

**MOTIVATION AND SATISFACTION OF TOURISTS VISITING THE TATACOA
DESERT – COLOMBIA**

**MOTIVACIÓN Y SATISFACCIÓN DE LOS TURISTAS QUE VISITAN EL DESIERTO
DE LA TATACOA – COLOMBIA**

**MOTIVAÇÃO E SATISFAÇÃO DOS TURISTAS QUE VISITAM O DESERTO DE
TATACOA – COLÔMBIA**

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Abstract

This article establishes the relationship of influence between the motivation and satisfaction of visitors to the Tatacoa desert in the Surcolombian region. The research was quantitative, with a deductive and descriptive approach. Thus, a survey was elaborated with Likert-type questions composed of nine dimensions for motivation and six for satisfaction. The model's reliability was measured with Cronbach's alpha and its validity with the Confirmatory Factor Analysis, both of which obtained acceptable levels. The hypothesized model was evaluated using structural equations. The model obtained showed a positive and significant relationship between motivation and satisfaction (0.751; $p < 0.00$), indicating that the higher the level of motivation, the higher the level of satisfaction of domestic and foreign tourists. On the other hand, the correlations in the motivation dimensions of Rest (R) (0.848; $p < 0.00$), Knowledge (K) (0.786; $p < 0.00$), Access and Infrastructure (A-I) (0.829; $p < 0.00$) and Local Attractions (LA) (0.787; $p < 0.00$), while for satisfaction they were Cost (Co) (0.811; $p < 0.00$) and Infrastructure (In) (0.797; $p < 0.00$).

Keywords: pull factors; push factors; preferences; satisfaction; tourism.

JEL: L83; M31; Z30, Z32; Z39.

Resumen

El presente artículo establece la relación de influencia entre la motivación y satisfacción de los visitantes del desierto de la Tatacoa en la región Surcolombiana. La investigación fue de corte cuantitativa, con un abordaje desde el método deductivo y de tipo descriptiva. Así, se elaboró una encuesta con preguntas tipo Likert compuesta por nueve dimensiones para motivación y seis dimensiones para satisfacción. La confiabilidad del modelo se midió con el alfa de Cronbach y la validez con el Análisis Factorial Confirmatorio, los dos obtuvieron niveles aceptables. La evaluación del modelo hipotetizado se realizó mediante ecuaciones estructurales. El modelo obtenido evidenció una relación positiva y significativa entre motivación y satisfacción (0.751; $p < 0.00$) denotando que, a mayor nivel de motivación, mayor será el nivel de satisfacción de los turistas, nacionales y extranjeros. De otra parte, sobresalen las correlaciones en las dimensiones de motivación de Descanso (D) (0,848; $p < 0,00$), Conocimiento (C) (0,786; $p < 0,00$), Acceso e

Infraestructura (A-I) (0,829; $p < 0,00$) y Atractivos locales (A) (0,787; $p < 0,00$), mientras para la satisfacción fueron Economía (Ec) (0,811; $p < 0,00$) e Infraestructura (In) (0,797; $p < 0,00$).

Palabras clave: factores de atracción; factores de empuje; preferencias; satisfacción; turismo.

JEL: L83; M31; Z30, Z32; Z39.

Resumo

Este artigo estabelece a relação de influência entre a motivação e a satisfação dos visitantes do Deserto de Tatacoa na região Surcolombiana. A pesquisa foi quantitativa, com uma abordagem dedutiva e descritiva. Assim, foi elaborada uma pesquisa com perguntas do tipo Likert, composta de nove dimensões para motivação e seis dimensões para satisfação. A confiabilidade do modelo foi medida com o alfa de Cronbach e a validade com a análise fatorial confirmatória, ambas com níveis aceitáveis. O modelo hipotético foi avaliado por meio de equações estruturais. O modelo obtido mostrou uma relação positiva e significativa entre motivação e satisfação (0,751; $p < 0,00$), indicando que quanto maior o nível de motivação, maior o nível de satisfação dos turistas nacionais e estrangeiros. Por outro lado, destacam-se as correlações nas dimensões de motivação de Descanso (D) (0,848; $p < 0,00$), Conhecimento (C) (0,786; $p < 0,00$), Acesso e Infraestrutura (A-I) (0,829; $p < 0,00$) e Acesso e Infraestrutura (A-I) (0,829; $p < 0,00$); $p < 0,00$) e Atratividade local (A) (0,787; $p < 0,00$), enquanto para satisfação foram Economia (Ec) (0,811; $p < 0,00$) e Infraestrutura (In) (0,797; $p < 0,00$).

Palavras-chave: fatores de atração; fatores de pressão; preferências; satisfação; turismo.

JEL: L83; M31; Z30, Z32; Z39.

Introduction

Tourism is a phenomenon that has a broad spectrum of influence on society, encompassing social, cultural, and economic aspects, and involves the movement of people outside their everyday lives. The reasons for such travel vary and range from personal to professional or business purposes. These movements are carried out to engage in various activities that involve spending money on the activity undertaken. Individuals assuming this role are classified as either domestic or international visitors (World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2012).

According to Barroso and Flores (2006), since 2000, the tourism phenomenon has gained widespread global recognition, being considered a structural economic component, surpassing some traditional sectors of the economy such as agriculture and mining, among others.

For the United Nations (UN, 2010), tourism can be seen as a very special service where travel is an essential part of the consumption experience, meaning that people who wish to enjoy the product must physically travel to the location where it is offered.

In this context, three aspects are identified that have a significant impact on tourism: the geographic component, the personal component, and the economic component. The first component refers to the territory where the tourism activity takes place; the second pertains to the behavior of the visitors; and the third one belongs to the companies and organizations involved in the tourism business.

According to Figueroa (2011), among the many benefits that tourism offers, particularly noteworthy are those that provide progress opportunities for the communities involved in the activity. Thus, tourism can be leveraged to protect and simultaneously add value to cultural and natural heritage; transform community perceptions to responsibly use their natural resources; enhance community income, and revive modest local economies through the sale of goods and services to tourists and the creation of employment in tourism-related activities; and increase the quantity and quality of local infrastructure through public and private investment.

Indeed, it is evident that tourism is potentially a significant strategy for social, economic, and cultural change, generating income for the population and improving their quality of life, positively altering their mindset regarding natural resource use, and allowing for the conservation of nature and its attractions.

There are numerous studies aiming to establish the relevant factors that are determinants for travel decisions within the context of tourism activities. McCabe (2000) states that, for a long time, research on travel motivators in the context of tourism was studied from a single construct,

either from cognitive factors or from emotional factors. However, after the year 2000, and currently, studies related to motivation in tourism tend towards a holistic approach when analyzing motivational factors. Thus, multiple studies have been recorded related to motivation for various types of tourism, such as exotic location tourism (Correia et al., 2007b), attraction tourism (Ab Dulhamid et al., 2022), rural tourism (Pesonen et al., 2011), sports tourism (Mishra & Malhotra, 2022), cultural tourism (Giang, 2022; Seyitoglu & Davras, 2022), religious tourism (Seyitoglu et al., 2022), ecotourism (Carvache et al., 2022; Wu et al., 2022), gastronomic tourism (Ullah et al., 2022), sun and beach tourism (Trupp et al., 2022), protest tourism (Shim et al., 2022), and health tourism (Sobani et al., 2022), among others.

On the other hand, there is a variable strongly linked to motivation, which is tourist satisfaction. In some cases, researchers have established that motivation can eventually become a predictor of tourist satisfaction (Solis et al., 2021), making the relationship between these two variables a focal point of interest for a better understanding of the tourism phenomenon.

Therefore, this research aimed to establish the levels of motivation and satisfaction of both domestic and international tourists who visited the Tatacoa Desert, a tourist attraction located in southern Colombia. The Tatacoa Desert is a point of national and international interest due to its particularities and very dry tropical forest conditions. This tourist attraction is visited annually by thousands of national and international tourists (Semana, 2020; Rodríguez, 2022).

Tourism and Its Scope

In the context of the 21st century, tourism, in its various manifestations, has become an economic and social phenomenon with significant implications, particularly due to the benefits it brings (Araújo et al., 2012). As tourism is a generator of foreign exchange, income, and employment, it has a multiplier effect on other economic sectors, leading many countries to view it as an industry that significantly contributes to the development and consolidation of their economies (Quicaña, 2021).

Although there are many different types of tourism, they are generally classified into two central categories: traditional tourism and alternative tourism. This classification is based on the

spatial or temporal component of the activity or the purpose of the trip (Ibáñez and Rodríguez, 2012). Traditional tourism, which includes beach and sun attractions, historical cities, and cultural heritage sites near major cities, is primarily based on mass tourism and is often associated with a high level of sophistication in the services requested by tourists and provided by operators (Ibáñez and Rodríguez, 2012).

Alternative tourism, on the other hand, focuses on outdoor activities and the social and cultural expressions of rural, indigenous, and urban communities, aiming to preserve the natural, cultural, and historical components of destinations and attractions (Ibáñez and Rodríguez, 2012).

Tourism Motivations

In general, motivation is a psychological force that drives individuals to action (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2003). In the context of tourism, this concept becomes a set of desires that lead an individual to certain tourism activities and, consequently, to destinations (Beerli & Martín, 2004). This concept refers to travel motivation, which encompasses the sum of biological and sociocultural forces that energize and generate tourist behavior (Chan et al., 2018).

Travel motivation is linked to a set of needs that influence the selection and execution of tourism activities and relates to something that is lacking in the individual, with its satisfaction resulting in the trip (Dann, 1981).

Tourists plan their trips based on different motivations (Correia et al., 2013). One of the earliest works by Crompton (1979) identified nine travel motivations: escape from the mundane, exploration, relaxation, prestige and status, regression, relationship enhancement, social interaction, education, and novelty; these were synthesized by McIntosh & Goeldner (1986) into physical, cultural, interpersonal, and status and prestige motivations.

On the other hand, Ryan & Glendon (1998) found four dimensions of travel motivations in the UK: social dominance, relaxation, intellectual, and competence. Similarly, Hanqin & Lam (1999) identified five motivation factors for visitors to Hong Kong: knowledge, prestige, human

relationship enhancement, relaxation, and novelty (including attributes related to the pursuit of excitement).

Moreover, Cleaver et al. (2000) established six dimensions in their research: self-improvement, thrill-seeking, discovery, status-seeking, reminiscence, and escapism. Additionally, Goeldner et al. (2000) included a dimension of spirituality in the list of travel motivation factors, while Loker & Perdue (1992) identified travel motivations based on perceived benefits: escape, excitement and evasion, extreme thrill-seeking, family and friends orientation, enjoyment of nature, and multiple benefit interests.

In general, there is abundant empirical evidence regarding the presence of motivating factors that influence people to engage in tourism activities. Regarding the reasons for traveling and selecting a specific destination, Dann (1977; 1981) suggests two macro-categories: the "escape" need and the "search" need (Monoarfa et al., 2022). Thus, people undertake trips to certain places because they are driven by internal aspects or are attracted by the features of those destinations. Consequently, push factors correspond to internal or emotional aspects of the person (e.g., the desire to escape, the intention to rest and relax, the taste for adventure, or impulses for social interaction), while pull factors are related to external aspects such as highly attractive resources, physical infrastructure, or other aspects linked to tourist attractions (Devesa et al., 2008; Yousaf et al., 2018).

In summary, elements that drive the desire to travel are generally known as push factors, referring to internal forces that induce a person to decide to travel (Dann, 1977; 1981). These factors are linked to emotional aspects (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). On the other hand, pull factors refer to the characteristics of the destination that persuade the person to travel (Kim & Lee, 2002). Unlike push factors, these factors are related to a person's cognitive aspects. (Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

In this context, Uysal & Jurowski (1994) and Lin et al. (2023) consider that push factors include desires to escape routine, rest and relax from work, gain prestige, improve health and physical condition, experience adventure, and engage in social interaction, while pull factors are

based on the characteristics of the destination and are strongly linked to tangible resources, how they are marketed, and perceived benefits.

In this logic, Lee et al. (2002) identified six push dimensions: escape and getaway, novelty-seeking, relaxation, travel bragging, hedonism, and family bonding; and seven pull dimensions: environment and safety, natural/ecological sites, convenience and value, art/culture and shopping, climate, unique people, and outdoor family activities.

Similarly, Jang & Cai (2002) found that tourist motivations for travel can be framed into five push dimensions: novel experience, escape, knowledge-seeking, fun and excitement, rest and relaxation, and family and friend bonding; and five pull dimensions: natural and historical environment, cleanliness and safety, easy access and cost, outdoor activities, and sunny and exotic environment.

Regarding pull factors, Abuamoud et al. (2014) consider that among the determinants for visiting certain tourist sites are both the conditions provided by authorities (security, infrastructure, public services, etc.) and the services offered by various private enterprises (facilities, image, costs, etc.). Similarly, Vong & Ung (2012) assert that the consolidation of tourist destinations is related to aspects such as convenience and infrastructure in the places visited by tourists.

In this sense, the tourist destination is considered, from a psychological perspective, as a product of mental construction based on an evaluation process that the tourist undertakes with information gathered from various sources (Pérez, 2015). This process is referred to as the destination image, a concept that has been extensively studied and is considered a crucial element in the choice of destination (Almeida et al., 2013; Perera & Echarri, 2012).

Tourist Satisfaction

Oliver (1981) defines satisfaction as:

An evaluation of the surprise inherent in a product acquisition and/or consumption experience. In essence, the summary psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding

disconfirmed expectations is coupled with the consumer's prior feelings about the consumption experience. (p. 21)

The previous definition refers to an emotional comparison between what the customer expected from the service they purchased versus what they actually received from the service provided. This difference corresponds to the level of satisfaction experienced by the person.

On the other hand, Campo & Garau (2010) argue that satisfaction

(...) is not of a cognitive or affective nature, but rather both at the same time, and they propose to define satisfaction as the evaluation of emotion, since the emotional component can be the consequence of a specific consumption situation or a succession of consumptions. It explicitly incorporates the purchasing condition for the evaluation of product satisfaction, as in order to evaluate and feel an emotion, it is essential that a consumption experience of the product takes place. (p. 465)

Satisfaction among tourists, according to some authors, is subject to tangible factors, such as the physical infrastructure where the tourist service is provided and the natural context, as well as intangible factors like the treatment received from tourism operators, the friendliness of the local population, and the quality of the services provided, among others (Devesa and Palacios, 2005; Devesa et al., 2008). According to Kotler & Keller (2006), tourist satisfaction arises from contrasting the expectations generated before the trip with the experiences lived during the consumption or use of the tourism product. Therefore, satisfaction is linked to both pre-trip and post-trip aspects (Sweeney & Soutar 2001). Consequently, an experience below expected standards leads to a certain degree of dissatisfaction, while the attainment of gratifying experiences that exceed expectations will result in a highly satisfied tourist (Bringas and Toudert, 2016).

The satisfaction and positive perception experienced by tourists are of great value, both for businesses and destinations, as they lead tourists to share their travel experiences with others or even decide to return (Devesa and Palacios 2005). "Perceived quality is a concept related to consumer satisfaction that in some cases has presented measurement difficulties due to unclear boundaries in its methodology" (Campo & Garau 2010, p. 463). However, there is precision regarding the aforementioned terms: customer satisfaction corresponds to the specific perception

expressed in the short term, while service quality is an attitude that develops over the long term and serves to evaluate performance (Hoffman & Bateson, 1997).

Relationship Between Motivation Factors and Tourist Satisfaction

Multiple authors relate tourists' travel motivation to their level of experience satisfaction, especially within the framework of loyalty (Yuksel et al., 2010). In this context, understanding what motivates tourists allows tourism management efforts to be directed more effectively. It is considered that once the values and needs of tourists are established, the characteristics of tourist sites can be adjusted to these preferences, thereby significantly influencing the expectations and experiences of tourists and considerably impacting their level of satisfaction with the products and services offered.

Scientific literature highlights numerous studies that link motivation with tourist satisfaction across different types of tourism, ranging from local tourism (Devesa et al., 2010), wine tourism (Pérez et al., 2015), ethnotourism (Prada and Pesántez, 2017), ecotourism (Hoang et al., 2022), sun and beach tourism (Solis et al., 2021), gastronomic tourism (Cordova et al., 2021), rural tourism (Sánchez et al., 2021), and ice and snow tourism (Xiangyu et al., 2022), among others.

Sociodemographic Profile of Tourists

Regarding the economic characteristics of tourists, various studies, such as those conducted by Correia et al. (2013), have established that the sociodemographic profiles of tourists tend to vary according to their destinations. These studies highlight that certain places, such as cultural attractions, are primarily demanded by individuals with a high level of education, specifically those with higher education degrees, and with high or medium incomes. In this regard, in the majority of models that study decision-making within the framework of choosing tourist destinations, factors such as the sociodemographic characteristics of individuals (e.g., gender, age, professional occupation, education level, marital status, and social class, among others) stand out (Beerli & Martín, 2004; Um & Crompton, 1990). For instance, Woodside & Lysonski (1989) observed that a destination's image is influenced by both destination attributes and traveler variables, such as age, income, past experiences, and personal values, while Baloglu (1997) examined the motives

of travelers from West Germany to the United States and found that image factors vary significantly with travelers' sociodemographic characteristics.

Finally, as empirical evidence, Weaver et al. (1994) found that age was a discriminative demographic variable influencing destination choice, while Zimmer et al. (1995) identified travelers' income and education as influential variables when choosing destinations, whether they are close or far away. For example, Weaver et al. (1994) noted that travelers under 45 years old tend to seek novelty. In contrast, Zimmer et al. (1995) indicated that better-educated tourists with higher disposable incomes tend to travel farther from home.

Methodology

Scope of the Research

This research was quantitative in nature, given how the variables of motivation and satisfaction, along with their dimensions, were addressed. Additionally, it was approached using the deductive method, as it considered the theoretical foundations of motivation from the push and pull factors, and satisfaction from the perspective of expectations and experience, for a better understanding of the phenomenon. Finally, the study was descriptive in type, as its characteristics were examined (Hernández et al., 2010).

Population and Sample

The studied population consisted of adult tourists, both men and women, national and international, who were visiting the Tatacoa Desert. Information was collected through a physical questionnaire distributed in hotels, restaurants, common areas, and other open spaces in the vicinity of the Tatacoa Desert. The sampling method used non-probability sampling, specifically for convenience, in which 250 questionnaires were administered. Of the sample, 57% were men, while the remaining 43% were women. The predominant age range for both sexes was between 31 and 50 years old, with the majority having a professional level of education (70%).

Operationalization of Variables

The questionnaire designed to evaluate the motivation construct, was developed by the authors following a rigorous literature review process, referred to as theoretical scrutiny, to ensure

the minimum expected levels of reliability and validity. The questionnaire consists of 26 questions across nine dimensions: Rest (Correia et al., 2007b; Jang & Cai, 2002), Fun and Entertainment (Jang & Cai, 2002), Knowledge (Correia et al., 2007a), Socialization (Correia et al., 2007b), Prestige (Yuan & McDonald, 1990), Access and Infrastructure (Vong & Ung, 2012), Local Attractions (Jang & Cai, 2002), Image (Perera and Echarri, 2012), and Cost (Lee et al., 2002). Respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions using a Likert scale ranging from one (1) to five (5) (Table 1).

Table 1

Operationalization of the Motivation Variable

Dimensions	Items
Push. Rest	1. I like to disconnect from everyday life.
	2. I like to relieve stress and accumulated tension.
	3. I like peaceful environments.
Push. Fun and entertainment	4. I enjoy the beauty of natural landscapes.
	5. I enjoy stargazing and observing constellations.
	6. I am an adventure seeker.
	7. I enjoy trying foods from different places.
Push. Knowledge	8. I like to see new and different things.
	9. I am interested in the history of the places I visit.
	10. I like to learn about and experience local cultures.
Push. Socialization	11. I like to interact with the local flora and fauna.
	12. I like to be with people who enjoy the same things I do.
	13. I like to enjoy my free time with family and/or friends.
Push. Prestige	14. I enjoy meeting people from different parts of the world.
	25. I visited the Tatacoa Desert for its fame and tourism reputation.

Pull. Access and infrastructure		15. The Tatacoa Desert is an easily accessible place.
Pull. attractions	Local	18. The Tatacoa Desert is an exciting place. 19. I like the desert landscape. 20. The Tatacoa Desert is an exotic and attractive place.
Pull. Image		22. Online or social media advertising was decisive in my decision to visit the Tatacoa Desert. 23. Advertising in magazines or newspapers was decisive in my decision to visit the Tatacoa Desert. 24. Recommendations from friends/family were decisive in my decision to visit the Tatacoa Desert.
Pull. Cost		26. The Tatacoa Desert is an affordable tourism option.

Source: prepared by the authors.

On the other hand, regarding tourist satisfaction as the dependent variable, the instrument for its measurement was developed by the researchers based on the review of multiple authors and theoretical perspectives. It consists of 22 questions distributed across six dimensions: infrastructure (Devesa & Palacios, 2005), cost (Heung & Cheng, 2000), rest (Bonet, 2008), services and attention (Devesa & Palacios, 2005; Devesa et al., 2008), safety (Wang, 2000), and satisfaction and loyalty (García & Gil, 2005). Similar to the previous one, respondents indicated their perception on a Likert scale (Table 2).

Table 2

Operationalization of the Satisfaction Variable

Dimensions	Items
Infrastructure	21. The signage in the Tatacoa Desert is good.
	27. It is easy to find public transportation to Villavieja.
	28. It is easy to travel from Villavieja to the Tatacoa Desert.
	30. The Tatacoa Desert is well-preserved.
	39. I am satisfied with the hotel facilities.
Cost	29. The price-quality ratio for transportation from Villavieja to the Tatacoa Desert is good.
	31. The price-quality ratio of the guides is good.
	32. The price-quality ratio of the tourist sites is good.
	40. The price-quality ratio of the hotel is good.
Rest	16. The Tatacoa Desert is a peaceful place.
	33. The opening hours of the tourist sites are appropriate.
Services and Attention	34. The tourist information is good.
	35. The residents of Villavieja are friendly.
	36. The gastronomic offer in the desert is good.
	37. I was well attended to at the hotel where I stayed.
	38. I am satisfied with the cleanliness of the hotel.
Safety	17. The Tatacoa Desert is a safe place.
Satisfaction and Loyalty	41. I am very satisfied with all the services received at the hotel where I stayed.
	42. I would recommend the hotel where I stayed to family and friends.
	43. I am very satisfied with visiting the Tatacoa Desert.
	44. I would recommend visiting the Tatacoa Desert to family and friends.
	45. I would return to the Tatacoa Desert.

Source: prepared by the authors.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using the statistical software SPSS Statistics V26 and its structural equation modeling (SEM) add-on, AMOS. The Cronbach's Alpha was measured to assess reliability, achieving an acceptable level of reliability as the Cronbach's Alpha for the analyzed variables was above 0.70 (Motivation, 0.920; Satisfaction, 0.864) (Grande & Abascal, 2000).

Additionally, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed on the model of latent variables because both motivation and satisfaction are multidimensional variables: Motivation consists of nine dimensions, while satisfaction is composed of six dimensions. The results show that the validity levels of the motivation variable, as indicated by the goodness-of-fit (GoF) indices, were acceptable for all indices (CMIN = 886.053; $df = 287$, $p < 0.000$; $CMIN/df = 2.827 < 3.00$; $CFI = 0.889 > 0.90$; $TLI = 0.901 > 0.90$; $IFI = 0.868 > 0.90$; $RFI = 0.913 > 0.90$; $NFI = 0.921 > 0.90$; $RMSEA = 0.08 \leq 0.08$). Similarly, the validity levels for the satisfaction variable, as indicated by the goodness-of-fit (GoF) indices, were acceptable for all indices (CMIN = 871.036; $df = 386$, $p < 0.000$; $CMIN/df = 2.998 < 3.00$; $CFI = 0.923 > 0.90$; $TLI = 0.906 > 0.90$; $IFI = 0.863 > 0.90$; $RFI = 0.902 > 0.90$; $NFI = 0.930 > 0.90$; $RMSEA = 0.07 \leq 0.08$).

Results

The study results are presented in three parts. The first part consists of a descriptive analysis; the second part shows the level of motivation obtained for each dimension of the construct, and the third part evaluates the hypothesized motivation construct.

Descriptive Analysis

Regarding the origin of the surveyed individuals, 69.6% were Colombian tourists. Of these, 37.4% traveled to the Tatacoa Desert with their family, while 28.7% did so with their partner. The remaining 30.4% were international tourists, 50% of whom traveled with their partner.

On the other hand, an acceptable reliability level was obtained for the push factors (Cronbach's Alpha: 0.80), with a mean evaluation score of 4.34. The ratings for the dimensions associated with the push motivational factor were as follows: Knowledge (4.59); Rest (4.29); Fun

and Entertainment (4.41); Socialization (4.52); and Prestige (3.88). The highest average was achieved by the Knowledge dimension, highlighting the environmental appeal that constitutes the attraction.

Similarly, the reliability level for the pull factors was acceptable (Cronbach's Alpha: 0.84), with a mean evaluation score of 4.06 for the motivation variable. The ratings for the dimensions associated with the pull motivational factor were as follows: Local Attractions (4.37); Access and Infrastructure (4.06); Cost (3.46); and Image (3.24). The highest average rating was for Local Attractions, reflecting the appeal of the diverse landscape of the Tatacoa Desert, with its multiple interaction spaces such as natural swimming pools, local cuisine, stargazing, and unique open spaces.

Furthermore, a comparison was made of the variables that make up the satisfaction dimension as described by the authors (Bitner et al., 1994; Bonet, 2008; Devesa & Palacios, 2005; Wang, 2000; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). An acceptable reliability level was obtained for satisfaction (Cronbach's Alpha: 0.81), with a mean evaluation score of 4.12. The ratings for the variables associated with the satisfaction dimension were: Rest (4.48); Satisfaction and Loyalty (4.45); Safety (4.33); Services and Attention (4.12); Cost (3.94); and Infrastructure (3.83).

In the analysis of tourist motivation, the most notable results with high average ratings were: Q4. I enjoy the beauty of natural landscapes (4.74); Q8. I like seeing new and different things (4.83); Q11. I enjoy interacting with the local flora and fauna (4.73); Q13. I like spending free time with my family and/or friends (4.62); Q19. I like the desert landscape (4.73).

Conversely, the lowest average ratings given by tourists were: Q22. Online or social media advertising was decisive for visiting the Tatacoa Desert (3.64); Q23. Advertising in magazines or newspapers was decisive for visiting the Tatacoa Desert (2.79); and Q24. Recommendations from friends/family were decisive for visiting the Tatacoa Desert (3.49).

Items from the satisfaction variable that received the highest ratings were: Q44. I would recommend the Tatacoa Desert to family and friends (4.61); Q43. I am very satisfied with my visit

to the Tatacoa Desert (4.56); Q16. The Tatacoa Desert is a peaceful place (4.48); and Q38. I am satisfied with the cleanliness of the hotel (4.44). Meanwhile, the lowest average ratings were: Q21. Signage in the Tatacoa Desert is good (3.43); Q27. It is easy to find public transportation to Villavieja (3.51); Q29. The price-quality ratio for transportation from Villavieja to the Tatacoa Desert is good (3.71); Q30. The Tatacoa Desert is well-preserved (3.82); Q31. The price-quality ratio of the guides is good (3.85); Q36. The gastronomic offer in the desert is good (3.70).

Model Validation

The hypothesized model confirmed a positive and significant relationship between motivation and satisfaction (0.751; $p < 0.00$) among tourists to the Tatacoa Desert. Thus, an increase in visitors' motivation level leads to an increase in the level of satisfaction experienced. Moreover, the correlations of push factors were significant, especially for Rest (R) (0.848; $p < 0.00$) and Knowledge (K) (0.786; $p < 0.00$), while the most significant correlations for pull factors were found in Access and Infrastructure (A-I) (0.829; $p < 0.00$) and Local Attractions (LA) (0.787; $p < 0.00$). Furthermore, the most significant correlations for the dimensions of satisfaction were found in Cost (Co) (0.811; $p < 0.00$) and Infrastructure (In) (0.797; $p < 0.00$). Finally, within the motivation construct, the strongest correlation was between pull factors (0.841; $p < 0.00$) and push factors (0.754; $p < 0.00$).

Conclusions

This study concludes that there is a significant and positive relationship between motivation and satisfaction variables, meaning that satisfaction is influenced by motivation. This finding aligns with recent studies linking tourist motivations with satisfaction (Huang, 2023). The proposed construct performed well in terms of validity and reliability, achieving acceptable indices, which allows it to be used in studies with similar contexts. In this regard, nine dimensions of motivation in tourists were identified, and grouped into push and pull factors, with higher ratings for the push factors. This suggests that, to a large extent, people's preferences and interests weigh more heavily when determining their travel destination in the analyzed case. The rating obtained for the pull factors highlights certain weaknesses related to the management and promotion of tourist sites. Additionally, six dimensions of satisfaction were established for visitors, following the same evaluation pattern as the previous variable.

Overall, a higher average rating was observed in the various dimensions of motivation from domestic tourists compared to international tourists' perceptions. Based on the results, it is likely that the inherent conditions of the desert landscape—pull factors—are more determining in the ratings given by foreigners, who apparently value these attractions more, although the values are only slightly higher. In terms of satisfaction, the highest score was for the tranquility of the tourist spot, while the factor with the lowest score was infrastructure, reflecting that visitors have a low level of satisfaction with signage, transportation accessibility, conservation of the protected area, and hotel facilities.

Therefore, local governments and sector businesses should pay greater attention and initiate efforts to improve service infrastructure, as it directly affects tourist satisfaction levels. Additionally, the desert landscape should continue to be promoted as a peaceful and restful place, with controls on social activities that disrupt these aspects. As mentioned earlier, tourism generates extensive benefits for multiple related sectors such as transportation, restaurants, supermarkets, etc., enhancing incomes, taxes, formal and informal employment, and the quality of life for local residents.

The results obtained can reinforce the need to include infrastructure improvement in state, city, and sectoral development plans. The resulting information also helps guide the efforts of trade organizations in seeking support for the development of roads, public services, and connectivity.

Finally, the significance of this study lies in its contribution to the limited scientific literature related to regional tourism assets, providing a tool to evaluate motivation and satisfaction factors and their relationship within the framework of regional tourism activities. This study represents an initial step toward constructing a measurement model for these constructs, making it essential to conduct further research to determine their behavior in other tourism scenarios.

Ethical Considerations

This study does not require approval from an Ethics or Bioethics Committee as it did not use any living resources, agents, biological samples, or personal data that pose a risk to life, the environment, or human rights.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this article.

Author Contributions

Juan Manuel Andrade Navia: Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Data Curation, Writing – Original Draft, Writing: Review & Editing, Visualization.

Juan José Sánchez Liévano: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Writing – Original Draft, Writing: Review & Editing.

Elías Ramírez Plazas: Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft.

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