The moderating effects of personal and situational characteristics on the image, satisfaction and future behavioral intention with ports of calls.

Completed Research Paper

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the moderating effects of cruise passengers' gender, age, education, and prior experiences on a Mediterranean port of call. We analyze the process of image formation and the influence that image and passenger satisfaction has on future behavioral intentions. The partial least squares technique (PLS) is applied to test the hypotheses developed with a sample of 492 cruise passengers. Our findings show that: (1) gender, age, education, and experience have a moderating influence on the image of ports of call, on cruise passengers' satisfaction, and on future behavioral intentions derived from cruise passengers' satisfaction; (2) prior experience has a moderating influence on the image formation of ports of call.

Keywords: *Destination image, Future behavioral intention, Cruise, Moderation.*

1. Introduction

Cruise tourism has received little study thus far (Sun et al., 2014). Most studies have focused on the Caribbean region (Andriotis & Agiomirgianakis, 2010) as it features in the majority of cruise itineraries—37.3% in 2013 (Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association, 2013). The Mediterranean Sea is the second choice for cruise itineraries, in particular as this region has experienced significant growth in cruise tourism in recent years. In spite of this growth, there is still little research on Mediterranean cruise tourism (Pranic et al., 2013). Furthermore, most cruise studies have focused on a single cruise line (Andriotis & Agiomirgianakis, 2010), and there are few cruise studies on specific ports of call. The literature lacks research exclusively focused on cruise ports (Sun et al., 2014). In particular, Xie et al. (2012) and Pranic et al. (2013) highlight the need to carry out more studies that analyze aspects related to cruise passengers' behaviors—such as their perceptions and experiences—at the port of call, and not only on board.

On another note, there are no existing cruise studies on the effect that moderating variables have on cruise passengers' behavior (Petrick, 2004). Moderating variables are gaining salience in the marketing literature and investigators have acknowledged their important role in predicting consumers' behavior (Walsh et al., 2008). In the tourism context, the literature review shows that an array of studies have analyzed the moderating influence of prior experience in different contexts. The effect of prior experience has also been analyzed in the process of the destination image formation and its influence on future behavioral intention (Rodríguez Molina et al., 2013). However, there is no academic literature as yet that has analyzed the moderating effect of prior experience on ports of call and destinations, and their

relation to behavioral variables. In addition, this is the first research to study the moderating effect of prior experience in the relationship of influence of image on satisfaction.

The tourism literature has also analyzed the moderating effect of tourist personal characteristics (e.g., age, gender, education) in different contexts. Although some tourism studies suggest the need to analyze the moderating effect of tourist personal characteristics (San Martin et al., 2013), there are no extant studies that analyze these characteristics and their moderating effect on behavior. In the tourism context, this is the first study to analyze the moderating impact of gender, age and education in the relationship between image and satisfaction and in the process of destination image formation. Considering the lack of research, this paper focuses on ports of call, in particular on a city that is a port of call for Mediterranean cruises: Valencia in Spain. This paper aims to: 1) evaluate the moderating effects of cruisers' prior experience, gender, age, and education in the process of destination image formation; 2) examine the moderating role of cruisers' prior experience, gender, age, and education in the relationship between image–satisfaction, image–future behavioral intention, and satisfaction–intention. The reason for choosing Valencia is that in addition to being the second port of call for Spanish cruises (CLIA Europe, 2013), it is also one of the main destinations for international tourism (Rausell, 2010).

2. Literature Review and Research Hypotheses

During their tour, cruises stop at different ports of call, so that tourists can visit cruise destinations (Andriotis & Agiomirgianakis, 2010). Cruise lines choose ports of call that bring cruisers satisfactory experiences and reject those ports of call that their customers find unsatisfactory (Henthorne, 2000).

2.1. Gender, age and education as moderating variables

Regarding gender, social role theory (Matzler et al., 2008) explains gender differences in consumers' behavior. In the literature, research studies have shown that gender moderates the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty (Matzler et al., 2008), as well as the relationship between image and intention (Matzler et al., 2008). As destination image (Prayag, 2012) and satisfaction (Matzler et al., 2008) can vary depending on gender, it is logical to suppose that gender also moderates the relationship between the two constructs.

The literature review also confirms that the importance accorded to cognitive dimensions (factors) that define a destination image varies according to social demographic characteristics such as gender (Beerli & Martín, 2004). In the same way, San Martín and Rodríguez del Bosque (2010) recognize that gender has a direct effect on the choice of a vacation destination. Based on these arguments, we suggest that gender will moderate the image formation process of a port of call, as well as the relationships between image, satisfaction, and behavioral intention. Thus, we propose the following hypotheses for ports of call: H1: The dimensions of destination image are moderated by the cruise passenger's gender. H2: The effect of destination image on cruise passengers' satisfaction with a port of call is moderated by their gender. H3: The effect of cruise passengers' satisfaction on their behavioral intention with regard to the port of call as a destination is moderated by their gender. H4: The effect of destination image on passengers' behavioral intention with regard to the port of call as a destination is moderated by passengers' gender.

Different theories explain the differences in consumers' behavior in terms of their age (Matzler et al., 2008). Research studies have shown that age moderates the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty (Matzler et al., 2008), as well as the relationship between

image and intention (Han et al., 2009). As both satisfaction (Matzler et al., 2008) and image (Prayag 2012) can vary according to age, it is logical to suppose that age will also moderate the relationship between the two constructs.

Previous studies also show that age can moderate the process of destination image formation (San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2010). Based on these arguments and the empirical evidence, we propose the following hypothesis: H5: The dimensions of destination image are moderated by cruise passengers' age. H6: The effect of destination image on cruise passengers' satisfaction with the port of call is moderated by their age. H7: The effect of cruise passengers' satisfaction on their behavioral intention with regard to the port of call as a destination is moderated by their age. H8: The effect of destination image on passengers' behavioral intention with regard to the port of call as a destination is moderated by their age.

Consumers' behavior also varies according to level of education. Consequently, we can expect that consumers with a higher level of education search for additional information about a destination besides the information given by image and satisfaction; in contrast, consumers with a lower level of education will base their purchase decision on the information given by image and satisfaction with the destination. There is little analysis of the moderating role of education in the literature (Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006). Previous studies have shown that education moderates the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty (Mittal & Kamakura 2001). Research has also shown that both loyalty (Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006) and destination image (Prayag, 2010) vary according to the level of people's education. Taking this into account, it is logical to suppose that education will also moderate the relationship between image and satisfaction.

In addition, education can moderate destination image formation. Based on these arguments and the empirical evidence, we propose the following hypotheses: H9: Destination image dimensions are moderated by cruise passengers' level of education. H10: The effect of destination image on cruise passengers' satisfaction with the port of call is moderated by their level of education. H11: The effect of cruise passengers' satisfaction with the port of call on their behavioral intention is moderated by their level of education. H12: The effect of destination image on passengers' behavioral intention with regard to the port of call as a destination is moderated by their level of education.

2.1. Prior experience as moderator variable

Previous studies have argued the need to analyze the differences between first-time and repeat visitors (Petrick, 2004). The intensity of the relationships between image, satisfaction, and future behavioral intention can vary according to situational factors, such as tourists' prior experience (Rodríguez Molina et al., 2013). Previous research carried out in the non-cruise tourism context has confirmed the moderating effect of prior experience on the relationship (1) between satisfaction and intention (San Martín et al., 2013), (2) between image and satisfaction (Chi, 2012), and (3) between image and intention (Faullant et al., 2008). The importance of cognitive factors in determining a destination image can also vary according to prior experience (Beerli & Martín, 2004). We thus propose the following hypotheses for ports of call: H13: The dimensions of destination image are moderated by cruise passengers' prior experiences. H14: The effect of destination image on cruise passengers' satisfaction with a port of call is moderated by their prior experience. H15: The effect of cruise passengers' satisfaction with a port of call on their behavioral intention is moderated by their prior experience. H16: The effect of destination image on cruise passengers' behavioral intention is moderated by their prior experience.

Figure 1 graphically represents the different research hypotheses.

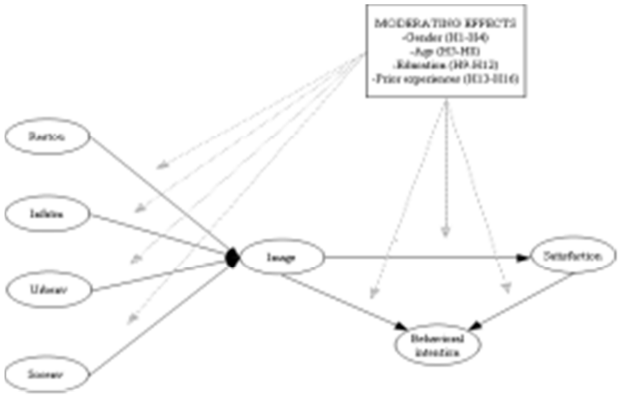

Figure 1: Research model and hypotheses

3. Research Methodology

Our target population was cruise passengers who disembarked in the port of Valencia between April and July 2013, i.e., they were cruise passengers who visited Valencia as a port of call, transiting as tourists. As the population size was unknown, several non-random samplings were made to choose the sample (San Martín & Herrero, 2012). First, a quota sample was used to match the target population in terms of age and nationality (San Martín et al., 2013). Second, a convenience sample was used to select the required number of subjects (Hung & Petrick, 2011), and was combined with the variables of age and nationality given by the quota sample (San Martín et al., 2013).

Personal data were collected through a questionnaire completed by a group of trained interviewers who confirmed that all respondents had visited Valencia City during their stop at the port of call. We had a sample of 492 valid responses. The sample was composed of 54.8% males and 45.2% females. Group ages were as follows: 29.7% ≤ 35 years; 37% 35–54 years; 33.3% ≥ 55 years. The levels of education were as follows: 36.6% did not have a bachelor's degree, and 63.4% had a bachelor's degree or higher.

In the proposed model, we developed an ad-hoc questionnaire to measure each construct. The measurement items for the proposed model were adapted to the specific context of this study. The items in the questionnaire were also validated through two opinion panels, one for cruise passengers and the other for cruise tourism experts (Bigné et al., 2009).

In this research, destination image was measured using a multi-attribute approach addressing the overall image following the type of approximation used by most studies. We measured the cognitive aspects of destination image for a set of attributes using fifteen items (Table 1) generated from the literature review (Barroso Castro et al., 2007) and rated on a five-point scale. Overall satisfaction was measured using three items (Table 1) (Oliver, 1980; Flavián et al., 2006). For measuring future behavioral intention, we used two proxies: intention to revisit the destination and intention to recommend the destination. The response format applied was a five-point scale and we used three items (Table 1) (Zeithaml et al., 1996; Cater & Zabkar, 2009).

We used descriptive statistics and PLS structural equation modeling. PLS simultaneously evaluates both the measurement model and the structural model. We decided to use this technique for the following reasons: (1) PLS is appropriate for analyzing measurement models of both formative and reflective items (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001); (2) compared to covariance-based SEM, PLS has many advantages in estimating interaction effects (Chin et al., 2003). In our PLS analysis, we used the SmartPLS 3.2.0 software (Ringle et al., 2014).

The moderating effects of gender, age, education and prior experience were analyzed through a multi-group comparison approach (Henseler & Fassott, 2010). For each moderating variable, the responses were classified into two groups. Using PLS, we estimated the path coefficients for each group (Sarstedt et al., 2011). Finally, we analyzed the differences between path coefficients. Significant coefficients were interpreted as having moderating effects. To determine the significance of the differences between the estimated parameters for each group, we applied Henseler's nonparametric approach (Henseler et al., 2009).

4. Results

4.1. Underlying dimensions of cognitive image

Before testing the proposed hypotheses, we carried out principal components analysis to determine the number of dimensions that comprised cognitive image. Exploratory factor analysis of the image scale enabled us to reduce the information into four dimensions (Table 1): tourism resources (Restou), infrastructure of the city and atmosphere (Infatm), urban environment (Urbenv), and socioeconomic environment (Socenv). These four dimensions represented 70.05% of the variance (Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin: 0.838).

In the model proposed, image was conceived as a first-order multidimensional reflective construct and as a second-order formative construct. Thus, the dimensions of destination image (tourist resources, infrastructure of the city and atmosphere, urban environment, socioeconomic environment) were assumed to be interacting with their items in a reflective way and with the destination image in a formative way. The image dimension items were optimally weighted and combined using the PLS algorithm to create latent variable scores. As a result, first-order dimensions became the observed indicators of second-order dimensions.

4.2. Measurement and structural model

Our model found the commonly-accepted guidelines (Roldán & Sánchez-Franco, 2012), for item and construct reliability, and for convergent validity. According to Henseler et al. (2015) for discriminant validity we employed the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) (Henseler et al., 2015). HTMT values remain below threshold of 0.9. This approach had a superior performance that the Fornell-Larker criterion (Henseler et al., 2015). Table 1 and Table 2 indicated the results of the measurement and structural model assessment respectively. Consistent with Hair et al. (2011), bootstrapping (5000 resamples) was utilized to generate standard errors and t-statistics. The R2 values exceed the minimum level of 0.10 (Falk & Miller, 1992) (Table 2).

Table 1: Measurement model

Construct/ Dimension/ Indicator	VIF	Weight	Loading	*t*-value	Composite reliability	AVE
Image (second-order factor)					n.a	n.a
Tourist Resources	1.426	0.234			0.904	0.704
Restou1. Tourist information is wide and adequate.			0.904	51.76		
Restou2. Tourist signs are appropriate.			0.858	28.93		
Restou3. Tourist services provided for the cruise (shuttle bus, tourist office, etc...) are sufficient.			0.887	36.15		
Restou4. Tourist attractions /places to visit are varied.			0.710	12.87		
Infrastructure of the city and atmosphere	1.838	0.726			0.944	0.600

Infatm1. There is a rich and varied gastronomy/ a wide variety of restaurants.			0.7409	24.86		
Infatm2. There is a good variety of shops and many facilities for shopping.			0.824	39.05		
Infatm3. There are enough leisure activities.			0.758	24.32		
Infatm5. It is a quiet city.			0.734	25.52		
Infatm6. Residents are friendly and welcoming.			0.735	25.57		
Infatm7. The weather is nice.			0.731	25.28		
Urban environment	1.371	0.212			0.910	0.835
Urbenv1. There is a good urban environment with low levels of environmental pollution (traffic, noise, fumes, etc.).			0.908	36.33		
Urbenv2. Street/area cleaning is optimal.			0.919	46.25		
Socioeconomic Environment	1.816	0.027			0.926	0.863
Socenv1. Shops have a good price-quality relationship.			0.953	71.98		
Socenv2. Restaurants have a good price-quality relationship.			0.904	32.47		
Satisfaction (reflective)					0.976	0.932
Sat1. I am satisfied with my visit to Valencia.			0.957	71.20		
Sat2. My decision to visit Valencia was good.			0.967	82.57		
Sat3. I feel good about visiting Valencia.			0.972	103.84		
Behavioral intention (reflective)					0.911	0.777
Int1. I would say positive things about Valencia to my friends and relatives.			0.955	128.57		
Int2. I would recommend Valencia to anyone who asks me for advice.			0.959	176.72		
Int3. I would visit Valencia on another occasion.			0.706	15.24		

Note: A: male; B: female; C: low age; D: high age; E: not have at least a bachelor's degree; F: have a bachelor's degree or higher; G: first time visitors; H: repeat visitors.

Table 2: Structural model

Ho	(β)	Weights (loading)	*t*-value (bootstrap)	R^2
H1: Image→satisfaction	0.495***		8.325	
H2: Satisfaction→behavioral intention	0.807***		15.516	
H3: Image→behavioral intention	0.037^{ns}		0.521	
Formative measures				
Restou →image		0.234 (0.6724)	3.988	
Infatm→image		0.727 (0.9514)	4.876	
Urbenv →image		0.200 (0.6643)	3.819	
Socenv →image		0.028 (0.6546)	0.165	
Effects on satisfaction				0.245
Effects on behavioral intention				0.682

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001; ns – not significant

4.2. Multi-group analyses

Male and female group sizes were 216 and 276, respectively. Age grouping was done using a median split (Han et al., 2009). The median value was 49 years old, with a total of 14 cases within the median. These cases were excluded for more accurate analyses. The group

below the median included 237 subjects, and the group above the median comprised 241 subjects. These age groups were labeled low and high age groups to distinguish them from the median. To test the moderating role of educational level, respondents were divided into two groups (Hwang et al., 2013): (1) tourists without a bachelor's degree (n = 180), and (2) tourists who had a bachelor's degree or higher (n = 312). The control variables tested (gender, age, and education) had no effect.

The participants were assigned to one of two groups according to their prior experience as follows: the first group comprised 309 tourists who were on their first visit, and the second group comprised 183 repeat visitors. To ensure that group differences were exclusively based on their prior experience, we corroborated that variables such as gender, age, and education were not exerting a confounding effect on the relationships established. For this purpose, we applied comparisons between the participants' destination experience and these variables using cross frequency tables and an X2 test. Our results showed that the correlations between destination experience and participants' gender (X2= 2.260; p=0.133), age (X2= 1.033; p=0.309), and level of education (X2= 0.000; p=0.992) were not statistically significant. Table 3 shows the standardized coefficients and t-test differences in the multi-group model coefficients.

Table 3: Multi-group analysis. Test results.

	Image			Satisfaction			Behaviour intention		
Gender	β^A	β^B	t-test	β^A	β^B	t-test	β^A	β^B	t-test
Image	-	-	-	0.412	0.587	0.002	-	-	-
Satisfaction	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.839	0.741	0.047
Restou	0.285	0.262	0.474						
Infatm	0.062	0.905	0.100						
Urbenv	0.355	0.094	0.351						
Socenv	0.655	0.177	0.105						
Age	β^C	β^D	t-test	β^C	β^D	t-test	β^C	β^D	t-test
Image	-	-	-	0.405	0.692	0.000	-	-	-
Satisfaction	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.827	0.610	0.002
Restou	0.178	0.447	0.125						
Infatm	0.725	0.681	0.427						
Urbenv	0.411	0.200	0.307						
Socenv	0.119	0.169	0.296						
Education	β^E	β^F	t-test	β^E	β^F	t-test	β^E	β^F	t-test
Image	-	-	-	0.738	0.320	0.000	-	-	-
Satisfaction	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.911	0.744	0.046
Restou	0.021	0.361	0.295						
Infatm	0.899	0.687	0.287						
Urbenv	0.277	0.389	0.135						
Socenv	0.348	0.297	0.150						
Previous experience	β^G	β^H	t-test	β^G	β^H	t-test	β^G	β^H	t-test
Image	-	-	-	0.466	0.818	0.000	-	-	-
Satisfaction	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.815	0.467	0.000
Restou	0.266	0.176	0.046						
Infatm	0.821	0.402	0.042						
Urbenv	0.075	0.276	0.164						
Socenv	0.030	0.652	0.022						

Note: A: male; B: female; C: low age; D: high age; E: not have at least a bachelor's degree; F: have a bachelor's degree or higher; G: first time visitors; H: repeat visitors.

Our results show that gender, age, and education moderate the positive relationships between image and satisfaction (H2, H6, and H10 are supported), and the relationships between satisfaction and behavioral intention (H3, H7, and H11 are supported). This can be explained by the significant differences between groups (male/female, low age/high age, and non-bachelor's degree/bachelor's degree or higher). However, there are no differences in the

dimensions that contribute to the image formation of groups. Thus, H1, H5, and H9 are not supported.

Focusing on gender and age, we make two observations: (1) the effect of satisfaction on behavioral intention is greater in the first group (male and low age) than in the second group (β=0.839 and β=0.827, respectively); (2) the effect of image on satisfaction is greater in the second group (female and high age) than in the first group (β=0.587 and β=0.692, respectively). For the participants' level of education, the effect of satisfaction on behavioral intention and the effect of image on satisfaction were greater in the first group (no bachelor's degree) than in the second group (bachelor's degree or higher), at β=0.911 and β=0.738, respectively.

Prior experience also moderates the relationship between image and satisfaction (H14 supported), and the relationship between satisfaction and behavioral intention (H15 supported). Our results show that image determines satisfaction to a higher degree when tourists have visited the destination more than once (β=0.818). Even so, the effect of first-time visitors' satisfaction on their behavioral intention is greater (β=0.815).

The dimensions that contribute to image formation show different values for first-time visitors than for repeat visitors. The most important dimension within the first-time visitors group is the infrastructure of the city and atmosphere (Infatm) dimension, followed by the tourism resources (Restou) dimension. The urban environment (Urbenv) and socioeconomic environment (Socenv) dimensions are not significant. In contrast, all dimensions are significant within the group of repeat visitors, especially the socioeconomic environment (Socenv) dimension. This implies that H13 finds empirical support.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

The objective of the study was to evaluate the moderating effects of cruise tourists' prior experience, gender, age, and education in the process of destination image formation, and to analyze the moderating role of their prior experience, gender, age, and education in the relationship between image–satisfaction, image–future behavioral intention, and satisfaction–intention. The model was tested to verify the hypotheses with respect to personal and situational characteristics.

Concerning the academic contribution of this study, we have to highlight that there are studies in the literature about the proposed model with regard to influence of image and satisfaction in the future behavioral intentions. However, this study is a pioneering research in the field of empirical analyses regarding future behavioral intentions of cruise passengers to a port of call. The novelty of this research lies in the study of cruise passengers' image formation, their satisfaction, and their future behavioral intentions with regard to a port of call in the Mediterranean region where there is still little research on Mediterranean cruise tourism. In addition, this research analyzes the moderating role of gender, age, and education (personal characteristics), and the moderating role of prior experience (situational characteristic) proposed in the model. A relevant contribution, in the tourism context, is made by the significant relationships of the moderating effect of tourists' gender, age, education, and prior experience on the relationships between destination image and destination satisfaction.

Our findings indicate that cruise passengers' image of a port of call has a positive and direct influence on their satisfaction with their destination. In the same way, cruise passengers' satisfaction with a port of call has a direct and positive effect on their future behavioral intentions regarding the destination. Surprisingly, the destination image of ports of call has no influence on cruise passengers' future behavioral intentions.

Our main theoretical contribution is the study of the moderating effects of gender, age, education, and prior experience on factors related to a destination. Our findings show that the influence of destination image and satisfaction on cruise passengers' future behavioral intentions strengthens with the following variables: (1) personal characteristics of gender, age, and education; (2) prior experience of a destination.

With respect to the personal characteristics of gender, age, and education, these personal characteristics show differences in (1) the influence of satisfaction on future behavioral intentions, and (2) the influence of destination image on satisfaction. Specifically, our findings indicate that for the male, low age, non-bachelor's degree group, the effect of satisfaction on future behavioral intention is higher than in the female, high age, bachelor's degree or higher group, consistent with Matzler et al.'s (2008) result in which the satisfaction of the male group was higher that than of the female group. The result for age as a moderator in the relationship between satisfaction and future behavioral intentions highlights the higher future behavioral intentions in the group of 48 years and younger than the group 50 years and over. This result is consistent with Homburg and Giering (2001). The result for education as a moderator in the relationship between satisfaction and future behavioral intentions indicates higher behavioral intentions for the group of cruise passengers without a bachelor's degree than in the group of cruise passengers possessing a bachelor's degree or higher. This result is consistent with Mittal et al.'s (2001) findings (Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006).

Our results indicate that for the female, high age, bachelor's degree or higher group, the effect of image on satisfaction is higher. As this is the first study in the tourism context to examine the moderating influence of tourists' gender, age, and education on the relationships between destination image and destination satisfaction, we cannot compare our results to the previous literature. A relevant contribution is made by analyzing the moderating effects of gender, age, and education in the relationship between image and satisfaction because is the first research to confirm these moderating effects.

In contrast to the hypotheses formulated, gender, age, and education do not moderate the different dimensions that contribute to image formation. Baloglu (1997) obtained similar results when he analyzed the moderating effect of gender and education on image formation. Our results for age are in contrast to the finding in Beerli and Martín's (2004a) study. As in this study, San Martín and Rodríguez del Bosque (2010) found that education did not moderate the dimensions that formed destination image.

On a different note, the previous experience of first-time and repeat visitors in ports of call show differences in (1) the dimensions used for image formation, (2) the influence of satisfaction on future behavioral intentions, and (3) the influence of destination image on satisfaction. We also find differences between first-time visitors and repeat visitors regarding image formation. There are only two significant dimensions for first-time visitors: the infrastructure of city and atmosphere dimension and the tourism resources dimension, the latter dimension being the most important. This means that first-time visitors are more sensitive to the infrastructure of the city and atmosphere dimension. As for repeat visitors, all dimensions are significant, socioeconomic environment being the most important.

Our findings show that first-time visitors' satisfaction with a port of call has a greater influence on future behavioral intentions than the satisfaction of repeat visitors. This result is consistent with that of San Martín et al. (2013) for non-cruise contexts. For tourist destinations, however, Rodríguez Molina et al. (2013) found no empirical support for the moderating effect of prior experience on the relationship between satisfaction and future behavioral intentions. In contrast, repeat visitors' destination image of a port of call has a greater effect on satisfaction than first-time visitors' destination image. We cannot compare our results to previous literature as this is the first study to examine the moderating influence of previous experience on the relationship between image and satisfaction with a destination.

A relevant contribution is made by analyzing the moderating effects of prior experience in the relationship between image and satisfaction because is the first research to confirm these moderating effects. Rodríguez-Molina et al. (2013) analyzed this moderating effect in the opposite way; they analyzed the relationship between satisfaction and destination image. We therefore suggest that managers of ports of call should consider the aspects analyzed here to contribute to the formation of destination image by increasing visitors' satisfaction.

Future research should study other factors that may influence the variables in the proposed model, such as the perceived value and the service quality. It would also be useful to analyze other potential moderators, such as external information resources (online/offline), visit duration, or motivation for visiting destinations. Finally, this study considered only Valencia in Spain as a port of call and thus some of the results could be specific to this destination. In future studies, it would be of value to select other destinations and cultural settings (Caribbean and Mediterranean ports of call), both to analyze possible variances in the influence of the moderators considered here and to seek greater generalization of the proposed model.

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