survey elicits an opinion relating to a dimension of satisfaction or whether it focuses on a dimension of dissatisfaction. The statistical analysis performed shows a marked lack of concordance between the two types of evaluations. The discrepancies detected between the tourists' "positive" and "negative" evaluations point to the need for further research, so as to better understand the reasons why people assess things differently according to how the question is posed. Does this problem have to do with the form or scale of the questions? Does such information pertain to critical incidents? Or is it that we must accept the fact that the concept of satisfaction is not one-dimensional and that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not necessarily extremes of a single continuum?

The importance of the issue studied in this paper goes beyond the fact that the explicit evaluations of dissatisfaction provide complementary information on the experience at the destination. The analyses performed show that the statements of dissatisfaction have an obvious bearing on both the tourist's degree of overall satisfaction and his/her intention to return to the destination. Overlooking such effects could mean giving up the opportunity to correct the negative aspects of the holiday experience. In this respect, the results obtained in the study on the intention to return are highly illustrative. The estimated model reveals that the negative situations stemming from aspects tied to overdevelopment, overcrowded tourism and the environmental deterioration of the destination are highly important in explaining the tourist's intention not to return. We must point out that evaluations of dissatisfaction have a greater bearing on the intention to return than on overall satisfaction. In the case of the latter variable, the dimensions of dissatisfaction are significant, although their influence is not as strong as those of satisfaction. Initially, this result leads to the conclusion that negative experiences at the destination may not determine the final evaluation of satisfaction, yet they nevertheless make the destination less attractive, and thus reduce the probability of return. This result might be due to the tendency to rate holidays satisfactorily, given the personal and emotional involvement inherent in the experience and their associated cost. Yet there is no such reinforcement when stating the intention to return. This matter is important in evaluating the holiday experiences of tourists and ought to be explored in greater detail in future studies.

For those administrating holiday destinations, several implications can be stated from this study. First of all, the different surveys or studies pertaining to the evaluation of the tourist's experience at the destination need to include explicit questions on dissatisfaction. The explicit ratings of dissatisfaction do not reiterate the evaluations made from the perspective of satisfaction, and thus provide additional information. Moreover, this information can be incorporated into the models of both satisfaction and the intention to return. And needless to say, the results may be especially valuable if we want to guarantee the tourists' return.

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