

Differences by Tourists Nationality in Risk Perception

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Abstract

This paper aims to conduct a study about the real and perceived risk in the tourism industry in Gran Canaria. In particular, to analyze, in tourists visiting the destination, the existence of different levels of risk perceived for the same level of absolute risk. We think these differences have relation with the different nationalities of individuals.

Key words: Perceived risk, tourism industry, nationality differences, and destination preferences.

Introduction

New destinations appear continually trying to show new proposal to the tourism market and obtain the benefits from this industry.

One of the competitive advantages of Gran Canaria Island over other competitors nearby and new destinations is security. Many studies analyzed destinations intention of recommendation or repeat because the perceived risk. For most of them, perceived risk is the most important factor that affects tourists when choosing travel. Although a destination can have different attractive, to choose the visit prevail the threats that may exist or be perceived in terms of safety (Um and Crompton, 1992; Sonmez and Graefe, 1998). The key for any new tourist destination is to have the best image about physical and crime safety in destination, since people perception of those issues is one of the most influence criterion on their behavior when choosing (Pizam et al., 1997). Therefore, Gran Canaria has a real competitive advantage that, according to many authors, is the most important and crucial of all for tourism development.

The perceived risk is the central element in the decision to travel, repeat or recommend. In our work, we will study whether the variable "nationality of the tourists" who visit us are related to the perception of tourism risks. Consider the difference between types of tourists is so important if we want to be properly addressed to each of them.

Theoretical framework

Security can be understood as the absence of risk, so it is important to our destination to know the tourists perception about the risks during their stay in Gran Canaria and prior to this, so risk perception is a relevant factor in the process of buying tourism products.

The perceived risk by Tsaor et al. (1997) is "that kind of risk perceived and experienced by tourists during the purchase and consumption of services in the destination." "Destinations perceived as too risky, could eventually become undesirable" (Um and Crompton, 1992) and be eliminated from the selection process (Sonmez and Graefe, 1998). Therefore, following these authors, it could be argued that individuals would be based on their perception to make judgments about whether or not to visit a particular destination.

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Reisinger and Macondo (2006) analyzed the risk in the tourism sector and defined a total of thirteen different types of risks of a different nature that are unique to this industry. Among all those who have greater weight in the decision process they are risk crime, cultural risk, health risk, physical risk, psychological risk, satisfaction risk and risk of time.

Methodology

To carry out this research, 267 surveys were conducted on tourists who were on holiday in Gran Canaria (Canary Islands, Spain). Total population or groups of individuals that make up the subject of research interest are those tourists visiting Gran Canaria.

Socio demographic variables and levels of perceived risk: nationality

The analysis focuses on the English and German nationalities due to the relative weight they have in the surveys and tourism figures in Gran Canaria.

Question 9 of the questionnaire (risk of crime), "I have warned repeatedly that in Gran Canaria should take precautions because of insecurity," a 25.01% of British respondents valued the issue with 5 or more. In the case of the Germans, 50.02% assessed 5 or more.

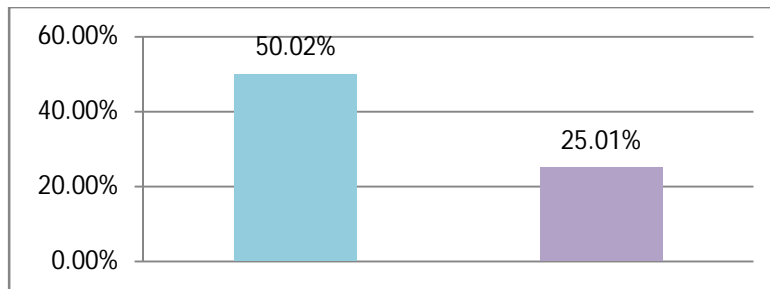


Fig. 1: Frequency comparison according response of 5 or more

By comparing the frequencies, we can see that the Germans have a more negative perception of risk of crime. Regarding question 10, "I have had knowledge of other visitors who have had security problems," a 72.72% of British respondents on the scale of 7, 4 or less. In the case of German response rate of 4 or less it is a 63.04%.

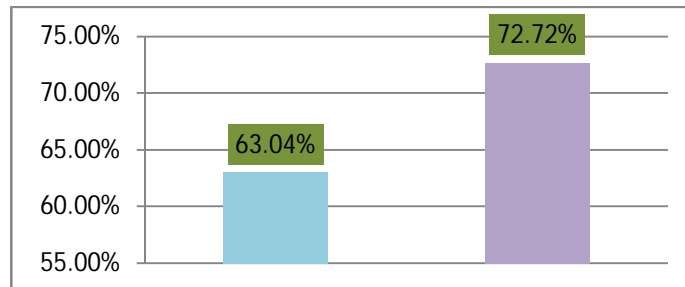


Fig. 2: Comparison of frequency response according to 3 or less

German tourists again show a more negative perception.

Question 12 corresponds to the cultural risk: "I believe that the way to be of Gran Canaria is easy to adapt to the culture of the island." 75% of British respondents 5 or more, representing the highest scores. In the case of the Germans the percentage rises to 89.13%. So in that case, Germans have less perception of cultural risk

Question 19 is about the health risk: "I have the perception that health facilities in Gran Canaria are appropriate". 66.66% of Britain's scored on the scale 5 or more, Germans only 36.96%.

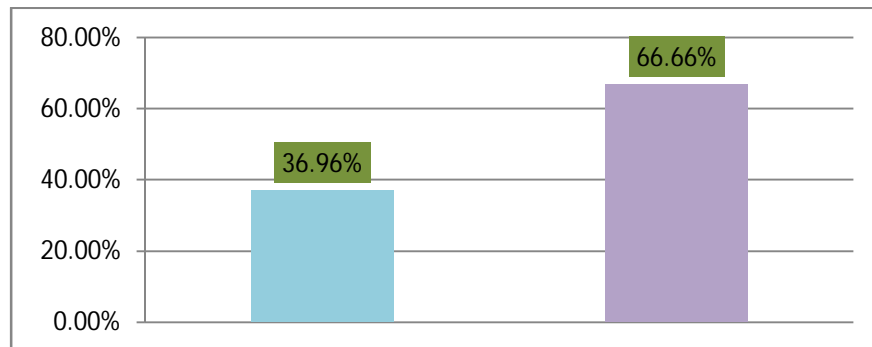


FIG. 3: Frequency comparison according response of 5 or more.

Question 27 or "consider force protection in Gran Canaria act appropriately in any situation of danger," a 56.06% of the British responded with a 5 or more, Germans responded in a 76.08% of cases.

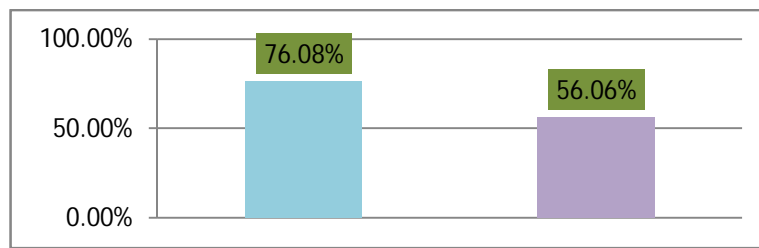


Fig 4: Frequency comparison according response of 5 or more

Issue 33 is related to the perceived psychological risk: "I find in Gran Canaria a destination where I can act naturally without changing my habits and customs." 80.3% of British respondents 5 or more, while in the case of Germany is 91.3%. Issue 34 is satisfaction risk: "I think in Gran Canaria I will fulfill my holiday's expectations" 83.33% of Britain's answered 5 or more while the Germans responded so in a 95.65% of the time. Issue 38 relates to the perceived risk of time: "I believe that Gran Canaria is a close destination and well connected, which allows me not to waste too much time traveling." In this item, 78.03% of the British responded with a 5 or more while in the case of Germany the figure is 67.39%.

Conclusions

In this work, we try to transfer the knowledge of the tourist perception of risks to the context of Gran Canaria. More specifically, the intention was to find out whether or not the nationality variable is related to how tourists perceive the risks, giving this place at different levels of perception by each tourist profile.

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