

“PARAÍSO NATURAL NAS ÁGUAS”: The Level of Consumer Satisfaction Regarding Boat Rides to Picãozinho

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ABSTRACT

The boat trips to Picãozinho originated during the 80's, aimed at the leisure of families of fishermen during weekends and holidays. It began to spread after the discovery of the destination as a form of leisure, so that it began to be marketed among the local community and tourists, which occurs to this day. The present article aimed to identify the level of consumer satisfaction regarding boat trips to Picãozinho. For that, a quantitative research was done using the survey method, with the application of a questionnaire, obtaining a total of 131 respondents. Among the main findings of the study, it was observed that the main motivation that the consumers have to take the boat trip is the experience of being able to visit the coral reefs. In addition, the majority of the respondents presented a high satisfaction with the quality of the tour.

Keywords: Picãozinho; Boat; Quality; Satisfaction.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism emerged as a consequence of human displacement, where people inhabiting planet Earth were displaced by climatic factors and in search of food (Dias, 2004). According to Castro (2002), tourism is a phenomenon of multidimensional character that allows insight, requiring interdisciplinarity for its better understanding.

In parallel to Dias (2004), tourism is an activity that is highly dependent on the human being as a service provider. Therefore, it is a means of generating jobs, whether direct, indirect, induced or temporary, resulting in economic benefits to the destination sought. Because of this, the sector has been innovating with the creation of new services, applications, advertising and infrastructure that are increasingly attractive, economical, practical and convenient in order to meet the expectations created by the consumer.

Barbosa and Zouain (2004) affirm that because tourism service is a tangible asset, quality control becomes vulnerable, since the service is produced by providers, where quality must be present throughout the itinerary. The quality is directly linked to the expectations created by the customers. When the service is within that expectation, it has a good quality, and when it surpasses that expectation created around it, it has a higher quality.

Customer satisfaction is something relevant to the management of tourism agencies, which are committed to the quality of their products and / or services. In the agencies that offer the maritime tours, the quality is influenced by several factors, among them the care with the hygienic-sanitary conditions, the conservation, the reception, the service, amidst others. The customers judge the quality according to the combination of these aspects. Thus, the owners of these agencies must be attentive to these factors, in order to reach the satisfaction and the surpassing of expectations of their clients.

Tourism companies play an important part, as they have a key role in generating revenues, benefits and development for the local community. One of the tourism segments that is

always present even with the passage of time are the boat trips, where they need a road map to establish guidelines, generating a better tourist circulation, allowing a better use of the attractions to be visited (Bahl, 2004).

All navigation activity carried out in still waters or currents, fluvial, maritime, lacustrine or oceanic are called nautical. When this activity is understood as a tourist practice, it is characterized the Nautical Tourism (Ministry of Tourism, 2010).

The boat that comes to satisfy the touristic need has to offer a quality service, where, it is of great importance the training of the employees who will provide the service, nevertheless, it is essential to possess equipment in great condition of use to seek to satisfy or even exceed the expectations generated by customers. In this way the visitor will take with them a good image of the sought-after destination (Barbosa & Zouain, 2004).

In view of the above, this study has as main goal to identify the level of consumer satisfaction with the service offered on the boat trip to Picãozinho. For this, one will procure the profile of these consumers; identify the determining motivational factor for them to carry out the activity; present the structure of the tour; and ascertain the quality of the ride, from the point of view of the consumers.

This article is theoretically justified by the few scientific bibliographies that deal with the theme of quality in the route of the ride to Picãozinho. Despite being a form of tourism having been used for a considerable amount of time on the shore of João Pessoa, the subject has not been overly discussed in scientific researches. In addition, the work shows itself relevant in a practical and social way for providing a possible reflection on the entrepreneurs about the importance of managing the quality of the products / services offered in transportation, which is one of the main tourist demands.

2. THEORETICAL FUNDAMENTATION

2.1 TOURISTIC OFFER: IMPORTANCE FOR LOCAL TOURISM

The touristic supply can be conceptualized as the amount of touristic goods and services, where the organizations offer at a certain price in a determined period of time. The nature of the touristic offer is given by the union of several resources, which the receptive has, to be used in tourist activities. It can also be defined as a group of attractions, whether produced by man or by nature, so that it can satisfy the needs of consumers (Lage & Milone, 2001).

In reference to Andrade (1997), when there is no human interference in any part of the formation process of the resource, it is known as natural touristic offer. This type of offer is characterized as being the main factor for a locality to be considered as possessing a tourist vocation due to its natural resources as attractive. Picãozinho demonstrates its charms through its natural landscapes such as the fauna and flora that are present in the coral reefs, in the fish and mollusks that are observed through the crystalline waters. There it is even possible to dive with masks that are available on the tour boats so that there is a better visibility of the aquatic ecosystem present in the region, in it the natural landscape comes to justify the beauty of the place.

Tourist attractions have a differential eigenvalue. The tourist has a great interest in knowing the new, something different; in that way the attraction will have a greater value, aiming to reduce the subjectivity that makes the tour monotonous to the visitor (Ignarra, 2003).

The tourist demand is conceptualized as the amount of tourists who visit a locality and are willing to pay for the products and services. The demands vary according to the tourist market, but all have the following characteristics: Seasonality that directly interferes with the volume and quality of tourism supply and demand; climatic variations and family holidays directly intervene in the amount of tourists that a locality will receive. Sensitivity shows that supply depends on demand, where supply is sensitive to any type of

fluctuation. The Elasticity is a highly variant phenomenon where there is the growth and the decrease in the number of demand, in which financial conditions, economic conditions and instability influence the formation of prices suggested by the organizations to the consumers (Andrade, 1997).

When it comes to hospitality it is not possible to stock up on services, or even compensate for the loss of production by working overtime. Service failures cannot be corrected easily, demand for service needs to be met whenever required, there is difficulty in planning service execution to meet demand for service. The intangible service is also present in boat tours through the hospitality, where great treatment makes the customer a consumer (Lashley & Spolon, 2011).

2.2. QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN TOURISM SERVICES

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The quality in the scope of the boat rides arose in the nineteenth century with the development of the Great Navigations that aimed at the excursion tourism. The term is intertwined with the word adequacy, where it is necessary to adjust to achieve what is sought, in order to satisfy customers and increase business profits. When it comes to nautical tourism, quality is necessary from the facilities of the means of transportation to the treatment given by the employees to the customers, where all service needs to approach perfection seeking the satisfaction of the final consumer and its fidelity (Paladini, 2006).

According to Barbosa & Zouain (2004), to conduct sound quality management, a competitive and participative organizational culture must be practiced where employees observe what is lacking in order to increase the company's success towards the consumer. In nautical tourism, it is necessary to present differences from the competitors, so that the company will bring more convenience and variety to the customer who bought expectations of the tour to be carried out. In these cases the competitive advantages are increasingly present in the agencies that idealize touristic routes in Picãozinho. Where it is

possible to dive near the coral reefs, the boats that offer diving masks for the best appreciation of the destination get ahead of their rivals by providing a better view of the site, for example.

Quality control is hampered by its peculiar characteristics, due to the fact that it is produced by a group of providers, in which quality needs to be present at each stage of the touristic route. In order for an improvement in quality to occur, it is necessary to: establish objectives; delegate functions; enable training of service providers and; fulfill the necessary responsibilities. This junction of factors needs to be seen in the touristic service, promoting an improvement in the quality of all the service performed during the visitation (Paladini, 2006).

Castelli (2000) cites that the quality is perceived by the consumer through tangible and intangible components. The tangibles refer to the set of elements that characterize the technical quality of a product, forming the objective side of quality. The intangibles are related to a set of actions that characterize the human quality of the service, constituting the subjective side of quality. Lashley & Spolon (2011) argue that the manager needs to heed the client's expectations, factors such as hygiene in the facilities of the means of transportation can cause dissatisfaction. However, against this theory, good service becomes a differential as a motivator for customers to return. The agencies are increasingly interested in surveys that point to the level of consumer satisfaction to find out in which aspects they can improve and to know where they are achieving their goals with quality management.

2.3. NAUTICAL TOURISM: ORIGIN, CHARACTERISTICS AND DEFINITIONS

Nautical tourism emerged along with the Great Navigations, where explorers braved the seas in search of food and military supplies, as well as the discovery of new territories. Over time the transatlantic ships appeared, intended to cross continents whilst

transporting passengers, also known for being hotels on the water, with accommodations and luxury leisure areas, they are currently called cruises (Ministry of Tourism, 2010).

Because Brazil is a country rich in water resources, it has many navigators and sailors, so it was necessary to create laws and decrees to maintain order in the waters, such as Presidential Decree Nº. 5.887 of 2006, which enabled a "new opening of the ports.". It was overthrown in 2009, by Decree Nº. 6,759, which regularized customs activities controlling trade in Brazilian waters.

According to the Ministry of Tourism (2010), nautical tourism is all navigation activity in favor of tourism as long as it's carried out on the water, using boats for tourist movement, thus it has two purposes, the first one takes into account the movement within the vessel where the important thing is the time spent inside the boat. The second purpose shows the boat only as a means of travel, so that the tourist goes to a place that needs the boat as a means of transportation. A boat destined to the tourism location with about 25 feet generates three job posts; a boat spends an average of 8% of its value in maintenance.

Small and medium-sized boats are still being built, due to the demand that exists in leisure tourism and also for individual use. The Navy is responsible for supervising these boats that carry out waterway tourism. The trips to Picãozinho have taken place since the 1980s on leisure boats, over time these boats haven't evolved much and accommodate 30 passengers, two guides and the person responsible for driving the boat (Andrade, 1997).

2.3.1. PICÃOZINHO

Picãozinho is a coral reef formation located about 1,500 meters from the beach of Tambaú on the coast of João Pessoa - Paraíba that appears during periods of low tide leaving a large portion of the reef exposed. The crossing takes about 15 minutes. The site is 300 meters long and 150 meters wide, amounting to an area of 45,000 m². Its location is given by the coordinates 07 ° 07 '30"S and 34 ° 48'05 ". The destination is highly sought after because it

has clear waters and a diverse marine fauna and flora. It is possible to rent diving masks on the boat (Bem, 2008).

During the trip from Tambaú Beach to the Picãozinho reef, one can see the barrier of Cabo Branco and Estação Ciência, one of the most important attractions of the city, besides the beaches of Cabo Branco and Tambaú. According to Bem (2008), Picãozinho was discovered in the 1980s by the fishermen of João Pessoa and it was exclusively theirs, where they took their families for fun on the weekends, a fact that lasted until the end of the 80s. In the year of 1988 began the tourism in the place, occurring thus the inclusion of Picãozinho as a tourist route of the city.

According to Andrade (2002) the days that most visitation occurs are Friday, Saturday and Sunday, regardless of the season. However, summer is the season when sightseeing happens the most. When comparing summer to winter the number of vessels exiting triples, going from seven boats to about 21 boats per weekend.

Picãozinho is one of the smallest coral reefs in Brazil, however, it presents itself as one of the main postcards of Paraíba due to the richness of its ecosystem that during the low tide form natural pools between the reef structures. Within the existing ecosystem, it is possible to observe the Coral-de-fogo; Búzio-de-chapéu; Estrelas-do-mar; Tartaruga-de-pente; Boto-cinza and the Peixe-boi-marinho (Ilarri, et al, 2007). It is a rich tourist destination that awaits its visitors, deserving to be respected and preserved due to its importance to the local ecosystem.

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3. METHODOLOGICAL TRAJECTORY

In order to achieve the objectives, a quantitative field research was carried out using the bibliographic research, with a descriptive character, using the survey method to better meet the goals established in the article, consisting of the analysis of a specific group on the perception of the experience with the nautical tourism in the path that the study being carried out is about. The research will involve two steps: one of the steps consists of field research, performing a data collection from the visitors on the tour and another one

referring to the bibliographic data gathered on quality management in boat trips to Picãozinho.

To better enlighten the research objectives, we opted for the quantitative approach in order to obtain a wider range of respondents: consumers of nautical tourism services, also considering that the data collected in the survey can be quantifiably translated into numbers, and then categorized and analyzed (Perez, 2005).

Barreto (2002) states that in the research using the survey method the results are obtained through the respondents of the study population, objectifying their characteristics/perceptions, by applying a form as a research tool. According to Zikmund (2000), the survey method was the most appropriate, because it brings a research that understands the phenomenon of interest, observing the place where the phenomenon happens. According to Gerhardt & Silveira (2009) in this type of research the respondent is not identified, so that confidentiality is guaranteed; this form of study is common in opinion polls.

Malhotra (2005) mentions that the population of this research will consist of consumers who have already been to / used some kind of boat trip characterized as nautical tourism destined to Picãozinho. As for the subjects of the research, it is characterized as non-probabilistic composed of volunteers, that is, the members of the population themselves volunteer to participate in the research. It is important to emphasize that this type of sample has as purpose only probing without inferential purposes. However, such a survey can be useful in identifying part of a population's perception of a particular subject or service and thus improving on specific aspects.

In order to reach accurate information and without interference from the researcher, the application will be given through the field research to be introduced in the boats that make the trip leaving the beach of Tambaú to Picãozinho.

Zikmund (2002) points out that it is common to use the questionnaire as an instrument of data collection in the survey method. Among the most used techniques, the authors cite the self-administered questionnaire, called self-administered surveys. These instruments are characterized by the participant's autonomy in responding to the questionnaire without having the researcher's help in explaining the questions and how to respond, with the subject being responsible for interpreting and understanding them.

According to Gil (1999), the interview is a way to obtain more data on the social life of the study collaborator, as well as to obtain clarification on the questions of the questionnaire elaborated, enabling the development of the research and, in conclusion, enabling the dissemination of results.

The questionnaire was applied from January 14th to February 19th, 2017. The data collection instrument was constructed with seven multiple choice questions, elaborated with the objective of knowing the socioeconomic profile of consumers of the boat trips to Picãozinho, and a likert scale, in which the participants of the research had to assign a score of 1 to 10 demonstrating their level of satisfaction regarding the four quality indicators established by the researchers. In total, responses from 131 participants were obtained. In order to perform the data analysis we used the Excel software for the elaboration of tables, in order to quantify and categorize in percentage frequencies the acquired answers in the data collection.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this topic the results of the research will be presented, aiming to meet the objectives outlined. In the beginning, we sought to know the profile of the research subjects, consumers who visited the coral reefs of Picãozinho, in order to meet the first specific goal of the article.

4.1. STUDY PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

In the interview analysis of the participants, a questionnaire was applied with primary research methods, that is, obtained through a research instrument that sought to analyze the profile of coral reef visitors.

The following table presents the predominant profile among the subjects of the research establishing an understanding about the public that attends the tourist destination. It is possible to observe the predominance of the female gender (59.54%) and the age group between 26 and 39 years old (41.98%). Most of the participants are married (38.16%), have incomplete college education (51.09%) and an average income of 3 to 5 minimum wages (56.49%).

In this analysis it is identified that the female gender is more linked to the practice of tourism activities due to the increase in the number of women entering the labor market, with this advent women have been gaining financial independence. In the age group it is understood that the percentage of people has a financial stability with a steady middle class income, where some are from other states and plan in advance to carry out the family's touristic practice.

Table 1 - Research participants' profile

Category	Predominance	Frequency
Gender	Feminine	59,54%
Age Group	26 a 39 years old	41,98%
Income	3 a 5 minimum wage	56,49%
Education Level	Incomplete college education	51,09%
Marital status	Married	38,16%

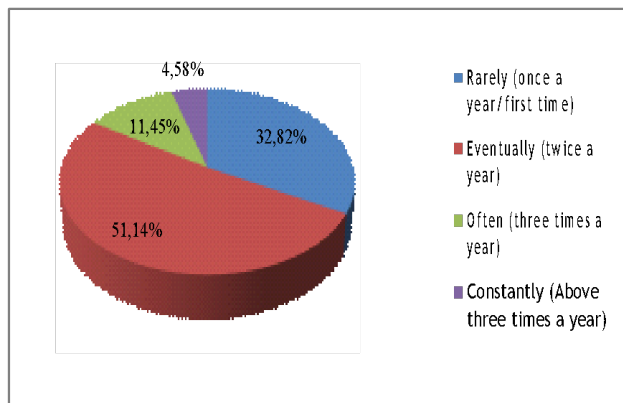
Source: Research data (2017)

When presenting the predominance in the participants' profile, it was possible to observe that the Age Group between 26 and 39 years managed to stand out among the others,

thus showing its importance in this segment of tourism. Another relevant fact was income, which showed that Picãozinho's visitors have a regular financial condition, so the destination is open to a large portion of the active economic population and to the growing niche of tourism that is the third age.

Checking the proportion of the survey respondents who are used to making the boat trips to Picãozinho, it was observed that a large part of them eventually carries out this type of tour, as can be observed in Chart 1.

Chart 1 - Frequency in the realization of the nautical walk.

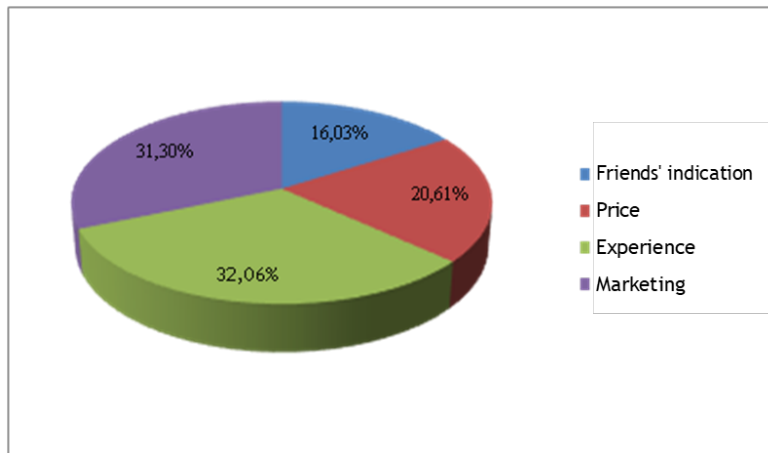


Source: Research data (2017)

According to the data acquired in the research, it is notorious that the frequency of twice a year can stand out from the others, reaching 51.14% of the research participants, approximately 33% said they attended the place once a year or were attending for the first time. Regarding the visit of at least three times a year (frequently), 11.45% of respondents identified themselves with the option. Approximately 5% of the respondents stated that they go on the boat trip constantly, that is, at least four times a year.

During the survey, the factors that motivated respondents to go on the tour were also verified. Therefore, it was visualized that the experience of performing such activity with 32.06% and the advertising that revolves around the boat trips with 31.30% are the main motivational factors for going on the tour, as can be observed in Graph 2.

Chart 2: Motivation factor for the boat trip to Picãozinho.



Source: Research data (2017)

It was observed that some of the research participants also answered that the price factor of the tour with 20.61% and the indication of friends with 16.03% were also present in the answers of the research subjects.

The motivational factors are attributed to perceptions related to a particular condition or preferential situation of the visitors, where their observations form a positive or negative judgment in light of their expectations (Stankey, 1980).

This information is valuable for deepening the studies in the region that even with the great importance it has as a tourist destination, there are still few studies regarding the motivation, frequency and above all the satisfaction of visitors. In the next subtopic, it will be possible to observe the results regarding the level of satisfaction of the respondents who made the boat trips to Picãozinho.

4.2. SATISFACTION LEVEL REGARDING THE LATEST BOAT RIDE TO PICÃOZINHO

In this second part of the form, we sought to understand the perception of consumers about the experience with nautical tourism, based on the quality indicators proposed by

the Researchers: Satisfaction with the tour, Courtesy in the service, Conditions of transportation, Satisfaction with the destination.

For analysis, the responses that comprised the values from 1 to 3 were adopted as low satisfaction; moderate satisfaction, responses ranging from 4 to 7; and as high satisfaction the answers with values higher than 7. The answers of the research volunteers are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Level of satisfaction regarding the latest boat trip to Picãozinho.

Quality Indicators	Number of respondents Frequency in (%)		
	Low satisfaction	Moderate satisfaction	High satisfaction
Satisfaction with the Tour	6 (4,9%)	13 (9,9%)	112 (85,2%)
Courtesy in Customer Service	7 (5,34%)	21 (16,03%)	103 (78,63%)
Transportation Conditions	40(30,53%)	52 (39,69%)	39 (29,78%)
Satisfaction With the destiny	0 (0%)	15 (11,45%)	116 (88,55%)

Source: Research data (2017)

In the quality indicator Satisfaction with the ride, only six people showed low satisfaction, corresponding to 4.9%. On the other hand, 112 volunteers stated that they had a high satisfaction with the ride, corresponding to 85.12% of the subjects. When the moderate satisfaction was analyzed, 13 participants identified themselves with the indicator, corresponding to 9.9% of the participants. This aspect demonstrates that there is a high satisfaction for visitors with the overall ride, but approximately 15% have shown to the entrepreneurs that there is still room for improvement when it comes to that high satisfaction.

The following indicator deals with courtesy in the service, on this criterion seven people showed a low satisfaction, about 5.34% indicated dissatisfaction with the treatment received. However, 103 volunteers reported receiving a good treatment during the tour, demonstrating a high satisfaction with 78.63% of the subjects. When dealing with moderate satisfaction, it was possible to observe that 21 respondents fit this term, corresponding to 16.03% of the respondents. Therefore, it is possible to observe that even though there is a high satisfaction it is clear that there is still a need to improve on the courtesy indicator in the service, the subjects believe that the hospitality during the trip can be improved.

In the quality indicator of conditions of transportation, 40 people showed low satisfaction, about 30.53% showed dissatisfaction. In terms of high satisfaction, 39 people identified with the term, corresponding to 29.78% of the subjects. Moderate satisfaction was what predominated in this quality indicator, where 52 volunteers felt represented by the term, reaching 39.69% of the respondents. With this, it is possible to observe that the transport needs to improve and to renew itself, since its structures are not pleasing the consumers, in case the fact is not corrected, the boat rides will be directly affected by the quality failure to attend the clients in the best possible way.

The last indicator deals with the satisfaction with the destination Picãozinho. In this factor nobody showed dissatisfaction with the destination. Picãozinho obtained 116 highly satisfied people with the coral reef, reaching 88.55% of the research subjects. In terms of moderate satisfaction, 15 people found themselves fitting it, reaching 11.45% of respondents. In the last indicator it was possible to observe that the visitors were passionate about the tourist destination, achieving a high satisfaction on their part. The volunteers who exhibited moderate satisfaction asked from the local community a greater environmental concern on the guides' part to make visitors aware.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Picãozinho tourist destination is of great importance for the tourism of Paraíba, the people who visit it are not only the tourists, but also the citizens of the locality often attend the attraction, claiming to value regional tourism.

The coral reef moves the tourism of the city of João Pessoa, there is movement in the economy, generating jobs and the coming of people from diverse places with its charms and natural beauties, for presenting itself as a very rich natural ecosystem. In view of this, the study sought to analyze the profile of the people who make the boat trips to Picãozinho, as well as the level of satisfaction with the quality of the tours.

In this study, it can be seen that the quality factors vary according to the perception of the visitors, where the satisfaction condition is related to the anticipated expectations, thus corroborating with Stankey & Schreyer (1987), when they affirm that a new tourist experience can affect the quality of a perception that was previously obtained. The visitors' conception in the connection of impacts is limited and the attitude of the tour manager can influence the quality condition (Manning, 1986), since consumer opinion is a prerequisite for improvements and a strategic vision factor to the planning in order to reach the visitors' expectations.

However, planning is necessary to order and direct the construction of the equipment in a suitable way to reduce risks that may arise in the path of the attraction (Ruschmann, 2004). Meanwhile, one notices the need for a strategic vision from publicity and advertising that works directly surrounding the product to the arrival of passengers who have chosen to carry out the touristic experience, aiming to adequately transform their services according to expectations of satisfaction.

The study showed that the people who go on the boat rides are mostly married, age from 26 to 39 years old, have incomplete college education, and earn between three and five

minimum wages. It was also possible to observe that the experience that revolves around the ride was the main motivating factor for the consumer to visit the place, allowing them to get to know an entire ecosystem with about 45,000 m², extremely rich in natural resources.

Another factor analyzed in the research was the periodicity that the consumer frequents the place, where about 51% of the volunteers of the research affirmed that they attend the place at least twice a year. A fact that is directly linked to the high satisfaction with the destination Picãozinho, in which the people who frequent like, indicate and want to return to the coral reef.

When analyzing the quality indicators to find out the level of satisfaction of visitors with the product and services, it was possible to observe that there is a high satisfaction with the touristic destination and with the tour in general, reaching almost 90% of the research volunteers. It was also verified that factors such as courtesy in service and conditions of transportation need to be improved, aiming to establish an evolution in the processes of structure and organizational management to then obtain more and more consumers.

In the analyzed data it was observed that the price factor was quoted among the relevant items, since the tour has an intangible product, in which the services cannot be stocked in case they are not sold. Note that there is a heterogeneity in quality and satisfaction with the service received, where there were consumers who disembarked satisfied with the landscape, others with the service and some with the experience. This can be based on the principles of Stevenson (1952), where it is necessary to identify human needs to then satisfy them, establishing different profiles of consumers aiming at excellence in the quality of services.

Therefore, it is necessary to invest in trainings aimed at hospitality with customers, passenger safety and maintenance of the boat that carries out the tour. As for the employees who work on the boats, it is necessary to provide a good service for the visitors

who attend. Consequently, it is necessary to identify consumer needs and also to invest in the means of transportation used to carry out the tour, since the better the structure and the service, the greater the satisfaction of the consumer with the nautical tour, therefore with more and more consumers increasing, generating viral marketing, attracting more and more customers and consolidating more and more advertising about the touristic product.

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