

Exploring the impact of destination attachment on the intentional behavior of the US visitors to Baja California, Mexico.

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Abstract:

This study focuses on exploring the existing relationship of destination attachment within the U.S. visitor's intentional behavior toward border places in Baja California, Mexico. The research consists in formulating a set of hypotheses for a model sustained by empirical data obtained from a telephone survey and analyzed with Partial Least Squares (PLS) path modeling. This study found a positive impact of destination attachment on intentional behavior and visitor experiences, which influences significantly both mentioned constructs. In this context characterized by the importance of cross-border flows and a stigmatization due to safety issues as well as other kinds of personal visit inhibitors, the study shows that familiarity with destination allows reverting and transforming this impression to a positive perception of the visited place.

Keywords: Destination attachment; intentional behavior; visitation experience; protection and safety; México-United States; Baja California Border.

Introduction:

Regardless of the academic and operative importance achieved by destination attachment and visitor's intentional behavior, its causal link in the marketing and tourism management constitutes a relatively new research line (Gross & Brown, 2008; Lee, Graefe, & Burns, 2007; Yuksel, Yuksel, & Bilim, 2010). The studies which have explored these topics showed a significant and positive impact of destination attachment on the visitor's intentional behavior, mostly through stimulating its components: loyalty and recommendation of the visited place (Kozak & Beaman, 2006; Li, Petrick, & Zhou, 2008; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Yuksel et al., 2010).

After the conceptualization of destination attachment into two complementary dimensions: identity and place dependency, this notion of place attachment seems to have more substance (Moore & Scott, 2003; Yuksel et al., 2010). The fusion of these components transforms destination attachment into an affective and symbolic construction (Lee, 2001; Sirgy, & Su, 2000; Stedman, 2002), in addition to projecting it into a contextual perspective which allows capturing the exclusivity of the visited destination through its functional offers (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005). Therefore, destination comes out of its generalizing anonymity to integrate a modeling effort based on empirical exploration (Gross & Brown 2008; Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Williams & Vaske 2003; Yuksel et al., 2010). In this regard, the motivation to explore the causality terms between destination attachment and the US border visitor's behavior toward the tourist destinations in Baja California, Mexico may be a concept susceptible to change depending on the visited place.

In a tourist context similar to ours, the promotion of intentional behavior is synonymous to vocational socio-economic growth due to its location at the border with the most solvent country in the world (Bringas-Rábago & Verduzco-Chávez, 2008; Judkins, 2007; Timothy, 2001). This favorable particularity is also a source of possible frictions propitiated by personal travel inhibitors, variation in visitors flow (Bringas-Rábago & Verduzco-Chávez, 2008; Gelbmana, 2008; Toudert & Bringas-Rábago, 2015), border transit difficulty, and the perceived safety in destination (Fuchs & Reichel, 2006; Karamustafa, Fuchs & Reichel, 2013; Khajuria & Khanna, 2014; Paya, 2006). In this effervescent and unpredictable environment, the difficulties within this destination awake research interests centered on the triangulation formed by destination attachment, experienced lived and intentional behavior (Alexandris, Kouthouris & Meligdis, 2006; Chen & Chen, 2010; Toudert & Bringas-Rábago, 2015; Tsai, 2012; Yuksel et al., 2010). These interests are manifested also by the destination management organizations (DMOs) who are responsible of handling the fluctuation impact of policy and conditions of the tourist stay (Antón, Camarero & Laguna-García, 2014; Karamustafa et al., 2013; Timothy, 2001).

The goal of this study is to evaluate the validity of the causal relationship of a two-branch research model in the case of visitors familiarized with the destination. The first branch represents tourism consumption defined in the framework of the connections with destination attachment, experience lived in the destination, and intentional behavior; it is the branch model which holds the most support from tourism marketing literature (Li et al., 2008; Kozak & Beaman, 2006; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Yuksel et al., 2010). The second branch takes a position in the destination characteristics which condition tourist flow and consumption in a tense border context (Fuchs & Reichel, 2006, 2011; Gelbmana, 2008;

Lepp, Gibson, & Lane, 2011; Paya, 2006). This branch is represented in the model by the relationship between personal visit inhibitors, destination access, perceived safety, and habit of traveling, a linkage of constructs very few times discussed in literature and even less in the case of repeat visitors (Antón et al., 2014; Karamustafa et al., 2013). In order to bind both branches of the proposed research model, particular exploratory links were created with tourist consumption determinants in the region of study: safety and destination access (Bringas-Rábago & Verduzco-Chávez, 2008; Paya, 2006; Timothy, 2001).

Theoretical framework and hypotheses

Destination attachment, experience and intentional behavior

In regards to destination's promotion and management, place attachment has become a subject of study and research due to its close relationship to visitor's intentional behavior, which seems to decisively condition behavior towards the products and services of the visited place (Li et al., 2008; Yuksel et al., 2010).

Destination attachment is often defined from the perspective of the emotional and affectionate ties created among the subject, place and its environment (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001; Yuksel et al., 2010). This connection was also defined in the context of an affective escalation that varies from one subject to another, reflecting in the exercise of an emotional capital, perceptions, and uneven demonstrations toward the appreciated and/or visited place. (Halpenny, 2006; Lewicka, 2008). However, even though destination attachment seems as a construction subject to time and recurrent visits, Halpenny (2006) and Yuksel et al. (2010) state that this kind of attachment can also occur before the visit thanks to the sociability propitiated by friends, relatives and the sociocultural environment.

The division of destination attachment into identity and place dependence allowed to incursion in identity symbolism, which confers personal referents to the place (like memory and perceptions) in a context of social interaction favorable to its formation (Lee, 2001; Sirgy & Su, 2000; Stedman, 2002;). From another perspective, this same ramification also entails to give place attachment a functional outreach, which is derived from place dependence (O’Leary & Deegan, 2005). Accordingly, what it is suggested here is the idea of places contending among them to satisfy the functional needs of people in contexts of reduced possibility to move from one place to another (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). From this approach, as Yuksel et al. (2010) suggest, tourist destinations present contexts which reflect affective demonstrations and motivational connections similar to the ones displayed by the place, and therefore, tourist perception is linked one way or another to the set of lived experiences in a place (Hui, Wan, & Ho, 2007; Lee, 2001).

The experience lived in the destination is one of the key concepts in tourism marketing literature placing it in the center of the motivation which moves the visitor’s intentional behavior (Chen & Chen, 2010; Meyer & Schwager, 2007; Petrick, 2004). This causality finds meaning in an expected conduct from the tourist to transmit the experience lived to family and friends who could become visitors to this destination (Chen & Chen, 2010; Oppermann, 2000; Petrick, 2004). .

With this approach, the experience lived seems to blend in with the visitor’s satisfaction which expresses an enjoyment level of the destination factors (Antón et al., 2014; Chen & Chen, 2010; Petrick, 2004). In the framework of this positioning, Antón et al. (2014) considered the frequency of visit as a quantitative indicator of the experience lived which stimulates the intentional behavior of the tourist *vis a vis* the destination.

Within a context of telephone surveys to visitors familiarized with the destination such as ours, not all the visits are recent to include a specific evaluation of satisfaction. In this sense, the experience lived tends to reflect a linkage with satisfaction during the stay (Antón et al., 2014; Chen & Chen, 2010; Petrick, 2004). In fact, for past visits, some studies suggest that the memory of a visitor retains the experience better than the evaluation of factors in the destination (Chen & Chen, 2010; Kozak, 2001, Petrick, Morais & Norman, 2001).

However, the vision of the experience lived also stands out as a result of a comparison between the visitor's expectations before and after the stay (Bigné, Sánchez & Sánchez, 2001, Chon, 1991; Kotler & Keller, 2006; Oliver, 1997). From this perspective, and parting from the disconfirmation of expectative logic, the conditioning satisfaction is formed and most importantly visitor's intentional behavior (Chi & Qu, 2008; Kotler & Keller, 2006).

Because of their importance in sales increase, the dimensions of intentional behavior- loyalty and willingness to recommend- have become a core priority for businesses and a subject of recurrent studies in the marketing field (Oliver, 1999; Valle, Silva, Mendes, & Guerio, 2006). Generally, intentional behavior in tourist consumption was approached as a consequence of visitor's satisfaction which stimulates recommendation to acquaintances, loyalty which reaches a double significance based on a favorable attitude towards the visited destination, and tendency to visit repeatedly (Chen & Chen, 2010; Chi & Qu, 2008; Oppermann, 2000).

Several studies have confirmed the existence of a reciprocal and positive relation between destination attachment and visitor's loyalty, which was measured in the tourism field with different indicators such as intention to repeat the visit (Alexandris et al., 2006;

Machado, Santos, & Sarmento, 2009; Tsai, 2012), willingness to recommend the destination to acquaintances (Chen & Chen, 2010; Lee, Lee, & Choi, 2011) and length of visit (Lee et al., 2007), among others. These different possibilities referring to loyalty give us a glimpse at a complex concept temporarily extended; these aspects have taken Oliver (1999) to divide it into three different stages. At first, the beliefs are generated by cognitive attributes, followed by attitude shaping which produces the affective preference and at the end the conation stimulating desires and motivations that lead to repeating consumption and/or promoting the product (Back, 2005; Chi & Qu, 2008; De Rojas & Camarero, 2008; Oliver, 1997 & 1999).

Taking into account this set of considerations which can be mainly translated into a theoretic framework characterized by different consolidation levels in tourist literature, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1: Destination attachment impacts positively on intentional behavior.

H2: A pleasant travel experience influences positively destination attachment.

H3: A pleasant experience works positively on intentional behavior.

The contextual model branch

To achieve an approach in the destination characteristics that often interact with the causal relationships mentioned at the end of the previous paragraph, this study considered the aspects supported by tourist destination literature on the Mexico-US border (Bringas-Rábago & Verduzco-Chávez, 2008; Gelbmana, 2008; Timothy, 2001; Paya, 2006). In this sense, four constructs were proposed defined by the frequency of visit which potentiates the geographical proximity (Judkins, 2007; Timothy, 2001), destination access mainly limited

by the border crossing conditions (Toudert & Bringas-Rábago, 2015), personal inhibitors that sometimes discourage the decision to travel, and safety concerns related to the cartels' war (Bringas-Rábago & Verduzco-Chávez, 2008; Gelbmana, 2008; Timothy, 2001; Paya, 2006).

In regards to perceived destination safety, tourist literature usually links it to risk perception (Fuchs & Reichel, 2006; George, 2003; Karamustafa et al., 2013). Research conducted by Sönmez and Graefe (1998) and Tarlow (2009) confirmed the existence of an impact in risk perception over the intention to travel and destination choice.

Perceived safety along with destination access play an important role in destination's image and the conformation of a positive experience of the stay (Chi & Qu, 2008; Wickens, 2002). The perceived safety shape a complex and multidimensional construct reflected within the framework of a tolerant reaction in a frequent visitor showing a greater adaptability potential to destination conditions (George, 2003; Khajuria & Khanna, 2014; Shaw, Saayman & Saayman, 2012). These considerations are present in the international border tourism which in the Mexican case exhibits weaknesses in public safety and transit flow delays when crossing the border (Bringas-Rábago & Verduzco-Chávez; Timothy, 2001; Paya, 2006). In theory, these aspects participate in defining the experience lived by the visitor that when travel expectations are surpassed, it would be like stimulating the intentional destination behavior (Bigné et al., 2001; Chon, 1991; Oliver, 1997). Nonetheless, when an unpleasant situation has been lived (De Rojas & Camarero, 2008; Szymanski & Henard, 2001), this perception becomes part of the personal visit inhibitors in conjunction with the changes in the border crossings procedures and the lack of resources to sustain the expense (Bringas-Rábago & Verduzco-Chávez, 2008).

Referring to the personal travel inhibitors, literature suggests differentiated impacts between those who have not travel yet to the destination and those who are familiarized with it, as is with the population included in our study (Karamustafa et al., 2013; Fuchs & Reichel, 2006, 2011; Lepp et al., 2011). Generally, the repeat visitors are considered a low investment segment with significant profits compared to first-time visitors, making repeat visitors a privileged target for DMOs and marketing campaigns (Li, Cheng, Kim, & Petrick, 2008; Oppermann, 1998). In fact, familiarity and accumulated experience from repeat visitors is seen as a factor that impacts consumption increase and the promotion of a favorable intentional behavior (Antón et al., 2014; Petrick, 2004). Nevertheless, the findings of Antón et al. (2014) and Lee et al. (2007) and Karamustafa et al. (2013) have shown that these impacts are no lineal because once visitor's expectations in the destination are met other behaviors and consumption options arise.

In the same field, some differences were observed in the perception of the types of risk depending if visitors are visiting for the first time or repeating their visit (Karamustafa et al., 2013). According with Karamustafa et al. (2013), Chi and Qu (2008), Fuchs and Reichel (2006, 2011) and Wickens (2002), our study also links the visit to a positive perception of risk and destination access. Under this approach, the personal travel inhibitors construct is presented in an inability to undermine risk perception and accessibility context in the case of visitors familiarized with the destination (Karamustafa et al., 2013; Fuchs & Reichel, 2006 y 2011; Toudert & Bringas-Rábago, 2015). Under this perspective and taking into consideration all of the above, we propose the following hypotheses:

H4: Traveling habit influences positively in perceived safety.

H5: Perceived safety influences positively on how destination access is perceived.

H6: Personal travel inhibitors act positively on perception of destination access.

H7: Personal travel inhibitors impact positively on perceived safety.

Connections among the branches of the model

The relationship among the branches of the research model representing tourism consumption in the destination contextual is shaped by the safety and destination access constructs which translate the most important growing limitations for the tourism growth on the Mexico-US border (Bringas-Rábago & Verduzco-Chávez, 2008; Timothy, 2001; Paya, 2006).

Within tourism literature, the existing relationship among safety, destination attachment, and intentional behavior is generally conceived as the result of a satisfactory experience in the visited destination (Bigné et al., 2001; Chi & Qu, 2008; Wickens, 2002). Under this approach, safety has a positive impact on destination attachment and intentional behavior. This impact is even greater when familiarized visitors are involved (George, 2003; Khajuria & Khanna, 2014; Shaw et al., 2012). However, it is necessary to clarify that the intentional behavior impact on the perception of destination access has received little discussion in the border crossing context. In this regard, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H8: Intentional behavior influences positively in the perception of destination access.

H9: Perceived safety influences positively on intentional behavior.

H10: Perceived safety influences positively destination attachment.

Data, research methodology and results

Sampling and questionnaire development

In studies with similar epistemological interests to ours, sampling usually follows two types of approach which can be complementary. In the first, the estimates are inferred

to the whole population as in Parayag and Ryan (2012) and Stedman (2002) who chose a sample size of 705 and 711 cases respectively. While in the second approach, similar to ours, the goal is to achieve the validity and robustness of the structural equation modeling which led Yuksel et al. (2010) and Silva, Kastenholz and Abrantes, (2013) to choose a size sample of 224 and 315 cases respectively.

On this basis, the information for this research came from the “Characterization of the potential market of international visitors to Baja California” telephone survey which was carried out on December 2012. This survey¹ was applied to 18 to 65 year-old residents in six different counties of Southern California which traditionally generate the most important tourist flow to Baja California destinations (Toudert & Bringas-Rábago, 2015). To determine the sample size, we considered the area weighting of the six counties of Southern California that was conducted using the statistical proportionate method of residents ages 18-65. Furthermore, the representativeness by age range was watched carefully allowing acceptable measurements in an initial state of the study (see Table 1). Given the universe of all residents of the six counties surveyed and with the total answered questionnaires, it was possible to achieve a 95% confidence level with a +/- 4% margin error.

In the framework of this operation, a 36 question phone interview was conducted which lasted 9 minutes, allowing to complete 600 questionnaires. The applied questionnaire consists of 5 parts: (1) socio-demographic profile of the interviewee, (2) characteristics of last visit, (3) satisfaction and experience, (4) personal travel inhibitors, and (5) intentional behavior.

¹ The survey was requested by the Observatorio Turístico de Baja California (OTBC) who provided the data for this research and was applied by a call center in the San Diego, Imperial, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside and Los Angeles Counties.

From the completed questionnaires, 342 were selected which satisfied the requirement of having visited one tourist destination in Baja California. With this number of cases involved in the research model, it fully complies with the rule of thumb suggests that PLS path modeling requires a sample size of 10 times the most complex relationship within the research model (Henseler, Ringle & Sinkovis, 2009). In the same manner, the number of interviewees who answered each one of the involved items in the study was two times greater than the highest ratio suggested by MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Podsakoff (2011). This provides a good recovery to the chosen sample, and it is complemented with acceptable values from the communality shown in Table 3.

[Table 1 near here]

Measuring variables and scales

The survey and questionnaire that gave empirical support to this document were not initially elaborated to cover the research interest of this study. In this sense, resorting to PLS technique which allows to operate with different dimensions and scales has been great help to perform an adaptation within the framework of the limits and scopes of the survey (Azen & Walker, 2011; Falk & Miller, 1992). The PLS technique was used to evaluate the validity as well as the significance of the research model. In addition, this election is based on data, which do not show a normal distribution, some compound constructs with formative items, and a lack of solid theoretical framework to support the research model as it was mentioned before (Chin, 1998).

From the total amount of questions in the applied questionnaire, 17 indicators were selected because of their thematic and nomological match with our proposal. These indicators complied with the rigorous validation criteria in a PLS modeling (Jörg, Ringle,

Sinkovics & Rudolf, 2009; MacKenzie et al., 2011). In this way the research model proposal as shown in figure 1 and table 2 is articulated around a seven latent variables which are linked to 17 items.

[Figure 1 near here]

The items in the applied questionnaire were measured with specific scales shown in detail in Table 2. As an example, a four level Likert scale of quality was used were (poor (1), excellent (4)) for the constructs destination access, safety and visit experience, and agreement items from two scales (no (1), yes (2)) for destination attachment, safety, personal travel inhibitors and behavior intention. A Likert scale of frequencies was adapted to the conditions of a phone interview as in the case of visit intensity (never (1), six or more (4)) and the time passed since the last visit (within the last year (1), more than 3 years ago (3)).

In order to prepare the data for its further processing with the PLS technique, the items expressed through a qualitative scale, as indicated in table 2, were recoded to increasing integers in a positive perception scale of the interviewee. Certainly, this type of research approach corresponds more to a preliminary exploration than to a conventional follow up of the analyzed psychometric properties. However, if we consider the works of Alexandris et al. (2006), Kyle, Graefe, Manning and Bacon, (2004) and Yuksel et al. (2010), the instrument, its dimensions, and measured scales were relatively different, trying in each one of these cases to adapt to the subject as well as to the study context.

[Table 2 near here]

Empirical measurement of destination attachment through the assessment of place identity and place dependence is inspired in general on the 12 items characterized in Williams and Vaske's (2003) recreational study. In this regard, aside from whether we

found studies which are close to the 12 items as in the case of Alexandris et al. (2006), the most common is a scale of only a few items adjusted from Williams and Vaske (2003). In regards to Yuksel et al. (2010) study, the three dimensions defining place attachment (place identity, place dependence and affective attachment) were measured, each one by three items taken from other studies and adjusted to the context of the this research. In our case when measuring destination attachment, the approach is inspired in Kyle et al. (2004) and Yuksel et al. (2010), three related dimensions were used with two affective items (secure destination and place for retirement) and an item on investment which translates the functional perspective to place dependence (see Table 2).

From the measuring scale perspective for intentional behavior, the first approaches were made by Oliver (1997, 1999). In Yuksel's et al. (2010) study case, cognitive loyalty was measured with four items from Back (2005), loyal affection with three items and only two items to measure the conative dimension of loyalty (Back & Parks, 2003).

In our study, intentional behavior was measured with its two dimensions: two items to characterize the consumption repetition and one item for the destination recommendation (Chen & Chen, 2010; Chi & Qu, 2008; Oppermann, 2000) (see Table 2). This intentional behavior which detaches from the experience lived in the destination (Chen & Chen, 2010; Meyer & Schwager, 2007; Petrick, 2004) was represented, as we did, with a general satisfaction dimension (Bigné et al., 2001; Wanous, Reichers & Hudy, 1997).

With respect to the contextual branch model, the constructs destination access and safety, personal travel inhibitors, and traveling habit were measured by dimensions of tourism demand (Judkins, 2007, Toudert & Bringas-Rábago, 2015). Destination access, safety and travel inhibitors were approximate, as shown in Table 2, by three specific

dimensions for each of the three constructs, while traveling habit was measured with only one item which translates the habit of going on vacation.

Validity and robustness of the model

Entirely the involved indicators with reflective constructs were characterized by very close or higher loading values to the admissible rule of thumb of 0.707 and the observed variance (communality) shared with its respective constructs above the acceptable value of 0.5 (Chin 1998; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Tenenhaus, Vinzi, Chatelin & Lauro, 2005) (see Table 3). The formative indicators traveling habit and visiting experience are connected to one item only, and do not include additional reflective variables, nor shadow type constructs that allow its inspection according to the PLS procedures (Diamontopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001; McKnight, Choudhury, & Kacmar, 2002) (see Table 5). In regards to personal travel inhibitors, with a variance inflation factor (VIF) far below the 3.3 limit suggested by Diamantopoulos and Sigauw (2006), the absence of multicollinearity is confirmed.

[Table 3 near here]

The reliability of latent reflective variables determined by the composite reliability provides, as seen in Table 4, values above 0.7 which correspond to an acceptable level in this early stage of the research (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Similarly, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) indicates also values superior to 50 % (Chin, 1998; Fornell y Larcker, 1981; Tenenhaus et al., 2005). Accordingly, the measurement model complies with the discriminant validity that can be verified in Table 4 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

[Table 4 near here]

The significance levels of the causal relations implicated in the research model were estimated with t of student values through the bootstrap technique with a resampling of

5000 (Chin, 1998; Kline, 1998, Tenenhaus et al., 2005). These estimations show significant impacts only in four of the 10 causal relations (see Table 5). The highly significant relations are established for H1 and H2 hypothesis ($P < 0.001$), while the significant ones are for H8 and H3 ($P < 0.01$).

[Table 5 near here]

The prediction quality of the model measured through R^2 values shows as indicated in Table 6, amounts greater to a 10 % of the variance explained by the fluctuation of exogenous variables, rates that are considered in an acceptable range (Chin, 1998; Falk & Miller, 1992). In fact, the R^2 which characterizes endogenous variable behavior intentions is emphasized by an explained variance of 51 % that might be considered as substantial.

The discriminatory level of the redundancy index in the cross validity calculated with Stone-Geisser's coefficient (Q^2) presents values greater than zero, which shows a prediction level in the estimation of endogenous variables. Finally, the goodness of fit (*GoF*) in accordance with Tenenhaus's et al. (2005) method, produced a value of 0.349, indicating a wide adjustment for the model (Wetzels, Odekerken-Schröder, & van Oppen, 2009).

[Table 6 near here]

Discussion and conclusions

The results mentioned in the previous segment show findings which have both theoretical and practical implications. Referring to the branch of the contextual constructs addressed as determinants of tourist demand, literature has been very scarce (see the work of Fuchs & Reichel, 2006, 2011; Gelbmana, 2008; Lepp et al., 2011) mainly for the case of repeating visitors (Antón et al., 2014; Karamustafa et al., 2013).

Beyond the existence of background which claims, in other contexts, about the impact between perceived safety in destination (Hall, Timothy & Duval, 2004; Sönmez & Graefe, 1998; Tarlow, 2009) and respectively, destination access (Chi y Qu, 2008; Wickens, 2002), destination attachment (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Silva et al., 2013) and visitor's intentional behavior (De Rojas & Camarero, 2008), in our study these connections resulted statistically non-significant. In the same way, the construct of personal visit inhibitors also showed a non-significant impact in destination access as well as in the perceived safety and for the relationship between the traveling habits on vacation and the visitor's perception of safety.

For the border visitor segment that had previous visits to Baja California, the constructs personal travel inhibitors, destination access and safety do not seem to structure determinant impact in attachment and intentional behavior towards destination. In fact, if we take perceived safety and destination access as the weaker sides of the border offer in Baja California (Bringas-Rábago & Verduzco-Chávez, 2008; Timothy, 2001; Paya, 2006), it would seem contradictory that it wouldn't be determinant to destination attachment as well as to the visitor's behavior.

Nevertheless, these findings are consistent with a cross-reading of tourist literature on destination attachment and repeat visitors which make evident the familiarity with destination as a key concept to explain the behavior differences with first-time visitors (see the work of Artuğer, 2015; Fuchs & Reichel, 2006, 2011; Karamustafa et al., 2013; Yuksel et al., 2010). For these works, a favorable perception of certain critic factors like safety was attributable to destination attachment when this was the main focus of the study (Halpenney, 2006; Lee, 2001; Yuksel et al., 2010) while, the same behavior was conferred to repetition of the visit in the studies focused on destination familiarity (Artuğer, 2015;

Fuchs & Reichel, 2006, 2011; Karamustafa et al., 2013; Lepp et al., 2011). In our case which includes both approaches, the impact absence between perceived safety and destination attachment indicates, as argued by Fuchs and Reichel (2006, 2011) and Karamustafa et al. (2013) and Lepp et al. (2011), that the tolerance to certain types of risks is transversal to visitors familiarized with the destination. From this perspective, the causal relationship between repetition of visit and perceived safety, as was evidenced also in Lee et al. (2007) and Anton et al. (2014) and Karamustafa et al. (2013) does not obey to a lineal logic of a greater habit to travel which corresponds to a visitor who is more secure of what he can be for the mere fact of having visited that destination.

This surprising familiarity with destination effect (Karamustafa et al., 2013; Li et al., 2008), is also translated in the case of the trips to Baja California by personal inhibitors which do not influence positively in the perceived safety and destination access. In this sense, the inability to continue traveling due to the reasons reflected in the items of the analyzed construct seem to bring down the positive perception which characterizes a familiarized visitor.

The overall results focused on the contextual branch of the model also finds segments of explanation in the specificity of the border tourism in the zone of study. The few miles distance between origin-destination favors a cross-border mobility characterized by a visitor who is relatively aware of the tourist offer conditions, the risk taken, and preventive measures which have to prevail during the visits (Judkins, 2007; Timothy, 2001; Toudert & Bringas-Rábago, 2015). These characteristics seem to coincide with the visitor's profile molded into a functional purposes expressed in a concrete way through important motivations like visiting friends and family, undergo medical treatments, in a proportion

superior to half of the real flow of visitors measured during summer 2013 (Toudert & Bringas-Rábago, 2015).

From the consumption branch perspective in the research model, the evaluation of destination attachment was highly significant with a positive impact in the intentional behavior. The perceived experience in the destination had the same type of significant and positive impact in the destination attachment, and its impact on intentional behavior was significantly equal and positive. The same thing seems to have happened in the intentional behavior which registers a significant and positive impact in the perceived destination accessibility.

Within the framework of these results, the causal triangulation among the visit experience, behavior intentions and destination attachment resulted highly significant in the study; attention is drawn to its structure around the perceived experience in the destination. In fact, without pretending to link visit experience as mediator between destination attachment and behavior intentions, this construct is located in our research model in a position generally reserved by many authors to satisfaction (Antón et al., 2014; Bigné et al., 2001; Chen & Chen, 2010; Chon, 1991; Oliver, 1997). By understanding visit experience as an intrinsic satisfaction perspective and its impacts are in accordance with the literature that has validated this kind of triangulation (Kozak & Beaman, 2006; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Furthermore, as time passes after a last visit, the visitor tends to remember more than one experience of the trip comparing satisfaction with the destination factors. (Chen & Chen, 2010; Kozak, 2001, Petrick et al., 2001).

In the same context, the conceptualization of place attachment as a construct may obtain a pertinent benefit from the specificities of the cross-border tourism phenomenon which stimulates familiarity and its repetition. In fact, even when the border crossing and

the circulation conditions in highways are generally not well evaluated by the common visitor to Baja California (Toudert & Bringas-Rábago, 2015), as also corroborated in Halpenney (2006) and Yuksel et al. (2010), loyalty to destination seems to possess a contention power and even of transformation of this impression to a positive perception.

From the perspective of the tourist activity managers and DMOs who expressed their concern about the perceived weakening of safety in destination, the results of this work do not seem to justify these concerns in the case of visitors familiarized with the destination. Nonetheless, this exception concludes with the intervention of personal travel inhibitors (living a bad experience in the destination, economic problems, and the absence of travel documents). These could turn into areas of attention for tourism administrators in order to minimize their impact on the decision to travel.

Considering the importance repeat visitors have on consumption, management strategies which seem to generate more visits and longer stays are the ones focusing on these visitors as a specific segment (Karamustafa et al., 2013; Li et al., 2008; Oppermann, 1998). In fact, contrary to first-time visitors, repeat visitors consume in a different manner and usually discard the negative aspects of their destination from the decision of visiting again. Under these conditions, tourism managers as well as DMOs benefit when the repeat visitor segment is addressed by specific marketing strategies. Choosing marketing strategies centered on strengthening and diversifying experiences in the destination may result more stimulating for consumption than concentrating all the efforts to revert the negative perception of the destination.

Focusing on the experience in the destination as a key concept to generate a greater consumption of repeat visitors, tourist operators have a number of tools to encourage a familiarized visitor to diversify consumption. Some mechanisms to allow repeat visitors to

scale in their experience could include awarding coupons and vouchers, orienting the repeat visitor to scale in the experience (first row seats, select wine with dinner, upgrading) and experiencing new local specialties (gastronomy, wine pairing, scenery, and heritage) among others, could allow to achieve more visits and longer stays.

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Table 1. Summary statistics for overall sample.

Genre		(%) ^a	(%) ^b	Ethnic groups	(%) ^c
	Male	53.22	49.95	White/Caucasian	58.48
	Female	46.78	50.05	AfricanAmerican	5.85
Age ranking (in years)				Oriental	1.75
	18-35	33.92	37.22	Latin/Hispanic	26.32
	36-45	23.1	22.59	Other	7.6
	46-55	24.56	22.45	Occupation	
	56-65	18.42	17.73	Professional	31.58
Marital status				Housewives	5.56
	Married	54.68	46.10	Employees	9.36
	Single	26.02	37.28	Other	53.51
	Divorced/widower	14.91	14.18	Number of Questionnaires	Abs
	Other	4.39	2.45	Surveys taken Total	600
				Considered cases in the study	342

^a Overall sample; ^b Estimated target population categories by the US Census Bureau (2015);

^c Mismatch with census categories, only the sample statistics are presented.

Table 2. Latent and manifest variables involved in the study.

(A) Destination access*	(D) Traveling habit**
(A1) Time waiting to cross the border ^a	(D1) Custom to travel for vacationing ^c
(A2) Access to roads and highways ^a	(E) Visit experience**
(A3) Signaling in highways ^a	(E1) Experience of trip ^a
(B) Destination safety*	(F) Destination attachment*
(B1) Experience with Mexican police ^d	(F1) Destination is safe for tourist investment ^b
(B2) Opinion on military checkpoints ^a	(F2) Retirement in Baja California ^d
(B3) Experience with immigration officers ^a	(F3) Baja California is a safety destination ^d
(C) Personal travel inhibitors**	(G) Behavior intentions*
(C1) No passport ^d	(G1) Visiting again ^d
(C2) 2008-20101 Impact ^a of economic crisis	(G2) Recommend to family and friends ^b
(C3) Problems in the last visit ^b	(G3) Time past since last visit ^e

* Latents with reflective variables; ** Latents with formative variables.

^a Categorical: Excellent, good, fair, poor; ^b Categorical: Completely, a lot, regular, little, not all; ^c Categorical: Never, once or twice, three to five, six or more; ^d Categorical: Yes, no; ^e Categorical: Within the last year, between 1-3 years, more than 3 years ago.

Table 3. Reliability of the involved items.

Constructs and items	Items Loadings	Communality	Constructs and items	Items Loadings	Communality
Destination access		0.59	Destination attachment		0.553
A1	0.867		F1	0.726	
A2	0.654		F2	0.631	
A3	0.707		F3	0.856	
Destination safety		0.667	Behavior intentions		0.589
B1	0.718		G1	0.706	
B2	0.904		G2	0.725	
B3	0.694		G3	0.862	
Personal travel inhibitors*		0.302	Traveling habit **	-	-
C1	0.933		Visit experience **	-	-
C2	0.411				
C3	0.313				

* Formative construct; ** Formative constructs with one item.

Table 4. Convergent and discriminant validity.

Latent variables	Composite Reliability	AVE	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
A	0.738	0.590	0.768*						
B	0.810	0.589	0.225	0.768*					
C	0.785	0.553	0.093	0.682	0.744*				
D	-	-	0.050	0.315	0.290	-			
E	-	-	0.045	0.205	0.113	0.172	-		
F	-	-	0.164	0.148	0.026	0.089	0.008	-	
G	0.749	0.667	0.281	0.280	0.165	0.043	0.153	0.395	0.817*

A: Destination access, B: Behavior intentions, C: Destination attachment, D: Visit experience, E: Traveling habit, F: Personal travel inhibitors, G: Destination safety.

*AVE square root.

Table 5. Significance of the structural model relationships.

Model hipotesis	Path coefficients	T Statistics (bootstrap)
H1	0.616	19.463**
H2	0.283	5.698***
H3	0.129	3.273*
H4	0.157	1.084
H5	0.215	1.179
H6	0.055	0.655
H7	0.397	1.127
H8	0.157	2.898**
H9	0.173	1.180
H10	0.153	1.287

Significant at: **P<0.01; ***P<0.001.

Table 6. Assessment of structural model.

Endogenous constructs	Exogenous constructs*	R ²	Q ²	f ²
	Personal travel inhibitors			0.002
Destination access	Destination safety	0.1049	0.0362	0.056
	Behavior intentions			0.001
Behavior intentions	Destination safety	0.5096	0.281	0.001
	Destination attachment			0.709
	Visit experience			0.025
Destination attachment	Destination safety	0.1072	0.0391	0.016
	Visit experience			0.079
Destination safety	Personal travel inhibitors	0.1808	0.0678	0.203
	Traveling habit			0.043

*considered as exogenous to calculate f²

Figure 1. Conceptual framework and hypotheses.

