# Understanding tourism loyalty: Horizontal vs. destination loyalty ☆

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- We highlight a change in the study of loyalty taking a tourists-centered focus.
- We identify differences between the background of destination and horizontal loyalty.
- We consider some new explanatory factors of horizontal loyalty.
- We apply a comprehensive analysis with 6964 tourists from 17 European countries.
- A well-known European destination, Canary Islands (Spain) is investigated.

## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

Tourism loyalty is a key topic that has been covered in literature mainly from a very homogenous perspective. This study analyses horizontal loyalty (consumer's loyalty divided among several destinations), and explains the background factors that affect this behaviour (cognitive, affective and overall destination image; information sources; motivations; socio-demographic characteristics; previous behaviour; conative loyalty). The paper also identifies the differences between the explanatory factors of horizontal loyalty and one-single-destination loyalty. Applying a comprehensive analysis with 6964 tourists from 17 European countries in the context of Canary Islands (Spain), the study provides interesting recommendations for destinations with a view to better designing marketing activities and improving their coopetition strategies and competitiveness.

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## 1. Introduction

Traditionally, research into loyalty in a tourist destination context has focused its attention on how a destination relates to tourists to try to establish lasting and beneficial relationships with them. However, less attention has been paid to the study from the perspective of tourists and how these relate to destinations. In order to allow destinations to be able to improve their marketing strategies and tourist loyalty, a change of focus is absolutely necessary (Font & Villarino, 2015; Nordbø, Engilbertsson, & Vale, 2014). "Service-dominant logic", as articulated by Lusch and Vargo (2006), claims for a customer-centered focus, where the context of creating value takes ground in networks of networks (destinations and tourists in this case). Focusing on tourists and how they establish their loyalty relationships with different destinations will help to understand how destinations should relate to both tourists and competitors, and it may be beneficial to foster coopetition between tourist destinations to improve competitiveness of the same.

Increasing competition among tourist destinations is an increasingly significant trend (Mariani & Baggio, 2012). This is accentuated by a larger number of holidays, albeit shorter ones, per individual, together with the unstoppable growth of the number of

destinations in the market and the development of their offer (UNWTO, 2013), which make this change in focus even more necessary in the analysis of tourist loyalty. While some tourists may be loyal to a single destination, there are a large number that share out holidays between different destinations, which may cooperate and/or compete with each other. In the current tourism scenario, destinations are forced to increase their competitiveness, and literature shows that collaboration and cooperation between tourist destinations (Fyall, Garrod, & Wang, 2012), as well as the development of loyalty (Pike & Page, 2014; Weaver & Lawton, 2011) are relevant strategies for destinations in achieving competitive advantages in the long term. Therefore, it is necessary to further analyse this phenomenon.

Loyalty is a construct that has been tackled in literature in a very homogeneous way and all the different ways in which tourists can show their loyalty have not been contemplated. According to McKercher, Denizci-Guillet, and Ng (2012), most studies on loyalty in the tourism industry focus on a single unit of analysis (e.g., a single destination), and apply similar indicators, which shows a lack of conceptual and methodological innovation. Specifically, according to these authors, from the consumer perspective, one can speak of the existence of horizontal loyalty (HL) where tourists can be loyal to more than one supplier occupying the same level within the tourism system. Thus, tourists can show their loyalty to several destinations at the same time.

The study of HL, which is hardly explored in tourism literature, requires an alternative methodological approach and suggests a better knowledge of the tourist and an answer to the following questions: What profile do tourists with HL have? What factors really explain the differences between HL and single-destination loyalty (DL)? In literature, serious efforts have been made to investigate the factors that influence customer loyalty (Han, Hyun, & Kim, 2014), but there are no studies that analyse the factors that determine whether a tourist is loyal to multiple destinations. Thus, the objective of this research is to segment tourists according to the way in which they manifest their loyalty to tourist destinations and to analyse whether or not the factors that determine HL are the same as those that determine DL.

## 2. Loyalty and cooperation as strategies for improving competitiveness of destinations

The study of competitiveness has been a dominant paradigm in twentieth-century industry (Kylänen & Rusko, 2011), and in the field of tourism destinations it has been defined as the ability of a destination to attract potential tourists to its region and to be able to satisfy their needs and desires (Enright & Newton, 2004). According to Dawes, Romaniuk, and Mansfield (2009) tourist destinations compete for a time allocation of the traveller during a particular trip or for being the traveller's choice through consecutive trips. Thus, destinations are connected to each other through the decisions of tourists.

However, according to Mariani, Buhalis, Longhi, and Vitouladiti (2014), in a highly competitive tourism sector, pure competition is not the only tool for destinations to achieve sustainable competitive advantages. The term coopetition is understood as cooperation and simultaneous competition between companies (Luo, 2007) and destinations. This approach to cooperation, introduced during the last decades (Kylänen & Rusko, 2011), has changed and will continue to change the economic landscape (Fyall & Garrod, 2005; Jorde & Teece, 1990). Thus, coopetition has important political and management implications, and influences the marketing of tourist destinations and their potential benefits for all the stakeholders involved.

But while the focus on ways of competing in destinations has

changed, the study of the development of loyalty has continued to have a very homogeneous traditional approach (Zhang, Fu, Cai, & Lu, 2014). This is especially important because of the fundamental role that loyalty plays in the competitiveness of a destination (Weaver & Lawton, 2011). The need for a rethinking of tourism loyalty has been suggested in order to better understand this phenomenon and discover subtle relationships and acquire a more complete understanding of tourism (McKercher et al., 2012).

### 2.1. Conceptualisation and importance of loyalty

Since the 1930s, the study of loyalty has been one of the concerns of academics (Rundle-Thiele, 2005). According to Oliver (1999), loyalty is a deep commitment to buying a product or service again in the future, which causes repetitions of the same brand despite situational influences and marketing efforts that have the potential to provoke a change in behaviour. Developing customer loyalty has become an important marketing strategy because of the benefits associated with retaining existing customers (McMullan & Gilmore, 2008): loyal customers represent not only a stable source of income but also act as channels of information that informally connect networks of friends and other potential travellers to a destination; they are less sensitive to prices, showing a greater willingness to pay; and also the cost of serving this type of tourist is lower (Lau & McKercher, 2004; Oliver, 1999; Oppermann, 2000; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990; Shoemaker & Lewis, 1999).

Traditionally, the conceptualisation of loyalty has adopted three main approaches (Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Moore, Rodger, & Taplin, 2015): behavioural, attitudinal, and an approach that integrates both attitude and behaviour (Rundle-Thiele, 2005). However, Oppermann (2000) argued that in a tourism context, loyalty research should emphasise the behavioural approach, which in addition to being the most frequently used by researchers (Zhang et al., 2014), allows to keep questionnaires to a manageable length (Rivera & Croes, 2010). Thus, the final benefits that a loyal tourist brings to a tourist destination are largely motivated by their behaviour.

The first studies of loyalty already analysed this behavioural approach (Oliver, 1999). From this perspective, loyalty is usually measured as the number of times a product is purchased, or a destination is visited (McKercher et al., 2012). Thus, the tourist destinations compete for repeated visits of the tourists. Under this approach, the greater the number of times a tourist visits a destination, the more loyal he will be considered.

Although there is a great deal of research on loyalty and its connection with marketing strategies (Sivadas & Baker-Prewitt, 2000), fewer studies have analysed loyalty to tourist destinations (Moore et al., 2015), and approaches that integrate several destinations visited by tourists alternatively (Rivera & Croes, 2010).

### 2.2. Horizontal loyalty

Although one-to-one loyalty relationships, where consumers are loyal to a single brand, are desirable, it seems that consumers are often loyal to more than one brand (Felix, 2014). This specific expression of loyalty has been tagged by the literature as multi-brand loyalty (Jacoby & Kyner, 1973; Oliver, 1999; Olson & Jacoby, 1974), divided loyalty (Sharp & Sharp, 1997; Yim & Kannan, 1999); dual loyalty to the brand (Cunningham, 1956); polygamous loyalty (Dowling & Uncles, 1997) multiple loyalty (Passingham, 1998) or transferred loyalty (Pearce & Kang, 2009). In addition, these relationships have been empirically demonstrated in different sectors, such as recently in the tobacco (Dawes, 2014) and mobile telephone sectors (Quoquab, Yasin, & Dardak, 2014). Loyalty to multiple brands, in non-tourism contexts, has been

conceptualised and named in different ways.

However, according to McKercher et al. (2012) traditionally, in a tourism context, studies on loyalty have considered a single unit of analysis (e.g., a single destination), and fail to consider the complex interrelationships between multiple units of analysis at the same level in the tourism system. This is a consequence, among other things, of the difficulty of measurement that it involves. These authors suggest the study of loyalty related to the consumer perspective, and propose, among others typologies, the HL approach, manifesting that tourists can show loyalty to different suppliers at the same level within the tourism system (e.g., a tourist can show a loyal behaviour to two or more destinations at a time). Thus destinations should understand that tourists behave in such a way that they share their holidays between different tourist destinations, which means that their loyal behaviour can also be divided among several destinations (Dawes et al., 2009). The current traveller can choose from an almost unlimited range of destinations offering similar attractions and facilities (Bianchi & Pike, 2011).

Moreover, the shared loyalty behaviour is motivated by the fact that in the tourism sector many of the goods and services are similar in both the quality and the experience they provide (Baloglu, 2002; Campo & Yagüe, 2007; Darnell & Johnson, 2001) and by the search for something new, considered by some authors, to be innate in travellers (Bowen & Shoemaker, 1998), which can have a negative impact on their loyalty, if one considers the traditional approach to a tourist destination (Alegre & Juaneda, 2006; Jang & Feng, 2007). This suggests analysing, if indeed there are any, the differences in tourists showing DL and HL.

The HL concept, however, has not been extensively studied in the tourism sector. In this context, only a few studies have analysed implicitly or explicitly multi-brand loyalty, for example, in the airline industry (McKercher et al., 2012) and destinations (Dawes et al., 2009; McKercher et al., 2012). These studies have indicated that tourists show HL but have not analysed whether there are differences in the profile of this group of tourists with respect to the rest, and what factors explain this behaviour (McKercher & Guillet, 2011).

Understanding and an appropriate use of information concerning customer loyalty will help identify different segments of visitors (Melián-González, Moreno-Gil, & Araña, 2011; Petrick, 2005). In addition, the characteristics that constitute tourist profiles are critical factors in analysing loyalty (Ozdemir et al., 2012).

Many studies have attempted to examine the differences between first time visitors and repeaters (Weaver & Lawton, 2011), finding discrepancies, for example, in socio-demographic aspects (Li, Cheng, Kim, & Petrick, 2008; McKercher & Wong, 2004), as well as factors related to before the trip, such as motivations (Lau & McKercher, 2004; Li et al., 2008), and the search for information (Li et al., 2008), and the perception of the destination image (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991). However, there are few studies that analyse the differences between the different groups in which repeating tourists can be classified. There are no studies that analyse the differences between those who show loyalty to a single destination and those whose behaviour reveals loyalty to several destinations at the same time (Moore et al., 2015).

## 2.3. Background of horizontal loyalty

Many studies have examined tourism loyalty and its antecedents (Forgas-Coll, Palau-Saumell, Sánchez-García, & Callarisa-Fiol, 2012; McKercher et al., 2012; Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Zhang et al., 2014). These studies have examined a number of factors that influence destination loyalty, including demographic characteristics, past experiences and destination image (Assaker, Vinzi, &

O'Connor, 2011; McDowall, 2010). Recently Sun, Chi, and Xu (2013) present a summary of the literature that has studied loyalty to tourist destinations. Among the aspects that they highlight some are emphasized such as tourist's motivations, the image of the destination and behaviour of information searching. Gursoy, Chen, and Chi (2014) classify these factors as components pre-trip and post-trip, emphasising motivations and image. However, previous studies have not yet been able to fully explain the background factors that affect customer loyalty (Yoon & Uysal, 2005), and even fewer have analysed the factors that cause HL. Previous literature has failed to analyse whether the factors that determine a tourist to be loyal horizontally differ from those that determine that a tourist makes repeated visits to a single destination. Therefore, the objective of this research is to verify whether or not the variables that determine DL are different from those that determine HL, exerting a different magnitude of the impact.

The following are some of the main antecedents of loyalty that have been used in literature: images, motivations, sources of information, socio-demographic characteristics and conative loyalty. Although there are other factors that determine loyalty (e.g., satisfaction, quality), attention in this study has been focused on those that have been less mentioned in literature, or those for which no consensus has been reached on the direction and magnitude of the relationships despite having been the subject of much research.

### 2.3.1. Image

Although there is a great deal of conceptualisation on the image of a destination (Chon, 1990; Gallarza, Saura, & Garcıa, 2002; Moreno-Gil and Martín-Santana, 2015), it can be understood as a total perception of cognitive and affective evaluations (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Carballo, Araña, León, & Moreno-Gil, 2015). The cognitive component of the image refers to the beliefs and information that tourists retain of the attributes of a destination, while the affective component is represented by emotional feelings or responses to the various characteristics of a place.

Although many studies have identified image as an antecedent of loyalty (Bigné, Sánchez, & Sánchez, 2001; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Faullant, Matzler, & Füller, 2008; Loureiro & González, 2008; Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Prayag, 2008) no consensus has been reached on the magnitude and direction of the relationships. Most of the authors use cognitive image (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008; Prayag & Ryan, 2012) or general image attributes to measure them (Bigné et al., 2001; Campo-Martínez, Garau-Vadell, & Martínez-Ruiz, 2010; Loureiro & González, 2008), and take into consideration to a lesser extent the attributes that measure the affective image (Zhang et al., 2014). The incorporation of the affective component suggested by Prayag and Ryan (2012), could help to understand the relation between image and loyalty.

### 2.3.2. Motivations

When individuals make the decision to travel for pleasure, they do so for different reasons (Beerli & Martín, 2004a). Previous studies have analysed the influence of travel motivations on tourism loyalty (Sun et al., 2013). These motivations can be classified into push and pull factors (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977). According to Dann (1977), internal motivations (push) are linked to the wishes of tourists and include the desire to escape, rest, achieve prestige, practice sports and social interaction. However, pull factors are related to the attractiveness of the destination and its historical, cultural or natural resources.

When the motivation for the trip is internal, the consumption of tourist destinations does not exhaust the objectives of an individual for that destination, but can improve their knowledge of the possibilities offered (Antón, Camarero, & Laguna-García, 2017),

meaning that an intense and satisfactory experience in the destination will have a positive effect on the intention to revisit it (Hosany & Martin, 2012). In addition, the fact that a new experience does not necessarily imply securing new knowledge (Crompton, 1979), and that certain experiences can always offer new sources of pleasure for the tourist (Lee & Crompton, 1992) reinforces this belief. On the other hand, according to Antón et al. (2017) external motives (pull) could dissipate when the destination becomes familiar to an individual since both their medium and long-term goals have been reached, implying a lesser intention to return. Thus, the travel motivations of individuals can act as inhibitors of loyalty or can benefit the development of it.

It is worth highlighting the search for something new as a particular case of motivation. It is widely accepted that this factor plays an important role in decision-making in the tourism sector (Petrick, 2002a, 2002b). The search for different types of novelty is the reason behind many holidays (Lee & Crompton, 1992). Thus, the search for something new as a travel motivation can also prevent tourist loyalty to a destination.

### 2.3.3. Sources of information used

Tourists look for information that helps them make a better decision when choosing a travel destination. According to Gartner (1994) this information comes from several sources, which have been extensively studied in literature (Llodrà-Riera, Martínez-Ruiz, Jiménez-Zarco, & Izquierdo-Yusta, 2015). In addition, according to Gruen, Osmonbekov, and Czaplewski (2006), word-of-mouth recommendations through social media can influence loyalty. This form of communication is perceived by customers as a reliable source of information, which requires a greater research effort (Law, Buhalis, & Cobanoglu, 2014), organic information being a key element for the success of a destination (Araña, León, Carballo, & Gil, 2016).

### 2.3.4. Socio-demographic characteristics

Previous research has revealed that there are differences in loyalty by gender and income (Petrick & Backman, 2001; Petrick, 2005). For example, Correia, Zins, and Silva (2015) found that older tourists are more likely to repeat visits than younger people. As far as income was concerned, these authors found that tourists with higher incomes are less likely to be loyal (intention to revisit). In any case, it is necessary to refute such indications in the context of HL.

### 2.3.5. Conative loyalty

According to Oliver (1999), the manifestation of conative loyalty, defined as the intention and commitment to re-purchase the brand (Harris & Goode, 2004), is the pre-behavioural loyalty phase. In this way, it is expected that a tourist who manifests an intention for a future visit to a destination, has a greater probability of becoming truly loyal to a destination. However, all of these previous evidences have focused on DL analysis, whereas it has not been analysed whether these factors are important for the determination of HL or not.

### 2.4. Methodology of the study

In order to achieve the proposed objectives, specific field work was undertaken through a structured loyalty questionnaire that included socio-demographic, behavioural, motivational and image variables. The questionnaire combined open and closed questions. The numerical scales used are from 1 to 7, with 1 being the minimum value and 7 being the maximum. For the measurement of the destination image, its three components were evaluated. To measure the cognitive component of the image, 24 items were used

following Beerli and Martín (2004a; 2004b). A 5-item semantic differential scale based on Russel (1980) was used for the measurement of the affective component of the image. A Likert scale from 1 to 7 was used to measure the overall image. With regard to motivations, the typology proposed by Fodness (1994) was used, with 19 items. The questionnaire was designed as a continuation of the bibliographic review and taking into account the specific nature of the destination analysed (Canary Islands, Spain).

### 2.4.1. Population

Europe remains the largest originating region for tourist flows in the world, a region that generates more than half of the annual international arrivals (UNWTO, 2016). Therefore, the target population of this study were potential tourists, aged 16 and over, who had travelled abroad during the last two years and from the seventeen major European countries that send tourists to the destination under study (Canary Islands): Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

### 2.4.2. Sample selection

The work was done through an Internet questionnaire (CAWI), to a representative sample of the 17 countries mentioned, from a database of panellists in each country. A specialised company, owing the panel database, with presence in all the European countries analysed, conducted the survey. A random selection of the same was made based on the variables of stratification of geographical area and province on the one hand and, on the other, of the criteria of gender and age, in order to guarantee the representativeness of the sample with the population of each country. The defined sample was 8500 tourists (500 in each country) and the actual sample 6964 tourists, between 400 and 459 tourists per country. Only tourists who have travel internationally during the last two years were considered. The selected sample was sent a personalised email inviting them to participate in the study, embedded in the mail itself was a personalised link that led them to the online survey. In order to ensure the expected number of surveys, during the three months of fieldwork in the different countries, two reminders were held to encourage response. Table 1 shows the basic profile of the sample analysed, differentiating between HL and DL tourist.

### 2.4.3. Quality control and data analysis

The questionnaire was translated into the languages of each country analysed. Once the questionnaire was pre-tested in the language of the potential tourists, and the pertinent corrections made to the questions that raised comprehension difficulties, the interviews were carried out. The online system, after the relevant programming had taken place, reviewed all the interviews conducted, detecting the time that a respondent had taken to respond to the survey, thus any survey answered in less than 5 min was not accepted as valid. After completing the fieldwork and having applied the corresponding quality controls, we performed a binomial Logit analysis with the latest version of the SPSS statistical analysis programme. In this case a Logit model based on the theory of random utility has been chosen. The use of this model guarantees robustness in the estimated results and the fulfilment of the properties of the conventional utility functions established by the theory of the consumer.

In this case, the seven islands (destinations) that compose the Canary Islands are considered the competitive set: Tenerife, Gran Canaria, Lanzarote, Fuerteventura, La Palma, La Gomera, and El Hierro. This destination was chosen, as well as for convenience, as a well-known European leading destination (Gil, 2003), and because

**Table 1**
Tourists' profile.

| | | HL Tourists (%) | DL Tourists (%) | Total Tourists (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Country | Germany | 6.33 | 12.24 | 6.07 |
| | Austria | 4.72 | 4.08 | 5.79 |
| | Belgium | 5.02 | 2.04 | 5.80 |
| | Denmark | 6.73 | 8.57 | 5.82 |
| | Spain | 10.64 | 7.76 | 5.83 |
| | Finland | 8.53 | 6.12 | 5.90 |
| | France | 4.02 | 1.22 | 5.77 |
| | Ireland | 10.34 | 6.94 | 5.79 |
| | Italy | 2.51 | 2.45 | 5.77 |
| | Norway | 9.14 | 12.24 | 5.74 |
| | Poland | 0.90 | 0.82 | 5.77 |
| | Portugal | 3.01 | 2.45 | 6.59 |
| | Russia | 0.80 | 0.41 | 5.82 |
| | Sweden | 11.14 | 8.16 | 6.19 |
| | Switzerland | 6.22 | 11.84 | 5.74 |
| | The Netherlands | 3.01 | 5.31 | 5.79 |
| | The United Kingdom | 6.93 | 7.35 | 5.82 |
| Gender | Man | 48.90 | 56.73 | 49.60 |
| | Woman | 51.10 | 43.27 | 50.40 |
| Age | from 16 to 24 | 12.55 | 8.16 | 19.65 |
| | from 25 to 34 | 14.56 | 17.96 | 20.03 |
| | from 35 to 44 | 18.37 | 24.49 | 19.75 |
| | from 45 to 54 | 22.99 | 25.31 | 20.19 |
| | from 55 to 64 | 19.38 | 13.88 | 14.69 |
| | more than 64 | 12.15 | 10.20 | 5.69 |
| Studies | Primary | 4.62 | 5.71 | 5.63 |
| | Secondary | 41.16 | 47.35 | 42.03 |
| | University degree | 35.44 | 35.51 | 33.21 |
| | University masters. doctorate | 14.86 | 9.39 | 15.32 |
| | Others | 3.92 | 2.04 | 3.81 |

there is an interesting complementarity between the islands that makes it ideal for the study of HL. Two groups of tourists are differentiated, those that show loyalty to a single destination (DL) and those that manifest HL. A tourist can be defined as being loyal to a single destination if at least two or more visits to the same destination are observed, without observing other visits to the rest of destinations considered in the competitive set (a single island of the Canary Islands in two occasions or more, and no other). On the other hand, tourists are considered to be HL tourists when they have visited at least two different destinations in the group (at least two islands among the seven Canary Islands).

### 2.5. Results and discussion

Below, and in order to fulfil the objective of the investigation, two regression models, with two different estimations, have been estimated with DL and HL as dependent variables. Since endogenous variables only involve two alternative choices, two binomial logit models are estimated. Before estimating the models, a factor analysis was carried out to examine the dimensions of the cognitive and affective image; and motivations with the objective of reducing their dimensions and to properly identify the determining factors. Each item, following the literature criteria, has been classified according to the higher loading. Most of the factor loadings were higher than 0.60, indicating a good correlation between the items and the factor grouping they belong to (Morakabati, Page, & Fletcher, 2017). Furthermore, Pearson correlation coefficients for each variable and factor were calculated, supporting the validity of these analyses.

Once this factor analysis was performed on the cognitive image of the target, three dimensions of the same were identified that explain 65.45% of the variance. As shown in Table 2 the first factor includes 6 items that have been labelled as "Sun, Beach and

Lifestyle". The second factor includes 7 items that refer to "tourist infrastructure and leisure". The third factor contains 6 items related to the "social and environmental situation".

With respect to the affective image, the factor analysis summarises the variables used for its study in two factors that explain 70.37% of the variance (Table 3). The first factor, which collects 3 items has been called "Healthy, Authentic, and Sustainable Lifestyle", while the second includes 2 variables that relate to the "Emotional vibrancy of destination ". With respect to Cronbach's alpha values, we have to consider that the low reported value in AFI1 could be a consequence of this factor comprising only 3 items and Cronbach's alpha being sensitive to the number of items in a scale (Beerli & Martín, 2004b).

The two dimensions of the affective image found in this study are in line with the two factors revealed in the study of Hanyu (1993). The first factor found by this author "arousal and pleasure" corresponds with "Healthy, authentic, and sustainable lifestyle" in the present study. Hanyu (1993) also found another independent factor, the "exciting factor" (amusement/commercial places). This factor may be considered as specific to the environmental context of the destination. In the case of the destination being analysed (Canary Islands -Spain), we have found a second factor related to happy and stimulating destination which has been tagged "Emotional vibrancy of the destination". These dimensions are also supported by Hosany, Ekinci, and Uysal (2006), who state that the affective perception can be differentiated between sincerity, excitement and conviviality.

As far as the motivations are concerned, there are 6 factors identified by the analysis and they represent 70.37% (Table 4). The first one summarises those variables that have to do with the "Rest and relaxation" and includes 4 items. The 5 items related to knowledge are summarised in factor number 2, which has been called "Knowledge and culture". The third factor is the one for

**Table 2**
Cognitive image factor analysis.

| Variables | Factor loadings | Eigenvalue | Cronbach's alpha |
|---|---|---|---|
| *COGI1: Sun, beach and lifestyle* | | | |
| The destination has good beaches | 0.794 | 9.794 | 0.876 |
| The destination is exotic | 0.788 | | |
| The destination has good landscapes and scenery | 0.722 | | |
| The destination has a pleasant climate | 0.693 | | |
| The destination has an attractive life style | 0.580 | | |
| The destination is fashionable | 0.511 | | |
| *COGI2: Tourist leisure and general infrastructures* | | | |
| The destination has good nightlife | 0.737 | 1.467 | 0.902 |
| The destination is good for shopping | 0.714 | | |
| The destination has a wider range of leisure facilities on offer | 0.680 | | |
| The destination has a wider range of sports on offer | 0.669 | | |
| The destination has a great level of general infrastructure | 0.661 | | |
| The destination is accessible | 0.655 | | |
| The destination has good hotels, apartments and chalets | 0.588 | | |
| *COGI3: Environmental and social factors* | | | |
| The destination is not crowded | 0.738 | 1.174 | 0.881 |
| The destination offers great personal security | 0.720 | | |
| The destination is clean | 0.694 | | |
| The destination has a good environmental situation without pollution | 0.682 | | |
| The destination is cheap for holidays | 0.627 | | |
| The destination offers great political and social stability | 0.610 | | |
| Cronbach's alpha | | | 0.945 |
| % Explained variance: 65.448 | | | |
| KMO: 0.952 | | | |
| Bartlett: 89645.852 | | | |
| Significance: 0.000 | | | |

**Table 3**
Affective image factor analysis.

| Variables | Factor loadings | Eigenvalue | Cronbach's alpha |
|---|---|---|---|
| *AFI1: Healthy, authentic, and sustainable lifestyle* | | | |
| Sustainable destination | 0.86 | 2.583 | 0.738 |
| Authentic destination | 0.83 | | |
| Healthy destination | 0.67 | | |
| *AFI2: Emotional vibrancy of destination* | | | |
| Happy destination | 0.90 | 1.266 | 0.806 |
| Stimulating destination | 0.89 | | |
| Cronbach's alpha | | | 0.760 |
| % Explained variance: 73.420 | | | |
| KMO: 0.694 | | | |
| Bartlett: 10417.695 | | | |
| Significance: 0.000 | | | |

"Prestige and social exhibitionism" and picks up 4 items. "Sports" is the name of the fourth factor that is composed of 3 items. The fifth factor is also made up of 3 items and is called "Entertainment". Finally, the sixth factor is composed of two items related to "Meeting new people".

The results obtained in the previous factor analyses largely coincide with literature (Beerli & Martín, 2004a;bib_Beerli_and_Martín_2004b; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Kozak, 2002), except for the affective image for which other authors (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martín, 2004a, 2004b) found a single factor, and in this case two have been identified, as was also the case of Tsiotsou, Ratten, Byon, and Zhang (2010). This result opens an interesting line of discussion on the number of dimensions of the affective image, where the greater sophistication of the tourists can divide between affective aspects more generic and shared between the holiday destinations (cheerful and stimulating) and other more distinctive of each place (Authentic, sustainable and healthy), as Echtner and Ritchie (1993) already categorised. In this case, this distinction facilitates different interpretations in later analyses.

Additionally, in the case of motivations factor analysis, it is important to highlight that the item "to enjoy and spend time with family and friend" is included in MOT1 (rest and relaxation), whereas the two items included in MOT6 are associated with meeting new people, and to be in contact with people from different culture backgrounds. This result matches with recent research studies such us Sung, Chang, and Sung (2016) who also found one factor called "Interpersonal communication and sharing" that comprised items related to mixing with fellow travellers and meeting new people, and they also found another factor related with "Family and friends relationship".

Table 5 summarises the results of the estimation for the two proposed models. The results determined, as Mechinda, Serirat, and Gulid (2009) and Wang (2004) stated, that age and income are variables that determine DL. The results show, in line with Correia et al. (2015), that the greater the age of the individual the more likely they are to be loyal to a destination ($\beta = 0.170$ p < 0.01), but also to several destinations simultaneously ($\beta = 0.215$ P < 0.01). Young people seem to be more connected with the search for something new, besides their younger age has given them fewer options for repeating visits to destinations. In general, the study confirms the findings from Petrick (2002a, 2002b) study, where novelty is more inherent to younger tourists. There is also a direct relationship between the mean income level expressed by the tourist and DL ($\beta = 0.010$ p < 0.01) and HL ($\beta = 0.014$ p < 0.01), these results are in line with Correia et al. (2015). However, greater purchasing power facilitates the repeated purchase of both a destination and an alternative way between competitors. In fact, the strength of the relationship ($\beta$ values) is higher for both variables (age and income) in the case of HL. The variables of gender and level of studies were found to be non-significant in both models; those results are in line with previous literature (Valle, Correia, & Rebelo, 2008).

As for the previous experience of the consumer as a tourist, the results show that the greater the number of holidays of more than four days a year, then as to be expected, the greater the probability

**Table 4**
Motivations factor analysis.

| Variables | Factor loadings | Eigenvalue | Cronbach's alpha |
|---|---|---|---|
| *MOT1: Rest and relaxation* | | | |
| To relieve stress and tension | 0.847 | 6.614 | 0.825 |
| To rest and relax | 0.844 | | |
| To escape from daily routine | 0.844 | | |
| To enjoy and spend time with family and friends | 0.515 | | |
| *MOT 2: Knowledge and culture* | | | |
| To know different cultures and life styles | 0.870 | 2.630 | 0.819 |
| To broaden my horizons | 0.867 | | |
| To know new and different places | 0.749 | | |
| To attend cultural events | 0.624 | | |
| To be in contact with nature | 0.431 | | |
| *MOT3: Prestige and social exhibitionism* | | | |
| To go to places friends have already visited | 0.763 | 2.149 | 0.773 |
| To go to places that are fashionable | 0.744 | | |
| To tell friends about the holiday experience | 0.733 | | |
| To go to comfortable places with good hotels and restaurants | 0.560 | | |
| *MOT4: Sports* | | | |
| To do watersports | 0.822 | 1.278 | 0.783 |
| To do recreational activities and sport | 0.805 | | |
| To play golf | 0.714 | | |
| *MOT5: Entertainment* | | | |
| To look for adventures and pleasure | 0.836 | 1.103 | 0.826 |
| To do exciting things | 0.791 | | |
| To look for entertainment and fun | 0.693 | | |
| *MOT6: Meeting new people* | | | |
| To make new friends | 0.840 | 1.003 | 0.896 |
| To mix with other people | 0.834 | | |
| Cronbach's alpha | | | 0.889 |
| % Explained variance: 70.372 | | | |
| KMO: 0.877 | | | |
| Bartlett: 72078.921 | | | |
| Significance: 0.000 | | | |

**Table 5**
Estimated binomial logit models of HL and DL.

| | Variables | DL | | HL | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | β | ε | β | ε |
| Socio-demographic | Age | 0.170** | 0.049 | 0.215** | 0.027 |
| | Income | 0.010** | 0.003 | 0.014** | 0.002 |
| Past Experience | Number of holidays per year | 0.075* | 0.034 | 0.157** | 0.019 |
| Information sources | Social Media use | 0.479** | 0.146 | 0.166* | 0.081 |
| Conative loyalty | Intention to visit | — | | 0.783** | 0.099 |
| Motivations | MOT 2. Knowledge | −0.225** | 0.074 | −0.134** | 0.042 |
| | MOT 3. Prestige and social exhibitionism | 0.211** | 0.074 | — | |
| Image | Overall Image | — | | 0.259** | 0.038 |
| | COGI1: Sun, beach and lifestyle | −0.181* | 0.079 | −0.307** | 0.047 |
| | COGI2: Tourist leisure and general infrastructures | 0.195** | 0.072 | 0.092* | 0.042 |
| | COGI3: Environmental and social factors | — | | 0.101* | 0.043 |
| | AFI2: Emotional vibrancy of destination | −0.246** | 0.083 | — | |
| | Constant | −4.790** | 0.251 | −5.153** | 0.239 |

Note: **: 0.01% *:0.05%.

there is of DL being evident ($\beta$ = 0.075 p < 0.05) or HL ($\beta$ = 0.157 p < 0.01), although it is possible to observe a greater probability of sharing out the loyalty between several destinations.

As for sources of information, tourists' use of social media with the intention of learning about their travel destination influences DL ($\beta$ = 0.479 p < 0.05), as stated by Gruen et al. (2006), and has also proved to be significant for HL ($\beta$ = 0.166 p < 0.05), demonstrating the importance for destinations to use this tool for enhancing loyalty, and also for opening up to the possibility of shared communications with other "competing destinations" in order to encourage HL.

The fact that a tourist shows a strong intention to revisit the

Canary Islands in the short term (conative loyalty), as expected, increases the probability of manifesting HL ($\beta$ = 0.783 p < 0.01). This variable is not explanatory of DL however, as the intention is to visit other destinations, albeit complementary to the islands. This result raises if tourists, when answering about their intention to repeat, really answer about returning to that same place, or about repeating that type of experience, which could take place in any other alternative destination. In addition, this result opens up an interesting line of research on the existing relationship between DL, HL and experiential loyalty (when the tourist is loyal to a certain type of holiday experience, regardless of the destination visited).

On the other hand, the motivation to know new and different

places, and new cultures and ways of life, as expected, has a negative influence on DL ($\beta = -0.225$ p < 0.01) and HL ($\beta = -0.134$ p < 0.01). In both cases, these motivations limit the development of loyalty. Tourists, who decide to visit a destination in response to this type of motivation, with a single visit, will probably satisfy their needs in the short and long term, so that the likelihood of a return visit to the destination decreases. These results reinforce the idea held by Jang and Feng (2007), who affirmed that repeat tourists are travellers with a low need for searching for something new. However, the value of the estimated parameter is lower in the case of HL, which can be understood as the fact that horizontality can provide tourists with a certain degree of novelty, but when it comes to competing destinations, and therefore with "similar products" it turns out to be an inhibitory factor to repetition.

However, the motivation related to searching for prestige, classified as internal motivation of the individual, affects DL in a positive way ($\beta = 0.211$ p < 0.01). This supports the idea of Antón et al. (2017), who asserted that tourists visiting a destination for internal reasons are more likely to repeat the visit. Although these tourists have met their needs in the short term, they may have decided that they have already found the destination that meets those needs, so when they wish to satisfy them again they are likely to return to the same destination "This is the place", and they do not have to change. It is important to emphasise that this motivation does not influence HL, and so it indicates an interesting difference between these segments. The motivations of rest and relaxation, sports, entertainment and meeting new people, are not significant in any type of loyalty, as they seem to be more general motivations that can be satisfied in a wide range of destinations. Those results, except in the case of rest and relax, are in line with the contribution of Yoon and Uysal (2005).

With respect to the determining factors related to the image of the destination, both models reveal a relation between the cognitive image and the loyalty. There is an inverse relation between the factor called "Sun, beach and lifestyle" with DL ($\beta = -0.181$ p < 0.05) and HL ($\beta = -0.307$ p < 0.01). The greater the value that the tourists apply to these attributes at the destination, the lower the probability of them showing loyalty. This may be related to the fact that these cognitive image features are easy to find in other destinations, making them easily substitutable. In addition, there is

a positive relation between leisure and general tourism infrastructures with DL ($\beta = 0.195$ p < 0.01) and HL ($\beta = 0.092$ p < 0.05), which can be explained by the self-congruence of the image, and the level of services that tourists expect to find in the destination. Tourists are very demanding and are seeking for novelty, but they do not tend to repeat the visit to a destination that does not share their "way of living" and self-perception (Beerli, Meneses, & Gil, 2007). On the other hand, the image assessment of the social and environmental situation ($\beta = 0.101$ p < 0.05) positively affects the tourist manifesting HL among the different islands that form the competitive group, with no relation between this factor and DL. This can be explained by the fact that the destinations of the competitive set have similar social and environmental conditions, which makes them interchangeable (but different from others), thus making this a hygienic factor that does not influence DL.

On the other hand, the attributes of affective image related to the emotional vibrancy of destination, inversely influence the DL ($\beta = -0.246$ p < 0.01), hindering the development of tourist loyalty. This affective part of the loyalty is easily replaceable, since practically all the sun and beach destinations provide a cheerful and stimulating image. When the affective perception of a destination is leaded by this generic image, the result is that any destination in the category is a valid alternative. The factor related to healthy, authentic, and sustainable lifestyle was found to be non-significant in both models. This factor seems to be more connected with the novelty seekers (Hosany et al., 2006).

The estimated regression model has also shown that the overall image of the competitive group is a determinant of HL, with a positive impact ($\beta = 0.259$ p < 0.01). However, no relationship was found between this variable and DL. This result opens an interesting line of research around the umbrella brand and the link of the same with the HL and with loyalty to each destination under that brand.

Fig. 1 summarises the determinants of each of the types of loyalty analysed. Thus, they differ between those that are significant for both HL and DL, and those that only affect HL or DL. These results seem to indicate that a positive overall image with intention to visit by the tourist, does not have to be an explanatory factor of DL, but does, on the contrary, for HL where other complementary destinations are selected for the next holidays. On the other hand, if
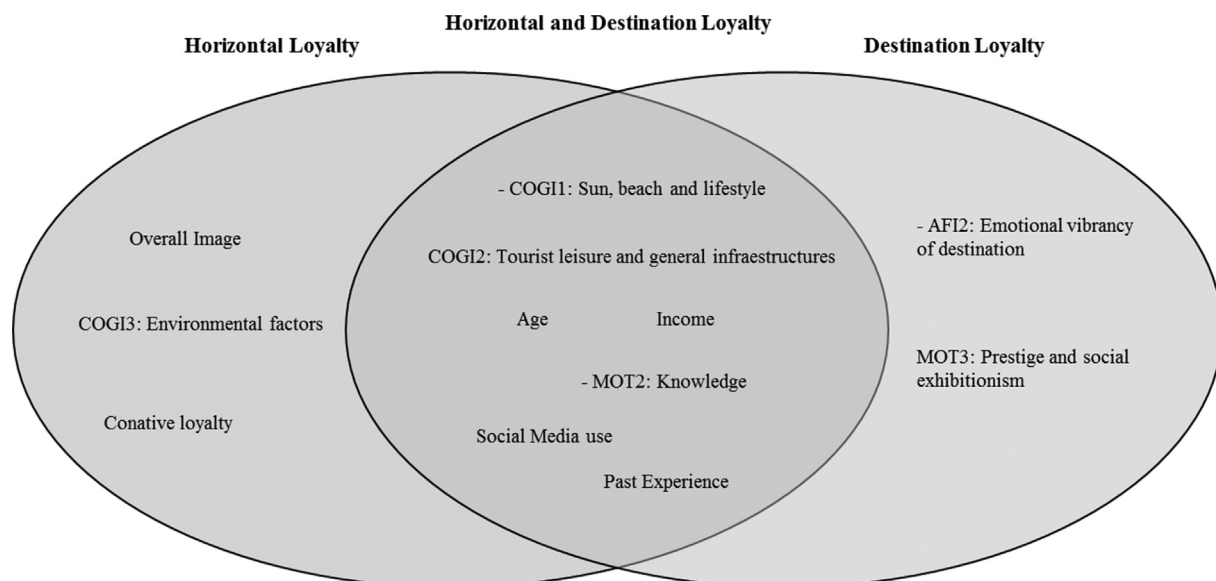


**Horizontal and Destination Loyalty**

**Horizontal Loyalty**                                                                 **Destination Loyalty**

- Overall Image
- COGI3: Environmental factors
- Conative loyalty

- COGI1: Sun, beach and lifestyle
- COGI2: Tourist leisure and general infraestructures
- Age        Income
- MOT2: Knowledge
- Social Media use
- Past Experience

- AFI2: Emotional vibrancy of destination
- MOT3: Prestige and social exhibitionism

**Fig. 1.** Determining factors of loyalty.

the destination is associated with a travel motivation of prestige and social exhibitionism, then there does seem to be a clear determinant for DL but not for HL. Some attributes that are generic and shared by all the destinations within the category (sun and beach in this case), as the cognitive perception of "sun, beach and lifestyle" and the affective perception of "emotional vibrancy" are inhibitors to loyalty. On the other hand, unique attributes of the destination within the category: social and environmental factors, leisure offering and infrastructures, encourage loyalty.

## 3. Conclusion

A review of literature helped to conceptualise the subject of study: the loyalty to the destination and its fundamental dimensions, different groups of tourists were identified according to the type of loyalty shown: loyalty to a destination and horizontal loyalty to multiple destinations. Subsequently, the differences in their explanatory variables were analysed with a methodological design based on a questionnaire made to potential tourists from seventeen countries, with a large sample size (6964 tourists) that allowed consistent conclusions to be drawn.

The results allowed us to identify the existence of variables that influence both types of loyalty, and furthermore, that there are others that influence HL and not DL, and vice versa. In this way, when designing marketing strategies and tourist loyalty, managers should take into account the differences between the determinants of each type of loyalty.

Regarding the theoretical implications, the present study supposes the first empirical application of the factors that determine HL, and its differences with DL, focussed on tourist destinations, where the concept of loyalty has its peculiarities (Alegre & Juaneda, 2006). Thus, the need for a change of focus in the study of loyalty in the context of tourist destinations is highlighted, where future work could use the methodology and conclusions that are developed in the present research. Traditionally, destinations and their marketing strategies have been analysed without taking into account other tourist destinations, or the relationship of tourists with all of them. This study proposes a change of vision in the design of such strategies, where the emphasis is placed on the community of tourists and how these relate to many destinations.

On the other hand, the practical implications are obvious, since the understanding of the differences raised in the loyalty of the tourist implies different marketing strategies for each group, allowing the destinations to enhance their competitiveness. Thus, destination organisations and managers of companies operating in the sector could maximise their available resources for tourism promotion and could also establish possible joint marketing strategies.

Specifically, the fact that the higher the age and the level of income of the tourist influences both the HL and the DL, means that the destinations must design loyalty programmes especially directed to these segments, being able to work with partners where this profile (higher age and income level) is the most common (e.g., airline loyalty programmes). As for the negative effect of the sun and beach image on both types of loyalty, this denotes the need for innovation by these destinations, even with the intention to "get out of the category" of sun and beach through innovation and differentiation if they want to keep tourists loyal. In this line, the identification of two factors in the affective image suggests further studying a new paradigm of the sun and beach image of destinations (affective image of authenticity, well-being and sustainability). Likewise, the projected image of its general infrastructures and leisure, to the extent that they are congruent with that of the markets of origin, are also a good impulse for loyalty. In any case, social media are an ideal source for communicating all these

proposals, as they promote both DL and HL.

In the case of destinations that want to promote DL, in addition to the previous aspects, the projection of an image aimed at those tourists motivated by a fashionable and prestigious destination, which allows social exhibitionism, would seem to be an appropriate strategy, moving away from a cheerful and stimulating destination image, as an image shared with other places. On the other hand, to promote HL, competing destinations can carry out joint promotional actions that help them in the conversion of the intention to visit, working on a shared global image based on common aspects of their environmental situation. In addition, as a means of avoiding the tourist's search for something new and lack of loyalty, destinations can continually renew their attractions, in addition to being able to offer joint proposals and itinerant events between the competing group.

Finally, some lines of future research are suggested: In the first place and since this study has focused only on a geographical area and a competitive set, the set of considered destinations can be expanded. For example, in the once-in-a-lifetime destinations, the extent to which these conclusions apply and whether they can also be networked should be analysed; Furthermore, other additional indicators may be considered to help explain the visits to each of the different destinations (satisfaction, quality, familiarity, etc.), and incorporate vertical and experiential loyalty dimensions; Analyse if the order in which the different destinations are visited influences HL and the determination of the number of times the group of competing destinations is visited; To further analyse the different typologies of social media and sources of information used by tourists to find out about their travel destination in the determination of HL; To evaluate loyalty from a social, environmental and economic perspective, in its different dimensions (DL, HL), and also the attitudinal loyalty —behavioural and attitudinal loyalty are the two sides of a coin, and its implications in the brand architecture, which would allow to evaluate the promotional proposals with better criteria; Additionally, given that cultural differences could originate diverse tourists' loyal behaviours, cross-cultural studies are suggested; Finally, to go deeper into the discussion of the number of dimensions of the affective image, where the greater sophistication of the tourists can differentiate between those affective aspects that are more generic and shared by holiday destinations (cheerful and stimulating) and other more distinctive perceptions of each destination (Authentic, sustainable and healthy) —common and unique psychological characteristics of the destination (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993).

## Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data related to this article can be found at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2017.10.011.

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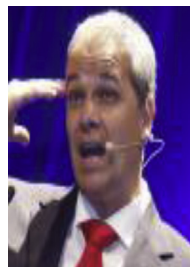


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