

# Satisfaction Factors That Predict Loyalty in Ecotourism

Subjects: [Anthropology](#)

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Recently, foreign tourists have revealed a growing interest for natural environment enjoyment. Results show three satisfaction factors in ecotourism: “nature and culture”, “infrastructure”, and “service”, where “nature and culture” was the most influential predictor of tourists’ loyalty. The entry also found a positive correlation between satisfaction and loyalty in ecotourism.

satisfaction

loyalty

ecotourism

foreign tourist

Costa Rica

## 1. Introduction

Visitor satisfaction is a vital aspect of national park marketing and management practice <sup>[1][2]</sup>. Therefore, understanding the importance of satisfaction allows managers to provide facilities and services according to the expectations of visitors <sup>[3][4][5]</sup>. In this sense, ecotourists tend to show significant levels of perceived satisfaction with the experiences lived during an ecotourism visit <sup>[6][7][8][9]</sup>. In addition, marketing approaches, which consider tourism satisfaction and behavioral intentions, remain an essential area for research in tourism studies <sup>[10]</sup>.

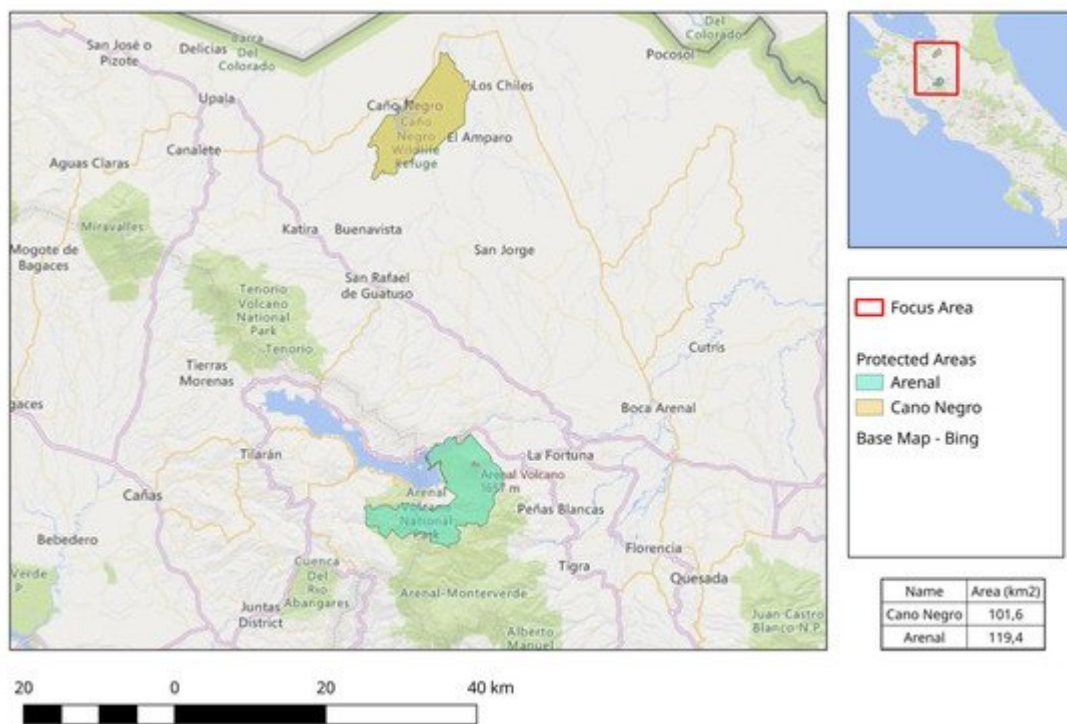
Ecotourism includes contact with nature, culture, agriculture, wildlife, and adventure activities <sup>[11]</sup>. Ecotourism areas have become important destinations due to their efficiency in protecting the environment and supporting education, recreation, and job creation <sup>[12]</sup>. The growing popularity of ecotourism around the world has encouraged tourist destinations to receive more and more tourists who like contact with nature and are willing to comply with the protection regulations of the chosen natural space <sup>[13]</sup>. Ecotourists search for nature and culture in a national park with their family and friends <sup>[14]</sup>. Managers must realize the economic importance of meeting the needs of visitors and providing them with memorable experiences <sup>[15]</sup>. Hence, satisfaction is often an important goal that park managers seek to achieve <sup>[5]</sup>. Likewise, mega faunas and impressive ecosystems are attributes of satisfaction in ecotourism <sup>[16][17][18]</sup>.

Inbound tourism encompasses the activities carried out by a non-resident visitor in the country of reference as part of an inbound tourist trip World Tourism Organization UNWTO <sup>[19]</sup>. In this sense, foreign tourists play an important role in national economies <sup>[20]</sup>. Therefore, the entry of foreign tourists to countries can play an effective role in increasing income exchange, creating new and more employment opportunities and fertilizing the tourism industry, and consequently, can promote quality of life and accelerate the country’s development process <sup>[21]</sup>.

Satisfaction factors are vital studies around the world, because the study of satisfaction in foreign tourists is an important indicator to analyze the return of foreign tourists, an important indicator in national economies.

## 2. Study Area

In particular, the Arenal National Park is selected, because it is one of the parks with the most visits nationwide and it is considered a natural laboratory and the Caño Negro National Wildlife Refuge in Costa Rica, since its characteristics make it a wetland of international importance (**Figure 1**).



**Figure 1.** The geographic location of protected areas: Arenal Volcano National Park and Caño Negro Mixed National Wildlife Refuge (Costa Rica).

## 3. Relationship of Satisfaction Factors with Return Intentions

To analyze the most important predictors in return intentions, a stepwise multiple regression was used, which included the satisfaction factors that were significant for the model. The results are presented in **Table 1**.

**Table 1.** Relationship of satisfaction factors with return intentions (Multiple regression).

Satisfaction Factors	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance
Nature and culture	0.227	3.716	0.000	1.000
Infrastructure	0.171	2.807	0.005	1.000

Satisfaction Factors	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance
Services	0.165	2.703	0.007	1.000
(Constant)		43.846	0.000	
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.096			
F statistic	9.637			
Sig.	0.000			
Durbin–Watson	1.428			

References

According to **Table 2**, the three satisfaction factors seemed to predict return intentions. The F test was significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating a real relationship between significant predictors and return intentions. Furthermore, the tolerance values indicated that there was no multicollinearity between the independent variables. Likewise, the Durbin–Watson Statistic reached a value of 1.43, which suggests the absence of auto-correlation in the errors and confirms the suitability of the model. The satisfaction factor “Nature and culture” was the most significant predictor in return intentions (Beta = 0.227,  $p < 0.05$ ), followed by the satisfaction factor “Infrastructure” (Beta = 0.171,  $p < 0.05$ ).

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4. Relationship of General Satisfaction with the Loyalty Variables

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Variable	Return Intentions			Recommendation Intentions			Say Positive Things about Destination		
	Beta	T	Sig.	Beta	t	Sig.	Beta	t	Sig.
Overall satisfaction	0.513	9.317	0.000	0.732	16.763	0.000	0.709	15.696	0.000
(Constant)		−0.197	0.844		2.487	0.014		5.681	0.000
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.260			Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.533		Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.500	
F statistic	86.799			F statistic	281.004		F statistic	246.379	
Sig.	0.000			Sig.	0.000		Sig.	0.000	
Durbin–Watson	86.799			Durbin–Watson	1.858		Durbin–Watson	2.024	

Phenomenon, Edited by James Higham. *Int. J. Tour. Policy* **2007**, *1*, 286.

Variable	Return Intentions			Recommendation Intentions			Say Positive Things about Destination		
	Beta	T	Sig.	Beta	t	Sig.	Beta	t	Sig.
Tolerance	1.000			Tolerance	1.000		Tolerance	1.000	

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## 6. Conclusions

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tourists. As a result, the destination and its community will benefit, with higher income and employment.

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- should be improved; in this way, the level of satisfaction of foreign tourists will be improved. For this, strategies can

Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326943269> that improve the facilities of the island in terms of furnishings and decoration that can give a better comfort to foreign tourists. On the other hand, the service and gastronomy of restaurants, guided tours, and complementary leisure activities can be promoted. For this, the quality of food, furniture, and equipment in restaurants can be improved, which can provide a better experience for tourists through better quality food and a more comfortable and pleasant establishment, notably improving the service and consequently the satisfaction of foreign tourists. Likewise, service trainings can be implemented for guides, which improve the expectations of tourists in relation to environmental and cultural information and education.