

Smart tourism destinations: Analysis of profile and tourist demand experience in Curitiba-PR, Brazil

Bruno Homann Zilli^a

Melise de Lima Pereira^b

Wellyngton Fernando Leonel de Souza^c

Gutemberg Cardoso da Silva^d

ABSTRACT: By analyzing the tourist demand of destinations and understanding the changes occurring in the tourism sector for various reasons, it becomes possible to elucidate tourists' desires, evaluate their perception regarding the products and services offered, and identify the need for adaptation on the part of business owners and public managers. In this perspective, this study aims to address the following question: how can measurement indicators of tourist experience be used in a research instrument to contribute to the evaluation of tourist demand in the destination of Curitiba, Paraná - Brazil? To answer this, the objectives are as follows: to analyze the demand profile, travel information, and tourist experience in Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil. This research is exploratory and descriptive in nature, employing a quantitative approach. The results demonstrate that comprehending tourists' profiles and evaluating their experience at the destination is crucial for strategic planning within the tourism sector. This enables efforts to be directed toward the formulation of public policies. The study provided pertinent insights into the tourist demand experience in Curitiba, furnishing valuable input for the development of effective strategies within the tourism industry. This enhances the city's tourist offerings and ensures positive visitor experiences.

Keywords: Tourism;
Tourist experience;
Strategic planning.

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^aGraduated in Tourism, Federal University of Paraná
david.brunozilli.contato@gmail.com

^bPhD in Tourism and Hospitality from the University of Vale do Itajaí - UNIVALI

^cBachelor of Tourism Management from the Federal University of Paraná

^dMaster's student in Tourism at Federal University of Paraná

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INTRODUCTION

The tourist phenomenon is composed of changes related to emerging or transforming segments (Panosso Netto & Ansarah, 2009). This trend is evidenced by shifts in the profile of tourist demand, where the act of traveling takes center stage, both for urban tourism destinations and for tourist destinations that promote enriching tourist experiences (Brasil, 2023). Tourist demand is a crucial aspect for understanding tourism as a phenomenon, and many researchers have dedicated themselves to studying this topic, generating increasingly relevant and diversified scientific output. (Camara, Monteiro & Marques, 2022).

Recent studies on tourist demand primarily involve models and theories that translate phenomena within the tourism activity into mathematical data (statistics). There are various aspects that can be evaluated for the purpose of confirming or refuting assumptions regarding the number, origin, profile, mode of transportation used, length of stay, expenditure, and satisfaction of tourists' experiences at tourist destinations. (Song, Qiu & Park, 2023; Brasil, 2023).

The objective of this research is to analyze tourist demand, which is a crucial indicator for comprehending tourists' preferences, the quality of products and services offered, and the necessity for adaptation in the planning and management of both businesses and public administrators. Therefore, in the midst of the era of creativity culture, new rules are proposed, even for the analysis of tourist demand in destinations, given the ongoing pursuit of cities' continuous development and alignment in production and consumption processes. (Ashton, 2018; Cooper, Hall & Trigo, 2011).

According to Sorokina et al. (2022), Smart Tourist Destinations (STDs) have emerged as a strategy to align physical and technological infrastructure, with the aim of providing exceptional experiences to tourists while simultaneously enhancing the quality of life for local residents. In this perspective, characterizing a city as an STD requires monitoring various indicators such as governance, sustainability, accessibility, connectivity, information and tourist intelligence, marketing, innovation, tourist experiences, and demand profile. However, these indicators might not be sufficient to yield truly meaningful results for sector planning. (Song, Qiu & Park, 2023).

The STD is an offshoot of the Smart City concept. While both involve cities developing intelligent systems and connectivity to strategically enhance their quality of life, the Smart City primarily focuses on its residents, whereas the STD expands this focus to include tourists. Among the cities classified as STDs is

Curitiba in Paraná. As the state capital, the city has been hosting the Smart City event annually since 2015, owing to its consistent investment in technology and innovation. Additionally, Curitiba is one of the key driving destinations for tourism in Brazil. (Pinto, 2018; Zouain, Júnior, Souza & Duarte, 2020).

Given that Curitiba has been investing in infrastructure and management strategies since 2014 to transform itself into a Smart City (Cruz, 2018), its management and infrastructure innovations along with the city's tourism planning have positioned it as one of the pioneering Smart Tourist Destinations (STDs) in Brazil. The municipality is part of Brazil's pilot STD project (Brasil, 2022b), solidifying its status as a significant destination for tourism development in the country. The project is a public policy initiative by the federal government, achieved through collaboration between the Ministry of Tourism (MTUR), the Institute Ciudades del Futuro (ICF), and the State-Owned Company for the Management of Innovation and Tourism Technologies (SEGITTUR). The project's goal is to establish public policies that enhance the competitive and innovative capacities of selected tourist destinations, while also considering the principles of sustainability and accessibility in their strategies. (Brasil, 2022b).

Recognizing the necessity of strategic planning for cities, particularly in the case of Curitiba as an STD, the measurement of tourist demand is essential. Thus, this study identified two themes for measuring tourist demand: (i) assessment indices of tourists' profiles and travel information, and (ii) tourist experience. Based on these themes, the question emerged: how to utilize measurement indicators of tourist experience within a research instrument to contribute to the evaluation of tourist demand in the destination of Curitiba, Paraná - Brazil?

The research justification stems from the premise that analyzing tourist demand is a fundamental element of planning for any tourist destination. It is understood that measuring tourist demand in Curitiba is crucial for effective destination planning. The applied quantitative research approach allows for an understanding of visitors' needs, assessment of satisfaction, and identification of improvement opportunities. The practical implications encompass more effective resource allocation, informed policy decisions, and attracting investments. Furthermore, the research has the potential to drive diversification of the tourism offering and spur economic growth in the region. However, it's important to note that demand models have limitations due to the presence of qualitative and unmeasurable variables (Camara, Monteiro & Marques, 2022). Therefore, the overall objective is to analyze the demand profile, travel information, and tourist experience in Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil. This research employs an exploratory and descriptive approach with a quantitative methodology. The structure of this work includes, in addition to this

introduction, the theoretical framework that follows, encompassing two main themes: (i) tourist demand and (ii) tourism planning. Subsequently, the methodological strategies are presented, outlining the research trajectory that supported the results presented and analyzed in the following sections. Finally, concluding remarks are provided, assessing the achievement of the objective and outlining the research's limitations, as well as the scope of the conclusions drawn, serving as a contribution to the academic and professional community in the field.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Tourism Demand

Tourist demand is a term employed within the realms of economics and psychology to describe the set of consumers who travel or wish to travel and consume tourist products and services. From an economic standpoint, demand is influenced by the interplay between price and demand, while from a psychological perspective, it takes into account an individual's personality and interaction with the environment. (Cooper, Fletcher, Wanhill, Gilbert & Shepherd, 2007; Santos & Kadota, 2012).

Understanding tourist demand involves studying tourists' behavior, encompassing their socioeconomic and demographic profiles, motivations, and satisfaction with the consumed services (Cooper, Fletcher, Wanhill, Gilbert & Shepherd, 2007; Santos & Kadota, 2012). According to Fernandes (2011), one of the major challenges in tourism is related to the preferences of the consumer-tourist, considering the cyclic nature of demand, which necessitates the industry's observance of the inherent seasonality of the activity, marked by peak and off-peak seasons. Consequently, comprehending these factors, aligned with the goal of developing and maintaining the characterization as an STD, is achieved through the measurement of tourist demand. This provides an ongoing understanding of what is being consumed by residents, tourists, and managed by public authorities and private enterprises.

In economics, tourist demand can be divided into (i) effective/real demand: tourist consumers who have already experienced or are currently experiencing the local tourism, and (ii) potential demand: those tourist consumers who, for various reasons, have not yet experienced the local tourism (Fernandes, 2011; Santos & Kadota, 2012). Analyzing demand within this division enhances the establishment of future actions to improve the reception structure for tourists, as well as initiatives related to the destination city's marketing efforts.

Fernandes (2011) raises several questions when considering tourist demand: why go? (motivation); where to

go? (destination); how to go? (transportation); where to stay? (accommodation); when to go? (seasonality); what to do (entertainment); how long to stay? (average length of stay); how much to spend? (income and prices); with whom to go? (individual or group); what to eat? (cuisine); what to bring back (souvenirs). Hence, the factors influencing tourist demand encompass price, income, preferences, and product characteristics. (Santos & Kadota, 2012).

Tourist demand studies are often grounded in models and theories that translate tourism phenomena into statistical data. On the national level, the Brazilian Ministry of Tourism emphasizes the significance of basic data such as the number of tourists, their origin, profile, mode of transportation, length of stay, and expenditure during the trip (Brasil, 2018). In addition to these factors, more complex elements like tourist satisfaction, motivations, and trends are assessed using quantitative indicators. (Neratika, 2017).

The quality of attractions, products, and tourist services also plays a pivotal role in tourist demand. Striving for excellence and maximizing consumer satisfaction is crucial for the success of tourist destinations (Cooper, Fletcher, Wanhill, Gilbert & Shepherd, 2007; Cooper, Hall & Trigo, 2011). Sampling tourist demand is a challenge, as it's difficult to control all entry and exit points for tourists in a destination. Statistics can fluctuate based on situational factors such as weather variations and economic crises (Ignarra, 2013).

Hence, the Covid-19 pandemic has directly affected and impacted research, including studies on tourist demand, necessitating revisions in how this information is collected. There's a tendency for domestic tourism to take precedence, especially with travel using road transport to nearby destinations, and the consolidation of nature tourism. (Brouder, 2020; Brouder, et al, 2020; Everingham & Chassagne, 2020; Neves, Carvalho, Souza & Filippim, 2021).

According to Camara, Monteiro & Marques (2022, p. 2), "the COVID-19 pandemic can be considered a random event that represents a turning point in the continuous growth process of international travel flow and the significance of the tourism sector for the economies of various countries, regions, and cities." Thus, sustainability, responsible tourism, technological trends, and informational influences have also impacted the tourism market. Methodologies, including the use of big data and internet data analysis, have been applied to measure and predict tourist demand. (Li et al., 2020; Song et al., 2023).

In this context, tourist demand is a fundamental concept for the study and planning of tourism, as it represents the quantity and characteristics of people who travel or wish to travel to a specific destination. Measuring tourist demand allows for an understanding of tourists' profiles, motivations, expenditures, preferences, and satisfaction. Therefore, measuring tourist

demand is one of the most essential elements for characterizing the demand of a destination and defining its strategic planning. These data often serve as the foundation upon which planning is developed. The significance of tourism planning is further addressed in the following sections of this work.

Tourism planning

Tourism is an activity that can bring economic, social, and cultural benefits to the regions that host it, but it can also lead to negative impacts. Sometimes, tourism planning and management are developed without a quantitative and qualitative understanding of the economic, social, and environmental impact of the activity, and this practice can hinder the sustainability of both national and international tourism (Silva & Mendes, 2023). That's why it's essential for there to be effective planning for this activity, which acts as a crucial tool for the sustainable development of the sector and destinations. This planning should be participatory and integrated with all sectors of society, as the lack of coordination between these stakeholders can severely hinder the sector's development. (Cooper, Fletcher, Wanhill, Gilbert & Shepherd, 2007; Cooper, Hall & Trigo, 2011; Diniz, Gomes & Fedrizzi, 2021; Neves, Souza & Filippim, 2020).

According to Molina (2005), changes have occurred in planning models due to the inefficiency of the centralized model in the face of the continuous development of tourism. Consequently, decentralized models are understood to be more efficient and integrated with all sectors and stakeholders involved. It's important to highlight that effective participation in tourism planning requires a power-sharing approach in the processes of formulation, execution, control, and evaluation. Broadly speaking, participation means sharing the decision-making process, involving co-decision and co-responsibility. (Ávila, 2009).

In today's context, no tourist destination can ignore or neglect participatory management and planning. It's imperative to work towards creating sustainable incentives that are founded on environmental respect and the enhancement of local potentials, while valuing cultural expressions. The primary goals should include job creation, social inclusion, and the reinforcement of collective and collaborative actions (Ávila, 2009).

However, there are several challenges that complicate this process, especially within the Brazilian context. According to Valls (2006), some of these challenges include: the high cost of planning, which depends on the political will of government officials and public administrators; political biases that might jeopardize the continuity of tourism plans in the event of changes in government (Pimentel, Emmendoerfer & Tomazzoni, 2014; Schindler, 2014); the complexity of harmonizing the interests of various stakeholders involved in tourism,

such as the public and private sectors, the third sector, local population, and visitors (Beni & Moesch, 2017; Cooper, Fletcher, Wanhill, Gilbert & Shepherd, 2007; Cooper, Hall & Trigo, 2011; Diniz et al., 2021; Neves, Souza & Filippim, 2020; Schluter, 1998); the specificities of each destination, requiring appropriate criteria for planning; and the inertia of non-planning, which leads many destinations to subject themselves to market forces without a strategic vision (Barbará, 2006; Neves, Souza & Filippim, 2020; Valls, 2006).

In this perspective, strategic planning is an essential tool for the management of tourist destinations, as it enables the identification of market opportunities and challenges, while also defining objectives and strategies to achieve them. Valls (2006) highlights that strategic planning should take into account the tourism segments present in the region, consumer profiles and expectations, the differentiated and competitive offerings of the destination, priorities and sustainable development goals, consensus and participation of social stakeholders, and appropriate management and control instruments.

The strategic planning for the development of a tourist destination follows a process that encompasses several stages: diagnosis, prognosis, setting objectives and goals, defining strategies to achieve them, plan implementation, and ultimately, monitoring and evaluating results (Ignarra, 2013). The diagnosis reveals the current state of the destination, while the prognosis outlines the desired future state, with the former influencing the latter.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

For a better understanding, the results obtained are presented in two parts: In this stage of the work, the analyses carried out through the online questionnaire applied for hotel employees are presented, which express the result of the Endomarketing that is utensils in good working order; and Housekeeping, responsible for cleaning the rooms, changing the linen, cleaning, checking the minibar consumption and organizing the hotel's common areas. The table below shows the total number of employees and the number of respondents per sector:

Strategic planning also contributes to the formulation of public policies that promote tourism as a driver of development (Cooper, Hall & Trigo, 2011). It recognizes that public policies related to education, healthcare, employment, safety, and urban mobility enable municipal development and, consequently, tourism development (Schindler, 2014; Swarbrooke, 2000). Tourism, as

an economic activity generating income redistribution and contributing to a city's economy, is therefore of significant interest to the public authorities, particularly in Brazil, where they play a role as planners, implementers, and facilitators of the tourism industry. (Beni, 2012; Ignarra, 2013).

In this way, tourism planning is understood as a crucial tool to ensure that tourist destinations are capable of providing quality experiences to visitors while respecting natural and cultural resources, as well as promoting the well-being of local communities. To achieve this, it's necessary to adopt a participatory and integrated approach that involves different stakeholders and interests related to tourism. Given this, the following section outlines the methodological procedures adopted for the research.

METHODOLOGY

Study Object Characterization: Curitiba

Curitiba, the capital of the state of Paraná, is renowned for its history shaped by economic cycles of cattle herding and the yerba mate industry. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the cattle herding movement drove the city's development, making it a significant economic hub in the region. However, it was in the late 19th century, with the boom in the yerba mate industry, that Curitiba experienced substantial population and economic growth. (Cruz, 2018).

Immigration was a pivotal factor in the cultural and ethnic formation of the city (Cruz, 2018). Italians, Ukrainians, Poles, Germans, Dutch, Chinese, Japanese, Arabs, Angolans, Syrians, and other groups have left their mark on the city, which now houses emblematic sites such as the German Wood, Japan Square, Ukrainian Memorial, and Arab Memorial. In addition to its cultural richness, Curitiba has distinguished itself by investing in innovation and urban planning. (Curitiba, 2015).

Presenting the characterization of the study object, in this case, Curitiba, is important as it provides context and a solid foundation for the conducted research. By describing the city's history, cultural formation, as well as its economic and demographic development over time, readers can better grasp the backdrop against which the research is being conducted. This characterization aids in contextualizing the collected information and interpreting the obtained results. Furthermore, by mentioning the cultural characteristics and iconic sites of the city, one can discern the significance of tourism and the visitor experience in Curitiba, underscoring the study's relevance regarding tourist demand in the region.

Research Approach and Characterization

This research is classified as exploratory-descriptive, as it explores existing literature to explain the research topics and describes data obtained through data collection using the research instrument. It aims to investigate and describe patterns and profiles of tourist demand based on these collected data. (Gil, 1991; Veal, 2011).

The research follows a quantitative approach, both in terms of data collection and the statistical evaluation of data, through the assignment of values to levels of satisfaction and quality. Thus, the research relies on numerical evidence to substantiate its conclusions, with a focus on the sample's level of reliability (Veal, 2011).

Development of the research instrument for data collection

The research instrument was developed based on a literature review in the field of tourism, aimed at analyzing tourist demand in relation to indices of assessing tourist profiles, travel information, and tourism experiences. The questionnaire, presented in Table 1, is divided into two sections and comprises 24 variables, along with a filter to differentiate between tourists and non-tourists. Section 1, "Tourist Profile and Travel Information," outlines a sociodemographic profile of the tourist and indicates their consumption behaviors during the trip, using 8 nominal scale variables, 3 discrete scale variables, 1 ordinal scale variable, and 1 continuous scale variable.

Section 2, "Tourist Experience," employs satisfaction indicators to assess the quality of the tourist experience in Curitiba, Paraná. This is done through 7 ordinal variables on a 7-point Likert Scale, as indicated by Norman (2010), 3 nominal scale variables, and 1 qualitative variable. The Likert Scale points correspond to: (1) very poor, (2) poor, (3) fair, (4) good, (5) very good, (6) do not know, and (7) none of the above. Both sections are substantiated with theoretical justifications and references for the selection of variables.

Chart 1 - Questionnaire variables

SECTION 1: TOURIST PROFILE AND TRAVEL INFORMATION			
Variable	Type of variable	Justification	References
Origin	Nominal	Place of residence is an important characteristic of the tourist's sociodemographic profile.	Ignarra (2013), Cooper et al. (2007), Brasil (2022a), Paraná (2017), Brasil (2019)
Sex	Nominal	Basic information of the tourist's sociodemographic profile.	Ignarra (2013), Cooper et al. (2007), Brasil (2022a), CEPATUR (2016), Porto Alegre (2011), Brasil (2019)
Age	Discrete	Basic information about the tourist's sociodemographic profile.	Ignarra (2013), Cooper et al. (2007), Brasil (2022a), Paraná (2017), CEPATUR (2016), Porto Alegre (2011), Brasil
level of education	Ordinal	Basic information about the tourist's sociodemographic profile.	Ignarra (2013), Cooper et al. (2007), Brasil (2022a), CEPATUR (2016), Porto Alegre (2011), Brasil (2019)
Occupational profession.	Nominal	Basic information about the socio-economic profile of the tourist.	Ignarra (2013), Cooper et al. (2007), Brasil (2022a), CEPATUR (2016), Porto Alegre (2011)
Monthly household income.	Continuous	Basic information about the socio-economic profile of the tourist and determining factors of demand.	Ignarra (2013), Santos & Kadota (2012), Cooper et al. (2007), Brasil (2022a), Paraná (2017), Porto Alegre (2011), Brasil (2019)
Number of overnight stays.	Discrete	Increasing the length of tourists' stays is one of the challenges in national tourism.	Brasil (2018), Brasil (2022a), Paraná (2017), Brasil (2019)
Number of companions	Nominal	Basic information about the tourist's profile.	Paraná (2017), CEPATUR (2016), Porto Alegre (2011), Brasil (2019)
Mode of transportation.	Nominal	The mode of transportation used is a determining factor for demand.	Brasil (2022a), Paraná (2017)
Accommodation type	Nominal	Basic information about the tourist's consumption habits at the destination that assists in defining their profile.	Ignarra (2013), Paraná (2017), Porto Alegre (2011), Brasil (2019)
Travel organization	Nominal	Basic information about the tourist's consumption habits at the destination that helps define their profile.	Ignarra (2013), Paraná (2017), CEPATUR (2016), Porto Alegre (2011)
Travel motivation	Nominal	It is one of the determining factors in choosing a destination, reflects the tourist's profile, and assists in segmenting demand and tourism planning.	Ignarra (2013), Curitiba (2015), Paraná (2017), CEPATUR (2016), Porto Alegre (2011), Brasil (2019)
Frequency of visits to the destination	Discrete	Basic information about the tourist's profile.	Paraná (2017), Porto Alegre (2011), Brasil (2019)

SECTION 2: TOURIST EXPERIENCE

Variable	Type of	Justification	References
Intention to return	Nominal	Reflects tourist satisfaction and is a question recommended by the plans.	Paraná (2017), Brasil (2019)
Visited attractions or attractions you intend to visit	Nominal	Reflects consumption habits at the destination and motivations for the trip.	Ignarra (2013), Paraná (2017)
Sources of information used	Nominal	Information systems are central in a Smart Tourist Destination (STD) and their effectiveness needs to be evaluated.	Neratika (2017), Cruz (2018), Paraná (2017), Curitiba (2022), Porto Alegre (2011)
Main mode of transportation used at the destination	Ordinal	Reflects consumption habits at the destination and the motivations of the trip, in addition to being a priority in Curitiba, the quality of tourist mobility.	Ignarra (2013), Curitiba (2015) Curitiba (2022), Porto Alegre (2011)
Variable	Type of	Justification	References
Overall satisfaction with the trip	Ordinal	The quality of the	Santos & Kadota (2012), Beni (2012),
Evaluation of the experience at the destination	Perceived quality of life	Ordinal	Factors such as quality, safety, and prices are determinants of demand in the destination and indicators of its competitiveness.
	Safety		
	Sustainability		
	Accessibility		
	Technology		
	Prices		
Tourist itineraries from the Municipal Tourism			
Evaluation of the overall infrastructure in the destination.	Public transportation	Ordinal	A Smart City makes citizen well-being part of the tourist experience, with Curitiba being recognized for its quality of life.
	Airport		
	Bus station		
	Public cleanliness		
	Access roads		
	Urban roads		
Public Wi-Fi network			
Evaluation of satisfaction with the infrastructure and tourist services at the destination	Tourist attractions	Ordinal	The characteristics of the tourism product are determining factors for demand and perception of quality at the destination, as well as indicators of tourism competitiveness.
	Tourist signage		
	Service at Tourist Information Points (TIPs)		
	Information channels		
	Tourist Line (public transportation service)		
	Accommodation facilities		
Restaurants and bars			
			Santos & Kadota (2012), Neratika (2017), Beni (2012), Curitiba (2015), Paraná (2017), CEPATUR (2016), Curitiba (2022), Brasil (2019)

Evaluation of the experience regarding connectivity, intelligence, and information at the destination.	Use of technology in tourist attractions	Ordinal	Intelligence and information are central to the tourist experience in a Smart Tourism	Neratika (2017), Cruz (2018), CEPATUR (2016), Curitiba (2022)
	Use of technology in public transportation			
	Ease of technology use			
	Quality of technology			
Evaluation of the experience regarding accessibility at the destination	At tourist attractions	Ordinal	Accessibility is a crucial aspect of a sustainable and smart tourist destination.	Neratika (2017), Cruz (2018), Brasil (2018), Curitiba (2022)
	On urban roads			
	In public transportation			
	At the airport			
	At the bus station			
In information channels				

Source: the authors (2023).

Chart 1 presents the questionnaire variables divided into two sections: "Tourist Profile and Travel Information" and "Touristic Experience." Each variable is classified according to its type, rationale, and bibliographic references. The provided references demonstrate the theoretical foundation of the choices, supporting the research's relevance and ensuring the consistency of the obtained results. Therefore, the 48 variables identified in the literature were incorporated into the research instrument and used to measure the tourist demand in Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection was conducted through two methods: digital and physical, between February 14th and April 12th, 2023. The questionnaire obtained a sample of 127 valid responses. The Google Forms tool was used to create the questionnaire, which was distributed digitally and also printed on paper for data collection. The sample is non-probabilistic and was selected for convenience.

The printed questionnaires were distributed at the following Tourist Information Points (PITs) and Tourist Assistance Centers (CATs) in Curitiba: Panoramic Tower, Botanical Garden, Palacete Wolf (Largo da Ordem), and Airport. The digital questionnaire was made available through QR codes at the same PITs and CATs. After data collection, the analysis of results was conducted in three stages, as outlined in Chart 2:

Source: Own authorship (2022)

Section	Type of Analysis
Section 1	Descriptive Statistics
Section 2	Descriptive Statistics
Section 1 X Section 2	Cross-tabulation

Source: Own authorship (2022)

Descriptive statistics is the statistical science that summarizes a dataset. Its techniques describe a large dataset through various methods of data synthesis, aiming to reduce the variability of the data. On the other hand, cross-tabulation is an analysis technique used to determine the relationship between categorical variables (Field, 2009).

The software PSCP was used to perform cross-tabulation of variables, mainly to analyze the relationship between the nominal variables in section 1 and the quantitative variables in section 2. Flourish is an online tool that enables the creation of interactive and visually appealing data visualizations. Similarly, Canva was used for the presentation of graphs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data analysis was conducted in three stages: (i) descriptive statistics of section 1, in order to analyze the profile and travel information of the tourists; (ii) descriptive statistics of section 2, to analyze the tourist experience; (iii) cross-tabulation between all variables within each section. Although all possible combinations of variables from sections 1 and 2 were tested, only results with statistical significance were presented. The purpose of these analysis stages was to explore the relationship between the profile of tourists and their evaluation of the experience in the destination of Curitiba.

It is worth noting that since the sample is non-probabilistic and selected for convenience, the results cannot be generalized to the entire profile of tourists in Curitiba. They should be considered as informative only. According to tourist demand data from 2018, approximately 36.7% of the 5.5 million tourists who visited Curitiba that year came for business purposes, 25.4% to visit relatives/friends, and 21% for leisure (Curitiba, 2018). The majority of tourists originated from the states of São Paulo (24.6%), Paraná (18.4%), and Santa Catarina (13.6%).

Although these numbers indicate the business tourism

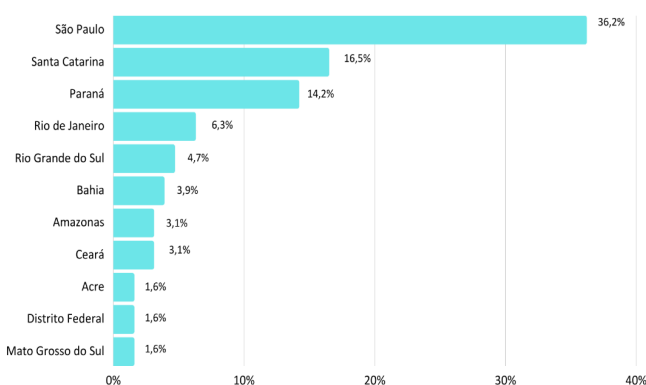
segment, Curitiba also offers natural attractions, such as well-preserved parks, which attract tourists seeking leisure and contact with nature. Curitiba continues to invest in tourism and urban planning. Projects like Curitiba DTI 2030 aim to create a competitive tourist destination, considering historical, culinary, cultural, and artistic and corporate events aspects (Curitiba, 2022). The city aims to establish itself as a smart destination, aligning sustainability, economic growth, and quality of life.

Tourist Profile and Travel Information

The results show that there is a tourist profile in Curitiba distributed among men (51.2%, n=65) and women (48.8%, n=62), with an average age of 33 years. The segmentation of ages into generational categories was conducted based on generational divisions (Hritz & Franzidis, 2018). Baby Boomers (born between 1944 and 1960) represent 0.8% of the sample (n=1), Generation X (1961-1980) accounts for 23.6% (n=30), Millennials (1981-2000) represent 58.3% of the total (n=79), and finally, Generation Z (born from 2001 onwards) represents 12.6% of the sample (n=16).

Graph 1, shown below, illustrates the origin of tourists by state. When analyzing the tourist profile by state of origin, it can be observed that the majority of tourists are from São Paulo – SP (36.2%, n=46), followed by Santa Catarina - SC (16.5%, n=21), and the state of Paraná - PR itself (14.2% non-Curitiba residents, n=18). It is noteworthy that the states of SP, SC, and PR are the main sources of tourists for the destination Curitiba. Rio de Janeiro - RJ contributed 6.3% (n=8) of the tourists, and Rio Grande do Sul - RS contributed 4.7% (n=6). These results are consistent with the findings of the previous tourist demand survey conducted by the Municipal Tourism Institute - IMT (Curitiba, 2018), where the ranking of the top five states in terms of emitting tourists is as follows: São Paulo (24.6%), Paraná (18.4%), Santa Catarina (13.6%), Rio de Janeiro (9.3%), and Rio Grande do Sul (4%).

Graph 1 - origin of tourists by state⁵

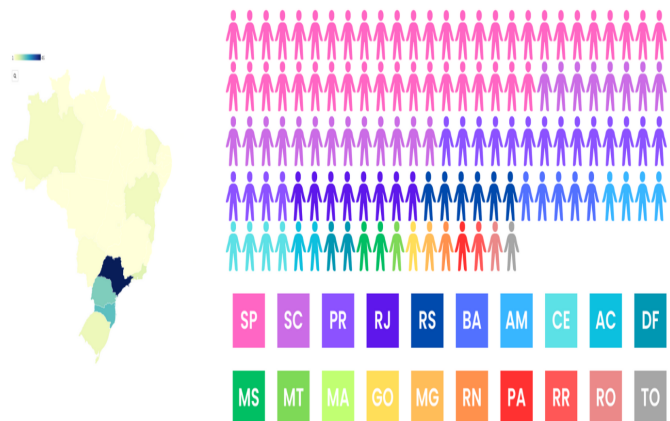


Source: the authors (2023).

When analyzing the origin of tourists by regions of Brazil, the Southeast Region is represented by 43.3% (n=55) of tourists (due to the high number of tourists from São Paulo), the South Region by 35.4% (n=45), the Northeast Region by 8.6% (n=11), the North Region by 7.9% (n=10), and the Midwest Region by 4.8% (n=6).

From the North and Northeast regions, the states of Amazonas (3.1%, n=4) and Ceará (3.1%, n=4) stand out, but the pattern is that the states from these regions are the least represented in the sample. It's interesting how Rio de Janeiro, a state that is geographically more distant and with a different climate, surpasses Rio Grande do Sul in numbers. The map and the pictogram presented in Figure 1 below allow visualizing the number of tourists per state.

Figure 1 - Tourists' Origin



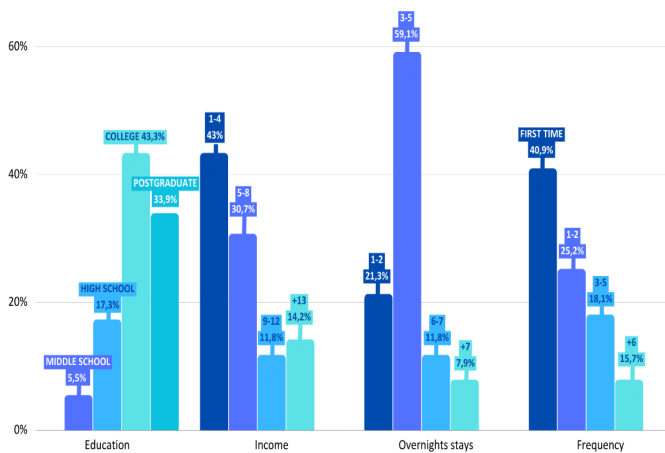
Source: the authors (2023).

Graph 2 - Distribution of Variables: Education, Monthly Household Income, Number of Overnight Stays, and Frequency of Visiting Destination Curitiba. It is noted that the majority of respondents have completed a bachelor's degree (43.3%, n= 55), 43% (n= 55) earn between 1 to 4 times the national minimum wage (R\$1,212.00 to R\$4,848.00), stay in Curitiba for 3 to 5 overnight stays (59.1%, n= 75), and are visiting the destination for the first time (40,9%, n= 52).

Cooper, Fletcher, Wanhill, Gilbert & Shepherd (2007) highlight that among the four main influencing factors of demand is income, which, depending on the price of the tourist product, can determine whether this demand will be potential or effective. Considering that the majority of tourists stay for 3 to 5 overnight stays in the destination and are visiting the city for the first time, it can be inferred that there might be a suppressed demand for Curitiba, especially from tourists who have visited the city before but did not return and chose another destination.

⁵Note: States with less than 1% representation were omitted from the illustration.

Graph 2 - Distribution of Variables: Education, Income, Overnight Stays, and Frequency of Visits to Curitiba



Source: the authors (2023).

Regarding the occupation of tourists, 43.3% (n=55) work in the private sector, and 18.1% (n=23) are self-employed professionals. The minority consists of retirees and entrepreneurs (3.9%, n=5 and 9.4%, n=12, respectively). In the 2018 IMT survey (Curitiba, 2018), 55.4% were described as having an "employment relationship," and 20.1% as "self-employed professionals." The configuration of travel groups is mainly families, with a predominance of couples without children (37.8%, n=48) or larger family groups that may not necessarily be couples (25.2%, n=32). Excursions appear as the least common category within this analysis: only 1.6% of the sample (n=2), which may indicate a sample bias in data collection. Although the classifications are different, these data differ from the 2018 survey results (Curitiba, 2018), in which 37.4% of the sample traveled alone, 28.8% with family, and 18.7% with friends.

It's worth noting in terms of lodging that, despite the majority of tourists staying in hotels or flats, a significant portion of the sample stays at the homes of friends or relatives (30.7%, n=39). Nevertheless, friends and relatives appear as the motivation for travel for only 11.8% (n=15) of the tourists. In 2018 (Curitiba, 2018), 40.3% of respondents stayed at the homes of people they knew, and 48.9% stayed in hotels. There's a noticeable increase in those who stay in rented homes/apartments (temporary rentals in the 2018 survey): 9.4% (n=12) compared to 3.9% five years ago.

The majority of tourists in Curitiba (73.2%, n=93) are primarily motivated by leisure, which results in high demand seasonality, depending on the visitors' availability of free time (Ignarra, 2013). In contrast, business and event motivations combined represent only 11.8% (n=15) of the sample, showing a significant difference compared to the previous survey in 2018 (Curitiba, 2018), in which 36.7% of Curitiba tourists had business as their main motivation, followed by 25.4% for

"visiting relatives/friends," and only 21% sought "leisure, sightseeing, or relaxation."

Such divergence in the results could be due to the sample bias, which was primarily collected at the Panoramic Tower, a tourist attraction, and therefore less likely to be visited by business travelers. Nevertheless, the data is noteworthy because, as highlighted in the Trends Report by the Ministry of Tourism (Brazil, 2023), there is a constant growth in the number of business tourists who take advantage of their professional trips to engage in leisure activities at the destination.

The results obtained from the tourist profile and travel information play a crucial role in supporting managers in making strategic decisions for the tourist destination. Based on this data, it becomes possible to effectively steer the destination's marketing efforts by focusing on the preferences and characteristics of the most frequent visitor profiles, while also aiming to attract more visitors from less common profiles. Furthermore, understanding the specific needs of each profile enables the enhancement of the tourist offerings, tailoring them more precisely to meet the expectations and demands of different groups of tourists. These insights are invaluable for enhancing visitor experiences, optimizing resources, and achieving sustainable and successful growth for the tourist destination.

Tourist Experience

The quality of the tourist experience in the destination of Curitiba was measured using indicators of satisfaction, consumption habits, well-being, information, and accessibility in the destination. These results evaluated Curitiba as a tourist destination, taking into account its particularities as a city that is part of the pilot project of Smart Tourist Destinations (DTIs) in Brazil, and its history of sustainability and quality of life.

The averages of the evaluation indices from the survey were analyzed in descending order, revealing that the perceived quality of life by tourists in the destination and the overall satisfaction with the trip obtained the highest ratings (4.04 and 4.59, respectively). These are the only variables with an average rating higher than 4. According to Santos and Kadota (2012), tourists tend to choose a destination not based on how the trip will actually be, but based on the image they have of it. Therefore, the perceptions that the tourist demand in Curitiba has about the city exert a significant influence on their final satisfaction with the trip.

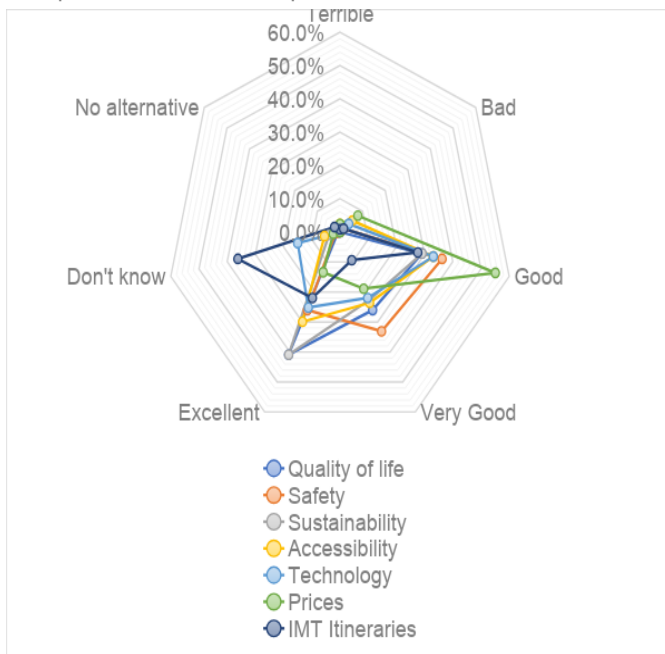
Furthermore, out of the 32 evaluation variables (considering the evaluation variables from section 2, about the tourist experience), 16 have a considered good average, between 3 and 4, in a range that goes from 3.06 (evaluation of the quality of technology used in the destination) to 3.9 (evaluation of sustainability in the destination). In contrast, 14 variables have a considered poor or very poor average, between 1.59

(evaluation of public Wi-Fi) and 2.97 (evaluation of technology in the destination).

Thus, it can be observed that issues related to destination perception, such as sustainability, safety, and public cleanliness, as well as the tourism infrastructure itself, including tourist attractions, accommodation, and dining options, have a generally good to very good average rating (between 3 and 4). However, more essential variables such as those related to accessibility, integrated information and communication technology within the destination, and basic infrastructures like the airport and bus terminal, receive a poor evaluation from tourists. Particularly noteworthy is the average rating for the service at the Tourist Information Points (PITs) (1.93), one of the lowest among the survey results. Reasons for this could include a lack of infrastructure, technology, and tourist materials at the information points. There may also be a need for better training for the staff to meet the needs of modern tourists.

Graph 3 illustrates the destination experience evaluation. In this aspect, the majority of evaluations tend to fall within the range between "great" (with notable instances, approximately 40%, in evaluations of quality of life and sustainability) and "good" (approximately 55% of evaluations of pricing). Pricing is one of the most determining factors of tourist demand for a destination (Cooper, Fletcher, Wanhill, Gilbert & Shepherd, 2007), making it a focus for Curitiba's management to further improve this aspect in the city. As for the evaluations, the only exception to the pattern of "great" and "good" is the assessment of the IMT's tourist routes, where the majority of respondents were unaware of them (approximately 38%).

Graph 3: Destination Experience Evaluation



Source: the authors (2023).

According to the Tourism Trends Report (Brazil, 2023), the number of destinations implementing technologies to enhance the tourist experience is growing, aiming to maximize demand satisfaction. In this regard, the connectivity, intelligence, and information in Curitiba stand out, with the majority of evaluations ranging from good to very good, with percentages between 20% and 30%, except for the assessment of technology use in public transportation. In this case, approximately 40% of tourists were unsure how to evaluate the question. This could be attributed to the limited use of public transportation by tourists in the destination. However, as emphasized by Neratika (2017), a Smart Tourism Destination should stand out in its tourism landscape through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). In the context of connectivity, intelligence, and innovation, Curitiba doesn't stand out in the same way as it does in sustainability, even considering its status as a Smart Tourism Destination.

With regard to accessibility, even though the overall evaluations fall between very good and good (approximately 25% to 35% of responses, with variations across different variables), there is a notable number of variables that received numerous "Don't know" responses. This result can be attributed to the small sample size, as only a few individuals may have used facilities like the airport or public transportation. Nevertheless, this is concerning, especially considering the tourism trend of treating each tourist as a unique individual rather than a uniform mass, addressing their specific needs (Beni, 2012). Hence, universal accessibility should be a priority in all environments.

The evaluation of the general infrastructure yielded varied results. Around 43% of the evaluations are "excellent" for public cleanliness, while aspects like urban roads and access highways have approximately 35% of evaluations in the "very good" category. However, once again, the evaluation of the airport, bus terminal, and public transportation predominantly received responses (about 50%) in the "don't know" category. Notably, the overall evaluation of the airport was (Mean=2.39), which contrasts with the 2016 data that measured national airport satisfaction, where Curitiba's airport achieved an average satisfaction score of 4.64. (CEPATUR, 2016).

The evaluation of infrastructure and tourism services also presented varied results for each index. Approximately between 43% and 38% of evaluations for tourist attractions and restaurants/bars are excellent. Regarding tourist signage, the majority (30%, n=38) evaluates it as good, while 30% (n=38) of evaluations for accommodation facilities are very good. However, the 5% (n=6) of poor evaluations for accommodation facilities and the 5% of poor evaluations for signage stand out, along with the high "don't know" responses for the service quality at the PITs, the Tourism Line, and information channels. Ignarra (2013) emphasizes that the

main evaluation factor for a tourism product is the quality of service, making it concerning that these tourists seemingly aren't being served well on various fronts. Beni (2012) underscores that tourism managers' primary concern lies in the excellence of the tourism services offered in their destination.

In general, it can be observed that leisure and quality of life aspects are well evaluated, while accessibility and technology have more moderate ratings. Moreover, issues related to specific public transportation infrastructures have a considerable number of tourists who cannot evaluate them due to their usage conditions (someone who used the airport is unlikely to also use the bus station).

The results of the tourist experience have a valuable application to assist managers in making strategic decisions in various ways. Firstly, by understanding the main shortcomings of Curitiba's tourism offerings, it is possible to outline strategies and plans to address these gaps and enhance the visitors' experience. Additionally, managers can recognize the strengths of the offerings and continue to invest and replicate these successful aspects to further boost tourism in the city. This targeted approach based on the results enables a sustainable and efficient development of Curitiba as a tourist destination.

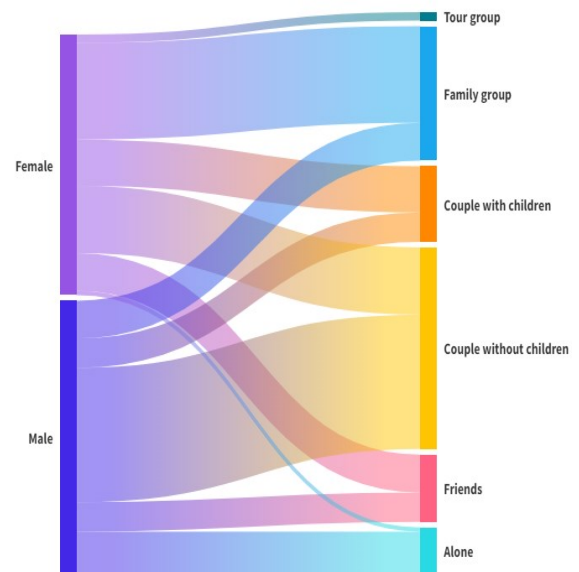
Cross-tabulation between tourist profile versus tourist experience

The first cross-tabulation examined the variables "gender" and "travel companions" (composition of the group the person travels with). The chi-square test (χ^2) indicates that there is statistical significance in this relationship ($p=0.001$), while the dependency between the variables is moderate (42% - Cramer's $V = 0.42$). Notably, 61.1% ($n=11$) of those who traveled in "couples with children" were female, whereas 66.7% ($n=32$) of the "couples without children" were male.

When associating "gender" with "family group" (for larger family groups or cases of a child traveling with a parent, for example), 71.9% ($n=23$) are female, and 28.1% ($n=9$) are male. The majority of women (37.1%, $n=23$) travel in family groups, while the majority of men (49.2%, $n=32$) travel as couples without children. If we analyze the variable of those who travel "alone," 90.9% ($n=10$) are male. There might be a tendency for women to travel with family due to sociocultural reasons, ranging from a sense of security to traditional family configurations. Women are traditionally more associated with family unity. The Sankey diagram (Figure 2) below illustrates these relationships:

Figure 2 - Cross-tabulation between gender and travel companions

Sexo X Acompanhantes de viagem



Source: the authors (2023).

The third cross-tabulation related the variables "Education Level" and "Perceived Quality of Life." It can be observed that there are some interesting relationships, where there is a tendency for higher education levels to be associated with better-rated quality of life in the destination. This could be due to a more critical sense capable of understanding what constitutes a good quality of life in a city, or it could also be due to the low number of respondents with incomplete higher education (only 22.8% of the total sample). Nonetheless, the perception of quality of life is one of the essential subjective aspects for the competitiveness of a DTI, and the results are consistent with the research on competitiveness indices of the inducer destinations in Paraná, in 2015 (CEPATUR, 2016), where Curitiba's overall index is 80.4 on a scale from 0 to 100. The chi-square test (χ^2) shows statistical significance in this relationship ($p=0.006$), while the strength of dependence is weak (29% - Cramer's $V=0.29$).

When relating the number of overnight stays in the destination with the evaluation of accessibility at the airport, the following results are obtained: 37.3% ($n=28$) of those who stayed between 3 and 5 overnight stays in the destination did not know how to evaluate the accessibility at the airport, while 46.7% ($n=7$) of those who stayed between 6 and 7 evaluated it as excellent, and 40% ($n=4$) of those who stayed for more than 7 overnight stays rated it as very good. There is a possibility that these tourists who stay for a shorter time arrive in Curitiba by car, and that's why they might not be able to evaluate the airport's accessibility. At the same time, this category represents 40% ($n=8$) of those who rated accessibility as excellent. The low sam-

ple size certainly influences these results, even though the statistical significance is high ($p=0.002$) and the dependence between the variables is weak (30% - Cramer's $V=0.3$).

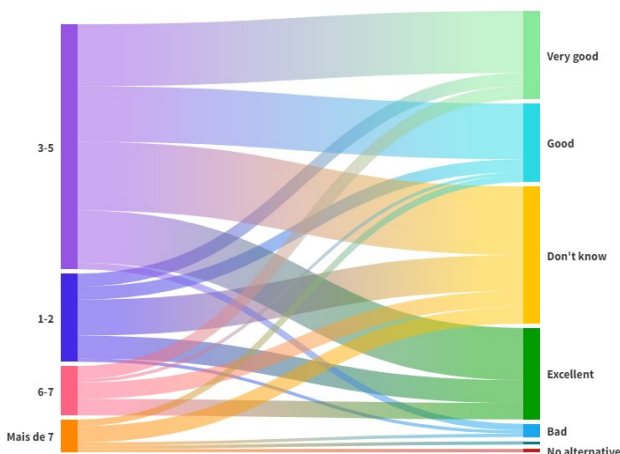
The number of overnight stays in the destination also correlates with the evaluation of tourist attractions. The chi-squared test (X^2) shows that there is statistical significance in this relationship ($p=0.002$), while the strength of dependence is moderate (32% - Cramer's $V=0.32$). It's noticeable that the longer the tourist stays in the city, the more evenly distributed their evaluation of the attractions becomes on the scale: 44.4% ($n= 12$) of those who stayed between 1 and 2 overnight stays rate the attractions as "Excellent," while when analyzing those who stayed for more than 7 overnight stays, it's evident that 30% ($n= 3$) rated them as "Excellent," 30% ($n= 3$) as "Very Good," and 30% ($n= 3$) as "Good."

It's understood that the longer a person stays in the city, the more critical their perspective becomes, or they might visit more tourist attractions with (potentially) lower quality. Considering this interpretation and the fact that, according to Ignarra (2013), tourist service is a crucial aspect of destination evaluation, it's necessary to invest in providing excellent service across the entire range of tourist offerings in the city, not just at the main attractions.

When analyzing the influence of the number of nights spent in the destination, it becomes apparent that the duration of the trip is related to the use and evaluation of the Linha Turismo (Tourism Line) service (Figure 3). Tourists who stay in Curitiba for 1 to 2 days and those who stay for more than 7 days tend to use the Linha Turismo less. Among those who stay for 3 to 5 days and 6 to 7 days, the tendency is to rate the city's service positively. For this cross-tabulation, the chi-squared test (X^2) indicates statistical significance in this relationship ($p=0.007$), and the strength of dependence is weak (31% - Cramer's $V=0.31$).

Figure 3 - Cross-tabulation between number of nights stayed and evaluation of the Tourism Line.

Nº de pernoites X Avaliação da Linha Turismo



Source: the authors (2023).

Finally, the relationship between the number of nights stayed and the evaluation of lodging facilities shows statistical significance ($p=0.000$), even though the dependence is moderate (35% - V Cramer=0.35). It is noted that 50% of the "Not sure" responses are from tourists who stayed between 1 and 2 nights in the destination ($n=7$). It is understood that these individuals stayed at the homes of friends or relatives. Nonetheless, the current trend in tourism for lodging is towards more comprehensive hotels and similar accommodations, which consider aspects of quality of life in their hospitality services, ranging from the design of the spaces to the availability of co-working spaces (Brasil, 2023). Therefore, it should be considered whether these needs have been met according to the profile of each tourist in Curitiba.

The results of the cross-tabulation can be applied to assist managers in making strategic decisions as follows: by understanding the needs and desires of different types of profiles that constitute the tourists in Curitiba, strategies can be established to satisfy them in their tourist experience at the destination. The results were analyzed and validated in light of the tourism literature, the research on the competitiveness indices of the inducing destinations of Paraná in 2015 (CEPATUR, 2016), the Tourist Demand Survey of Curitiba in 2018 (Curitiba, 2018), and the Tourism Trends Report (Brazil, 2023).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This article has achieved its objective by analyzing the demand profile, travel information, and tourist experience in Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil. The results have revealed valuable insights about the tourists visiting the city, including their geographical origin, demographic characteristics, lodging preferences, and travel motivations. Thus, in line with the literature discussed in this article, it can be concluded that understanding tourists' profiles and evaluating their destination experience is crucial for strategic planning in the tourism sector, enabling efforts to be directed according to visitors' needs and preferences.

Thus, this study has provided a relevant overview of the tourist demand in Curitiba, offering insights for the development of effective strategies in the tourism sector, enhancing the city's tourism offerings, and ensuring positive experiences for visitors. Despite being recognized as a city with a high quality of life and characterized as a DTI with strengths in sustainability, safety, cleanliness, and tourist attractions, Curitiba requires direct improvements in areas related to accessibility, technology, transportation infrastructure, and service at PITs and CATs.

Furthermore, the methodology presented for the accomplishment of this cross-tabulation research of pro-

file and experience data has brought a distinct contribution to the planning of the sector, allowing an understanding of the diverse needs and desires of the destination's tourist profiles and thus planning strategies on how to satisfy these profiles. Similarly, it adds to the research literature on tourism planning and tourist demand, as well as presents a quantitative research methodology for measuring tourist demand that can be replicated in other destinations.

In a practical sense, this research contributes to the way we understand tourists' preferences, the quality of products and services offered, and the need for adaptation in the planning and management of both business owners and public administrators. By identifying opportunities for improvement, the research provides insights for the development of more effective and targeted public policies, informing policy decisions and attracting investments to the destination. However, it should be noted that the research's non-probabilistic sample limits the generalizability of its results as representative of the overall tourist profile of Curitiba.

For future research, it is suggested to broaden the sample by including various locations for questionnaire administration, as well as utilizing online channels to reach a larger number of participants. Longitudinal data collection over multiple years will enable a more comprehensive analysis of seasonality and the development of reliable and detailed historical trends. Statistical analysis over time provides an understanding of trends and patterns in tourist demand behavior.

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