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MARKET MAVENS: KNOWLEDGEABLE CONSUMERS
AS A PROMOTION TOOL FOR SPANISH TOURISM

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Abstract

El objetivo de este estudio es investigar las principales características de los llamados consumidores expertos y su comportamiento en el mercado turístico, con el propósito de utilizar sus conocimientos como una herramienta de promoción de destinos turísticos como España. A través de un cuestionario sobre las actitudes de estos consumidores hacia el turismo, se selecciona una muestra de los dos países más representativos para el turismo español como son Alemania y Reino Unido. Por último, a través de los resultados obtenidos se realizan una serie de propuestas para cumplir con las expectativas de estos consumidores y motivar la difusión de sus conocimientos entre otros consumidores convirtiéndose, por tanto, en un medio de promoción turística.

The objective of this study is to investigate the main characteristics of consumers known as experts and their behavior in the tourism market, in order to use their knowledge as a tool to promote tourist destinations like Spain. Through a questionnaire on consumer attitudes toward tourism, a sample of the most representative countries for Spanish tourism as Germany and the United Kingdom is selected. Finally, from the results obtained a number of proposals to meet the expectations of these consumers and encourage the dissemination of their knowledge among other consumers becoming, therefore, in a mean for promoting tourism.

1. Introduction

Market mavens can be defined as “individuals who have information about many kinds of products, places to shop, and other facets of marketing, and initiate discussions with consumers and respond to requests from consumers for marketplace information” (Feick and Price, 1987).

According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) consumer behavior is “the behavior that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs”. It is a mental process of decision and physical activity. This decision process takes some time, including actions prior to the purchase and subsequent to it, for instance, what motivates a purchase decision and what is decided after experiencing what happens when this action is finished.

In general, all consumers can share information of the goods and services that they purchase, but only some of them are able to give significant data for business. Effectively, there are some groups of consumers especially important for the industry. We can distinguish three important groups: Early adopters (innovators), opinion leaders and market mavens. They have great importance for businesses and industries since they all have a desire to share information about the marketplace, products and services (Brancaleone and Gountas, 2007).

But, what differentiate innovators and opinion leaders from market mavens? Basically, early adopters and opinion leaders are more likely to share specific information and market mavens have general knowledge about many different products and services. Moreover, mavens don't need to purchase a product or use a service to have information about it as other consumers do, because mavenism is to seek as many information as possible about any kind of product or service. That is the reason why mavens are more useful, for example, for tourism promotion as this market covers a wide range of services and products.

Market mavens are enthusiastic to give their marketplace knowledge to other consumers and are often asked by other consumers for information. Consequently,

they are seen by other consumers as influencers in their purchase decisions. Mavens are likely to spread word-of-mouth communications among consumers, which become them in a very attractive target to retailers that commercialize a long variety of products. (Ronald, Clark and Goldsmith, 2005).

Mavens as regular users of magazines, direct mail advertisements and television, have a wide knowledge about a large number of issues, such as product quality, prices, sales, availability and other pieces of useful information for themselves and other consumers. (Higie, Feick and Price, 1987). Furthermore, they have been shown to possess important data of a large kind of products, including durable and non-durable. And, they are often more accurate in their service quality evaluation than non-mavens (Engelland, Hopkins and Larson, 2001).

Market maven profile is normally a female marginally lower educated and are heavy users of coupons, grocery lists and budgeting tactics (Feick and Price, 1987). Thus, they encourage others to use coupons because they usually give them away four more times than non-mavens. (Price, Feick and Guskey-Federouch, 1988). Also, they spend much time and money in shopping places than other consumers and tend to be innovative (Goldsmith, Flynn and Goldsmith, 2003).

Apart from the media consumption, market mavens have a sense of obligation to inform others about services, products and other issues of the marketplace. Associated to this action, it is the feeling of pleasure mavens experiment when they help other consumers with their market info. (Walsh, Gwinner and Swanson, 2004).

This special characteristic of maven's personality becomes them in influencers, creators of tendencies and a way to bring a product to success. For example, a hotel or a holiday destination will get more clients and prestige if they are recommended for a maven of tourism.

Responsible tourism development must cover both the different needs of the consumers and the supply management, and how their behaviors can be managed successfully. (Jamrozny, Backman and Backman, 1996).

As Ryan (1991) underlined, the value of targeting interested consumers with honest and important product information is very relevance. Then, Reid and Crompton (1993) developed the idea of a relationship of involvement and decision-making paradigms and said that purchasers of leisure services are more likely to have a high level of involvement, and that they consume a bigger amount of time and effort in searching, participating and evaluating different activities.

Therefore, given these considerations, and taking into account that market mavens play a leadership role among purchasers, discuss about different services and products, give information of quality and price, and even they give advice to other buyers about their purchase decisions, we can say that they could be an important tool in the promotion of the tourism market in Spain.

2. Characteristics of market mavens.

Market mavens, as experts with marketplace information and acting within the market as influencers on other consumers, they share characteristics like opinion leadership with other experts such as early adopters and opinion leaders. Otherwise, they have their own characteristics that let us differentiate them from other consumers. Then, we can affirm it is necessary to study in depth market mavens' traits in order to identify them clearly.

In the next lines it is going to be analyzed some general characteristics such as demographic ones, media consumption used by mavens to seek information and other important aspects of these experts of marketplace.

Furthermore, I am going to investigate those individuals identified as mavens and different aspects that shape their personality and how these personal traits can influence their interaction with others inside the market.

And finally, taking into account that many of the researches about market mavens have been focused on the demographic and personal characteristics, and the knowledge about their psychological influences is limited, I am trying to study deeper through this section the personal influences of these consumers in order to understand better their behavior.

Then, this section will be presented as follows:

1. General characteristics
2. Personality traits
3. Psychological influence

2.1. General characteristics

Demographics

Many studies have been conducted on the profile of the market maven, but it has been difficult to define the demographic characteristics of the mavens (Laughlin and MacDonald, 2010). In fact, there is no accordance between the different authors about this issue (Goldsmith, Flynn and Goldsmith, 2003). This aspect inside market mavens features is the least known and studied, and therefore, the one with less information provided.

Despite the fact that market mavens share quite similarities with opinion leaders and early purchasers, some specific characteristics have been joined to be more of a maven.

In the study led by Feick and Price in 1987 based on a sample in the U.S.A., they determined that there were a higher percentage of individuals considered market mavens who were black individuals and more likely to be female. On the other hand, Abratt, Nel and Nezer (1995) in South Africa and Walsh et al. (2002) in Germany, supported that there is a tendency in the profile of these consumers to be male. Some years before, Slama and Williams (1990) said there are no differences between genders.

Also, others have said that mavens are in possession of a lower cultural level of education than other consumers (Higie, Feick and Price 1987) and that they are slightly younger than the average (Williams and Slama, 1995).

Following the line mentioned above, about the little information held about this point, even some authors attempt to affirm that this demographic knowledge related to market mavens can be modified through time and the different cultures, so it cannot be considered as general for mavenism (Wiedman, Walsh and Mitchell, 2001).

Considering that these reflections are not totally reliable insofar as there is no consensus and this information is not completely proved, it cannot be considered as useful data for marketing to develop a strategy.

Information seeking and media consumption

It is known market mavens are characterized for being vivid seekers of information, something that become them in a source of useful knowledge for every person interested in marketplace. But what is their media consumption? Where do they collect these data from?

Market mavens are heavier users of television, consumer reports and advertisements, and read considerably more magazines than non-mavens (Feick and Price, 1987); moreover, female mavens read more house making magazines (Higie et al., 1987).

Furthermore, they are more interested in direct mail (Schneider and Rodgers, 1993) and use the Internet and, normally, visit more music sites than other consumers (Walsh et al., 2002).

They are known also, as great lovers of shopping and they usually look for sales and promotional offers such as coupons. This is a remarkable characteristic of mavens: they are great consumers of coupons (Price et al., 1988). And they not only consume coupons but also, they enjoy giving them away to other consumers.

In addition, they use to be careful with their expenditures and try to calculate how many money they can waste before going shopping. That is the reason why they are named as “smart shoppers”. But they also are worried about quality, something very important for them, so a market maven always looks for a good price-quality product in order to reach the best in their decision-making (Williams and Slama, 1995). Related to this, it is known they are characterized for being big consumers of brands, more than super store buyers (Elliott and Warfield, 1993). Hence, it can be said that they have a high level of perception of price and quality (Liechtenstein and Burton, 1990).

Spreading the information: word of mouth communication

The most reliable source of information for consumers is word of mouth (WOM) communication and it is, actually, this via of communication which experts as market mavens, opinion leaders and innovators use for spreading their knowledge.

In the marketing literature the term word of mouth communication is known as “the oral, person-to-person communication between a receiver and a communicator whom the receiver perceives as non-commercial, regarding a brand, product or service” (Buttle, F., 1998). It is considered WOM communication more credible than marketing or advertising because it doesn't led to any financial gain (Bansal et al., 2000).

Consumers look for WOM communication when they need information (Mangold et al., 1999). It is been suggested that WOW arose because of the discussions consumers initiated about their services experiences (Susskind, A.M., 2002). Probably, the reason of its origin is the fact that services, as intangible, cannot be evaluated until their consumption (Berry and Parasuraman, 1991). Thus, these experiences influence positively or negatively in the purchase decision making of other consumers.

In addition, it is said that they engage more discussions about services than products and, these talks are more probably to be about goods and services which they are highly involved in (Westbrook, R.A., 1987) and that give them a motivational experience (Gelb and Johnson, 1995).

Market mavens as seekers of information have the necessity to share their knowledge with others. Gelb and Johnson (1995) argued that people socializing with these market mavens has a high probability to act according to their WOM.

Through this exchange of marketplace information via word of mouth, the deliverer of the message is experiencing personal benefits such as the feeling of being socially respected, others considering him/her an expert or simply the pleasure of sharing information (Fitzmaurice and Comegys, 2006).

2.2. Personality traits

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is considered a personal trait and one definition of global self-esteem can be “an overall estimate of general self-worth; a level of self-acceptance or respect for oneself; a trait or tendency relatively stable and enduring, composed of all subordinate traits and characteristics within the self” (Guindon, 2002). More in general, we can say it is in which extent we have a positive attitude towards ourselves (Rosenberg, 1965). Not everybody has high self-esteem and that attitude can be, in some cases, more negative than positive, which lead to have a low self-esteem.

More often than not, if people don't pay attention to what we say, that make us feel bad with ourselves. On the other hand, we feel very pleased if someone listens with attention and interest what we are saying and that attitude give us a little more of self-confidence.

When you are highly self-confident, then you, normally, feel comfortable with your appearance, attributes, behavior, etc.

Self-esteem is said to be joined to market mavens features. It is been demonstrated that people with a high self-esteem are more likely to be opinion leaders. As we know, market mavens love to be asked by others for information and to be seen as influencers for other consumers, because then they reaffirm that feeling and also, secure their self-esteem.

Tendency to conform

Clark and Goldsmith (2005) defined tendency to conform as “a global, enduring personality trait in which the individual is predisposed to acquiesce to social norms prescribed by reference groups that are relevant and important to the individual”.

As it was said before in this study, market mavens establish consumption norms among consumers. A maven interact in the marketplace under stipulated norms created inside his-her group and it is unlikely that they are going to change their

behavior and deviant from the consumption norms. Consumers use to look for opinions that are similar to theirs and they value those buyers whose behavior inside the market is similar too (Rogers, 1995).

Therefore, knowing that market mavens pursue the recognition of others, it is understandable that they will seek the information that others demand and set their behavior following social norms.

Sociability/Extraversion

This personality trait is assumed to be an intrinsic characteristic of market mavens since they have a highly social activity inside the marketplace; they are socially oriented and enjoy initiating discussions with others and sharing their information (Mooradian, 1996). Extroverts are more likely to share their opinion about products and services (Briggs-Meyer and McCaulley, 1989). Also, they are considered as talkative, assertive and active. They like people and be part of big groups (Costa and McCrae, 1992).

Materialism

Most of times, consumer's desire of purchasing is associated with the need of material goods (Richins, 1994). The materialist consumer is more interested in the physical aspects of products (Gountas, 2003) and as market mavens, they are more precise analyzing different aspects of their material acquisitions such as colors, texture, weaves, grain, etc and difference and distinguish between the characteristics of a product or another (Briggs-Meyers and McCaulley, 1989). Also, they are more acute valuing the quality and store attributes of products and services (Engelland et al., 2001).

Innovativeness

Market mavens are interested in new products in order to be the first to know about the last manufacture in the market. If any information is available about new products, they are the first to know about (Levy, 1978). They are likely to share more

innovative and new information, and, especially this tendency it is more present when we talk about food and beverages (Slama and Williams, 1990).

2.3. Psychological influences

Consumer Involvement

Involvement is a characteristic that can be use for measure how important or interesting is a product for a consumer and, consumer involvement can refer to the attitude that a person has towards a specific product (Guthrie and Kim, 2009). These explanations of involvement and consumer involvement are quite general but many definitions are been stated regarding the area of study.

For instance, Rothschild (1984) made the following definition of involvement: “a state of motivation, arousal or interest...]. Its consequences are searching, processing and decision making”.

It is important to say that this term has its base in the concept ego involvement, which refers to purchaser’s association with an object. Ego involvement occurs when something has a personal meaning or arouses strong feelings to someone (Sherif et al., 1965).

In this case, market mavens are consumers with a high involvement inside the marketplace because they feel a sense of obligation to share their information with others, and they like to help other consumers in their purchase decisions (Walsh et al., 2004). They have such a strong social involvement that makes them to initiate discussions about products and services of the marketplace with other consumers (Feick and Price, 1987). Moreover, they feel important people and needed by others and, that feeling create an intrinsic pleasure inside them.

Also, some authors talk about enduring involvement, which suggests that a consumer highly involved in the marketplace could, more probably, play the role of opinion leader (Chan and Misra, 1990). When a product is very important for you and you identify yourself with this issue, appears the feeling of seeking all the information

related to this object and also, the enthusiasm for sharing this knowledge with others (Venkatraman, 1988).

Hence, thanks to their strong involvement inside the market and due to the fact that they dominate interesting information about a wide range of products, market mavens represent an important source of knowledge for retailers and other consumers (Clark and Goldsmith, 2005). They are seen as influencers for consumers and establish consumption norms among them.

Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence

Bearden, Netemeyer and Teel (1989) defined consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence as “the need to identify or enhance one’s image with significant others through the acquisition and use of products and brands, the willingness to conform to the expectations of others regarding purchase decisions and/or the tendency to learn about products and services by observing others and/or seeking information from others”.

Interpersonal influence is classified in two dimensions: normative influence and informational influence. Normative influence can be interpreted as the tendency to conform to the expectations of other members of the group (Burnkrant and Cousineau, 1975). And informational influence can be defined as the tendency to perceive the information obtained from others as real (Deutsch and Gerard, 1955).

It is known that mavenism is characterized by individuals that share information with others and give advices about purchase decisions inside the marketplace. But, we don’t know if, at the same time, market mavens feel uncertainty about their information and need to obtain information from others or if they are influenced by other consumers. Neither if they consider information of other purchasers as trustworthy, reliable or true for them. Then, it is not possible to affirm that informational influence affects market mavens in a positive way.

On the other hand, market mavens have a tendency to conform to social norms, to adjust their seeking of information according to the demand of the group members and to satisfy the expectations of these consumers. They perform the role of social communicator among consumer so that, they cannot break with social norms (Rogers, 1995). So, we can say that tendency to conform and consumer susceptibility to normative influence are two aspects directly related between them and both affect positively to market mavens (Clark and Goldsmith, 2005).

Consumer Need for Power

The concept need for power is defined as “a desire for the means of influencing other people” (McClelland, 1962).

French and Raven (1959) divided power into five distinct forms: coercive, reward, legitimate, referent and expert power. Individuals that have a wide range of information and who want to share it with others, possess also, the capacity of influence over those who receive their data in order to act as they do. Thus, since the referent power refers to someone who has the power to someone else want to be like him/her and wield, as a social leader, a power of influence over the group; and the expert power is the capacity of having something that anyone else wants, we can affirm that these notions can be applied to market maven.

Consumer Need for Uniqueness

This concept is described as “the trait of pursuing differences relative to others through the acquisition, utilization and disposition of consumer goods for the purpose of developing and enhancing one’s self-image and social image” (Tian et al., 2001).

Market mavens often are sought out for marketplace information and they are very involved in the task of satisfy the demand of other consumers and feel very self-confident about their knowledge. So then, it seems contradictory that they could feel need for uniqueness, since they see themselves as unique and different from non-mavens.

But, is precisely the knowledge that they are seen as an information source what makes them need to distinguish from others through their purchase choices. And they do it across established social norms, otherwise they wouldn't be asked for information. In this way, probably, they base their uniqueness in consumption norms (Clark and Goldsmith, 2005).

3. Tourism market: the importance of mavens for promotion.

Tourism is an activity of special importance for any country or population economy, as to it belongs a great part of the active population and it is an important source of income too. Since the tourist boom beginning in the 60s, tourism has helped Spain and, in particular, Andalusia for its weather conditions and landscape full of beautiful beaches, to develop and they became as preferred destinations in Europe.

Nowadays, Spanish economy has a strongly dependence of tourism market so that it is not strange to think that the promotion of destinations as Andalusia which is in fact, one of the favorite destinations for travelers when visit Spain, especially when seeking for sun and beach vacation, is an important point to develop successfully. It is important then to be informed about the needs and expectations of the potential tourists and also, to know their evaluation of their service experiences in order to implement the fittest marketing strategy.

3.1. Factors affecting tourists' purchase decision

Considering that tourism is based in the acquisition of intangible goods and taking in account that most of times these services cannot be evaluated until after their consumption, it is reasonable to think that people making the decision of travelling are interested in knowing the experiences of other consumers. Fodness and Murray (1997) defined the tourist information search concept as “a dynamic process wherein individuals use various amounts and types of information sources in response to internal and external contingencies to facilitate travel planning”. During the process of selecting useful information called tourist pre-trip decision process by Cai et.al (2004) appears a state of motivation in tourists that makes them need to get information of the final destination in order to make their purchase decision in a safety way. This state of motivation is known as consumer involvement.

Many authors have attempted to define this term but is Havitz and Dimanche (1990) who reviewed the concept of involvement in the tourism field and set the following

interesting definition: "Involvement is a psychological state of motivation, arousal or interest between an individual and recreational activities, tourist destinations, or related equipment, at one point in time, characterized by the perception of the following elements: importance, pleasure, value, sing value, risk probability, and risk consequences". Touristic services are characterized for being high involvement products since they have a bigger risk and they are associated with more information search and different sources of information (Laurent and Kapferer, 1985). And this specially fits with leisure travel packages (Berry and Yadav, 1996). Walsh and Gwinner (2009) found out, in their study of consumers of television shopping, that people wish to reduce the perceived risk through visual information before purchasing vacation packages. Also, it has been found that consumers reduce their uncertainty of risk by acquiring more information (Mitchell and McGoldrick, 1996).

Depending on the level of involvement in the purchase decision process, tourist will seek for information in a different way and consequently, they will have different perceptions of the services, their promotion and will have a distinct attitude towards the product (Josiam et al., 1999). Individuals with a high involvement are those who considered the purchase very important and seek for information in order to know the different alternatives existing. On the other hand, those with a low involvement do not consider so much relevance their purchase, so then they do look for little information or a not useful one (Rothschild, 1984).

Vacation, as an emotional experience, plays an important role in the decision making process.

Different authors suggest that highly involved consumers are more likely to spread the information of their experiences and probably they influence others in their decision making process (Feick and Price, 1987; Richins and Root-Shaffer, 1988). Also, some studies have suggested that involvement is applied to psychological experiences such as occurs in the tourism field (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; McIntyre, 1992; Selin and Howard, 1992).

Moreover, taking into account the special relevance of interpersonal communication inside the services sector, it can be said that exists a relationship between involvement and opinion leadership. For instance, Venkatraman (1988) said that tourists highly involved in the market are very important in the diffusion process.

3.2. Importance of market mavens for tourism promotion

In terms of promotion, some studies have suggested that opinion leadership play an essential role in the success of a management strategy (Jamrozy et al, 1996). For example, Fliegel (1993) developed the theory that opinion leaders, firstly, gets new ideas and then through their reputation and knowledge spread the information among interested consumers. Jamrozy et al., (1996) in their study of involvement and opinion leadership in tourism found out that those who feel pleasure through the different experiences and these are important for them, are more likely to be opinion leaders. Furthermore, those with a high opinion leadership behavior buy more travel holidays than other consumers and use more information sources. And they also affirmed that highly involved nature-oriented tourists concerning to the tourism destination, would be more receptive and spread the information with relish. Finally, Richins and Root-Shaffer (1988) identified in their study the relationship between enduring and situational environment, opinion leadership and word of mouth communication and affirmed that tourism marketers are probably interested in how opinion leaders spread the information, if they give advices about products, services or destinations and if they give news about family or emerging destinations.

Given these considerations, we can say that tourism is a sector in which the implication of market mavens has an important role for its diffusion and promotion. As an activity with a high risk perception and taking into account the intangibility of the services, consumers need the opinion and evaluation of reliable people with more accurate information for those tourists who are not sure of their decision and need a little push to make a final decision.

Market mavenism consists of individuals highly involved in the market, with a great amount of information about it and also is a clear example of opinion leadership among consumers using word of mouth communication media. In addition, unlike other individuals of high leadership behavior, mavens are not necessarily consumers of all products that they have information, what become them in a more powerful target for marketing strategies than early adopters or opinion leaders.

4. Method

Following the previous information, I have tried to focus this study in tourism industry, still little investigated in relation with market mavens, because these expert consumers have a strong potential to become important tools for tourist destinations. After have been analyzed all the characteristics related to market mavens and knowing better their personal traits and behavior inside the marketplace and among consumers, I have carried out a survey study in order to reveal the market mavens' attitude towards tourism industry and especially, Spanish destinations.

4.1. Sample

The empirical study is based on the survey data included in the Flash Eurobarometer 334 Attitudes of Europeans towards Tourism in 2012, carried out by the consortium TNS Political & Social between the 10th and 14th of January 2012. This survey was requested by the European Commission and covers the resident population of the 27 Member States of the European Union and aged 15 years and over. All the respondents were interviewed using the TNS e-call Center and all the participants were called both on fixed lines and mobile phones.

The basic sample applied in all countries is a multi-state random. TNS has developed its own RDD sample generation capabilities based on using contact telephone numbers from responders to random probability or random location face to face surveys, such as Eurobarometer, as seed numbers. These seed numbers identifies the effective numbers and eliminate those that will not work. Then, the seed numbers are stratified in order to get a geographic representative sample.

The sample counts with a total of 30.594 interviewees but for this study I have used only the sampling constituted by the respondents of Germany and United Kingdom, as countries with highest emission of tourists to Spain. The sample of Germany consists in 1500 interviews and the United Kingdom's sample compiles 1498 respondents. Thus, the representative sample in this study has a total of 2998 respondents. The survey includes questions related to the behavior of respondents

towards tourism and socio-demographic features such as sex, gender, occupation, region, etc.

In the table 1, we can observe the representative characteristics of the sample and the procedure followed.

Table 1: characteristics of the sample

Sample	
Date	Between 10-14 th of January 2012
Geographical scope	Germany and United Kingdom
Sample size	1500 + 1498 = 2998 respondents
Sampling procedure	Interviews made through both fixed lines and mobile phones.
Confidence level	95% (margin of error, 0,6%)

Source: own elaboration

4.2. Procedure and variables

This is a descriptive research as its purpose is the description of the attitude of the population of Germany and the United Kingdom towards tourism and specially, towards Spain as a tourist destination. This research has a simple cross design because the information was collected once and from only one sample of the target population. The analysis is quantitative as it uses numerical information and it is based in the statistic data obtained from the Flash Eurobarometer 334 questionnaire.

The information obtained through the survey is primary information needed for determined the behavior of the target population towards tourism. The questionnaire used to carry out this survey can be classified as an Ad-hoc questionnaire through telephone interviews. This kind of questionnaire saves time and money and ensures responses usually more reliable than surveys conducted via Internet or email, for instance.

The questions of this study are structured in two groups:

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1. Socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, age, region, occupation or education.
2. Behavioral characteristics such as types of accommodation used during holidays, destination country, motivations for travelling, methods used to arrange the holidays or the reasons to repeat destination.

In order to obtain the results, I have to make a statistic analysis taking in account the characteristics of the variables and the results that I want to reach to:

- Indicators: are those which define the different groups.
- Covariates: are those socio-demographic variables that characterize the composition of latent classes.

For a better view of the different variables used in the survey, the classification of the different questions is shown in table 2.

Table 2: Types of variables

<i>Indicators</i>
Q3 Thinking only about your personal holidays, how many times did you stay for a minimum of four nights in the following types of accommodation?
Q6 What were your main reasons to go on holidays in 2011?
Q8 In 2011, how many times did you go on any of the following types of holiday?
Q9 Did you arrange your holidays in 2011 using any of the following methods?
Q10 Which of the following would make you go back to the same place for a holiday?
Q13 In 2012, which of the following type of holidays do you plan to take?
<i>Covariates</i>
D1 How old are you?
D2 Gender

D4 How old were you when you stopped you full-time education?
D5 As far as you current occupation is concerned, would you say you are a self-employed, an employee, a manual worker or would you say that you are without a professional activity? Does it mean that you are a (n)...?
D13 Woul you say you live in a...?
Q5 Did you visit Spain in 2011?
Q14 Do you plan to take your holidays in Spain in 2012?

Source: own elaboration

Latent Class Cluster Analysis

The analysis of the data has been carried out using the Latent Class Cluster Analysis method, one of the most famous and used in marketing research to segmenting groups. Cluster analysis is a technique which classifies similar objects or individuals into groups, where the number of groups and their properties are unknown (Kaufman and Rosseeuw, 1990; Everitt, 1993). In this clustering model-based, the objects under study are generated by a mixture of probability distributions, with one component to each group (Zhang, 2004). When the characteristics of these objects are categorical, which is the case of this survey, cluster analysis is defined as a latent class analysis (Bartholomew and Knott, 1999).

The latent class model begins by selecting one independence class model to the data, followed by a two, three model, etc until it is found the class or group that fits the best (Goodman, 1974a, 1974b).

Then, in order to obtain the best number of groups, Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), a model selection criterion based on likelihood, which is designed to identify the true model (de Graft Acquah, 2010), was selected.

5. Results

5.1. Identification of segments

In order to reach the optimal solution for this survey, many models can be used such as AIC, BIC or AWE. According to these criteria information, the optimal model is the one for which the value of the information criterion is minimized. Finally, I have selected the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) for being the most used in Latent Class analysis (Vertmund and Magidson, 2002).

As I mentioned above, I have selected a sample of 2998 respondents from Germany (1500) and the United Kingdom (1498) from a total of 30.594 interviewees belonging to the 27 European Union member states. Then, taking into account the sample I have proceeded to segment it through the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) for getting the ideal number of clusters (segments). As it is shown in Table 3, the optimal number of cluster is 3, so that will be the number of segments studied.

Table 3: Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC)

	BIC(LL)	Npar	L ²	df	p-value	Class.Err.
Cluster 1	103241,003	89	71591,2553	1944	1,4e-13605	0
Cluster 2	102288,495	139	70257,8838	1894	4,7e-13363	0,075
Cluster 3	101444,981	189	69033,5061	1844	1,3e-13143	0,1129
Cluster 4	101381,984	239	68589,6458	1794	3,2e-13089	0,1597
Cluster 5	101383,906	289	68210,7047	1744	9,5e-13049	0,1358
Cluster 6	101380,709	339	67826,6444	1694	2,1e-13007	0,1701
Cluster 7	101502,582	389	67567,6536	1644	9,4e-12993	0,1657
Cluster 8	101540,485	439	67224,6939	1594	1,5e-12960	0,1725
Cluster 9	101787,053	489	67090,3982	1544	7,2e-12973	0,1729
Cluster 10	101796,817	539	66719,2991	1494	3,2e-12935	0,1584

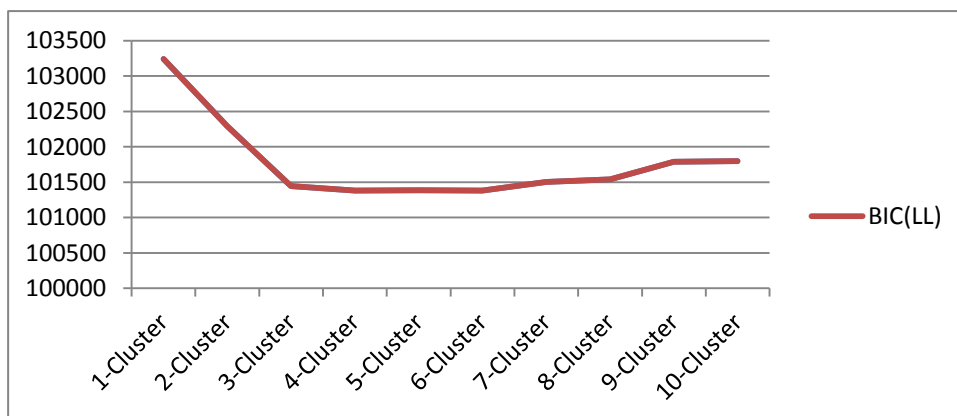
Source: own elaboration

Caption

- **BIC (LL):** Bayesian Information Criterion based on log-likelihood.
- **Npar:** number of parameters.
- **L²:** risk function.
- **Df:** number of observations that can vary along a constant parameter.
- **P-value:** probability of obtaining a result of a null hypothesis that is assumed true.
- **Classification error:** it shows how long the value of the sample from its exact value is.

Also, we can observe the segmentation of the sample in Graphic 1 where it is shown that the optimal solution is three clusters. At this point (cluster 3) the line suffers a flattening indicating that this solution is the most correct.

Graphic 1: Optimal solution according to BIC



Source: own elaboration

5.2. Behavioral characterization of the segments

Using the tourism indicators, which define the different groups of German and British tourists, a characterization of the respondents' behavior has been carried out. In order to know the attitude of these respondents towards tourism, Table 4 shows the number of people (absolute number and percentages) using different types of accommodation, the kind of vacation packages they buy, how they book their holidays, motivations for travel, etc.

Table 4: Behavioral characterization of the segments

Variables	Indicators	Segment 1	Segment 2	Segment 3
Q3 Types of accommodation	Q3_1 Paid accommodation	64,1% (943)	89,56% (862)	53,11% (299)
	Q3_2 In own property/second home	16,98% (249)	11,25% (108)	16,28% (91)
	Q3_3 At friends or relatives	31,86% (468)	23,01% (221)	53,35% (300)
	Q3_4 On a camping site	16,47% (242)	6,81% (65)	12,08% (68)
	Q3_5 In another type of location	16,59% (244)	16,37% (157)	12,15% (68)
Q6 Main	Q6_1 Sun/beach	30,14% (443)	38,39% (369)	6,92% (38)
	Q6_2 Rest/recreation			

reasons for going on holidays	(including Wellness/health treatment)	50,47% (742)	55,17% (531)	37,17% (209)
	Q6_3 Spending time with your family	37,36% (549)	21,35% (205)	32,39% (182)
	Q6_4 City trips	18,28% (269)	15,61% (150)	5,39% (30)
	Q6_5 Sports related	15,19% (223)	8,03% (77)	4,95% (27)
	Q6_6 Nature	20,50% (301)	18,31% (176)	13,56% (76)
	Q6_7 Culture/religion	14,79% (217)	8,49% (178)	8,55% (48)
	Q6_8 Visiting friends/relatives	25,58% (376)	14,90% (143)	48,29% (271)
	Q6_9 Other	1,01% (14)	2,89% (27)	4,86% (27)
	Q6_10 DK/NA	0,18% (3)	0,00% (0)	0,83% (5)
		Q8_1 All inclusive holiday	20,77% (305)	55,21% (531)

Q8 Types of holidays	(transport+accommodation+food)			
	Q8_2 Package Tour (Transport+accommodation)	21,74% (320)	55,64% (535)	6,19% (34)
	Q8_3 Segments of tourist service arranged separately	69,33%(1020)	44,83% (431)	47,94% (269)
Q9 Methods used to arrange your holidays	Q9_1 The Internet	88,61%(1304)	32,40% (312)	28,19% (158)
	Q9_2 Over the phone	28,21% (415)	22,53% (216)	23,92% (134)
	Q9_3 Through a travel agency	10,29% (151)	71,50% (688)	6,94% (39)
	Q9_4 Through someone you know	19,62% (288)	14,77% (142)	30,04% (169)
Q9 Methods used to arrange your holidays	Q9_5 Over the counter of a transportation company	4,68% (68)	7,61% (73)	4,86% (27)
		10,10% (148)	6,86% (66)	7,42% (41)

	Q9_6 On-site	0,23% (3)	3,14% (30)	(79) 14,19%
	Q9_7 Other	0,00% (0)	0,16% (2)	7,85% (44)
	Q9_8 DK/NA			
Q10 Reasons to go back to the same place	Q10_1 The quality of accommodation	54,69% (805)	50,39% (485)	22,51% (126)
	Q10_2 The natural features	58,30% (858)	59,16% (569)	37,11% (208)
	Q10_3 The general level of prices	37,05% (545)	28,65% (275)	14,67% (82)
	Q10_4 The activities offered	24,89% (366)	19,69% (189)	8,09% (45)
	Q10_5 How tourist are welcomed	31,11% (457)	31,44% (302)	11,03% (62)
	Q10_6 Other	2,39%	5,35% (51)	24,15% (135)
	Q10_7 DK/NA	1,38% (20)	2,74% (26)	15,81% (89)
	Q12_1 Personal	41,89% (616)	32,36% (311)	38,89% (218)

Q12 The most important information sources for you when planning your holidays	experience			
	Q12_2 Recommendations of friends, colleagues or relatives	55,86% (822)	48,67% (468)	48,34% (272)
	Q12_3 Paid for guidebooks, magazines	13,22% (194)	7,98% (76)	3,37% (18)
	Q12_4 Free catalogues, brochures	9,85% (144)	24,92% (239)	10,48% (59)
	Q12_5 Internet websites	63,85% (939)	26,23% (252)	18,39% (103)
	Q12_6 Social media sites	6,55% (96)	4,65% (44)	4,00% (22)
	Q12_7 Travel/tourist agencies	4,34% (63)	35,66% (343)	10,20% (57)
	Q12_8 Newspaper, radio, TV	6,99% (102)	7,50% (72)	6,62% (37)
	Q12_9 Other	0,61% (8)	0,66% (6)	2,50% (14)

	Q12_10 DK/NA	0,20% (3)	1,88% (18)	6,75% (38)
Q13 Which type of holidays you plan to take in 2012	Q13_1 Holidays with more than 13 consecutive nights	33,37% (491)	30,10% (289)	25,75% (144)
	Q13_2 Holidays between 4 and 13 consecutive nights	70,11%(1032)	60,37% (581)	37,16% (209)
	Q13_3 Short-stay trip (up to 3 nights)	47,79% (703)	27,45% (264)	21,90% (123)
	Q13_4 Not decisions yet	3,05% (44)	9,44% (90)	18,32% (103)
	Q13_5 Not trip at all	3,17% (46)	4,67% (44)	11,51% (64)
	Q13_6 DK/NA	0,13 (2)	1,25% (12)	1,46% (8)

Source: own elaboration

Segment 1: n= 1472 (49, 12%)

The main characteristic of the segment is that the most of the sample arrange their holidays through the Internet with a clear difference with regard to the other options.

Searching in Internet was the media used by 88,61 per cent (1304) of the tourist to plan their vacation. This characteristic is extremely related to the type of holidays arranged. In this case, 69,33 per cent (1020) of the Segment 1 booked the different tourist services separately instead of a package, for example. These services bought in a separate way are those like transport, food or accommodation. For instance, 54,69 per cent (805) consider decisive the quality of the accommodation for going back to the same place. This characteristic is only surpassed by the importance of natural features with 58,30 per cent (858).

Furthermore, the most important information source that influence tourist of Segment 1 for travelling to a location or other with 63,85 per cent (939) is internet websites which confirm the active use of the Internet to plan their holidays. The recommendations of friends, colleagues or relatives are also quite important with 55,86 (822) or self-experience with 41,89 per cent (616).

On the other hand, considering the motivations for going on holidays the highest percentage is vacations for resting or recreation including Wellness or health treatments with 50,47 per cent (742).

And, finally, planning for vacation in 2012, most of the sample, 70,11 per cent (1032), think that they will spend between 4 to 13 consecutive nights on holidays.

Segment 2: n= 963 (32, 11%)

This segment is characterized specially for trusting in the criteria of travel agencies for preparing their holidays. Through a travel agency, 71,50 per cent (688) of people arranged their holidays and, in addition, according to 35,66 per cent (468) of the tourists in Segment 2 trust the most in the information provided by travel agencies when they plan their vacation. Nonetheless, this segment also considers very important the recommendations of friends or relatives when they seek for tourist information.

Another difference with Segment 1 is the kind of holiday's package. While the previous segment prefers to buy the tourist services separately, more than a half of Segment 2 with 55,64 per cent (535) hired a package tour (transport + accommodation) and also, preferred to arrange transport, accommodation and food together buying an all inclusive holiday.

Like the previous segment, with a clear difference paid accommodation with 89,56 per cent (862) was the most popular lodging and the motivation for travelling with 55,17 per cent (531) was rest and recreation too. And, natural features are the most important thing to go back to the same destination, 59,16 per cent (569) affirmed it. Last, thinking about the next holidays, they are planning to spend between 4 to 13 consecutive nights on vacation as well.

Segment 3: n= 563 (18, 77%)

Something that highlights this segment is the important role that friends and relatives play in their vacation. Firstly, in terms of accommodation, 53,35 per cent (300) of the tourists stay at friends or relatives because also, it can be affirmed with 48,29 per cent (271) that their main reason for going on holidays is visiting friends or relatives as well. Moreover, Segment 2 has a clear tendency with 48,34 per cent (272) to trust the most in the recommendations of family and friends also, when preparing the holidays. Also, many of the respondents, 30,04 per cent (169), arranged their holidays through someone they know, who probably is a friend or relative.

On the other hand, as Segment 1 they preferred to buy the difference services forming their vacation in a separate way, with 47,49 per cent (269) of the answers.

And at last, as both previous segments, natural features are very important to go back to the same place and the type of holidays for 2012 is to travel between 4 to 13 consecutive nights, with 37,16 per cent (209).

After analyzing the three different segments, I can conclude that Segment 1 is the one that fits the most to the characteristics of market mavens. As it has been shown

above in Table 4, the sample of Segment 1 has a tendency to use more the Internet than the others segments for planning their holidays for example, visiting actively internet websites and also, they arrange the tourist services separately, all characteristics related to market mavens. Abratt et al. (2002) or Higie et al. (1987) affirmed within their researches, that market mavens use all media in a quite active way, for instance the Internet.

In addition, it can be appreciated the importance of the quality of the accommodation to go back to the same destination, something very considered for mavens, who gives a lot of importance to the quality of the product or services provided.

Finally, it is also important to say that Segment 3 has the potential characteristics to be those who asked for information, since the results show they based their travel decisions on the opinion of others. So then, they would act as people who know and trust on market maven's criteria.

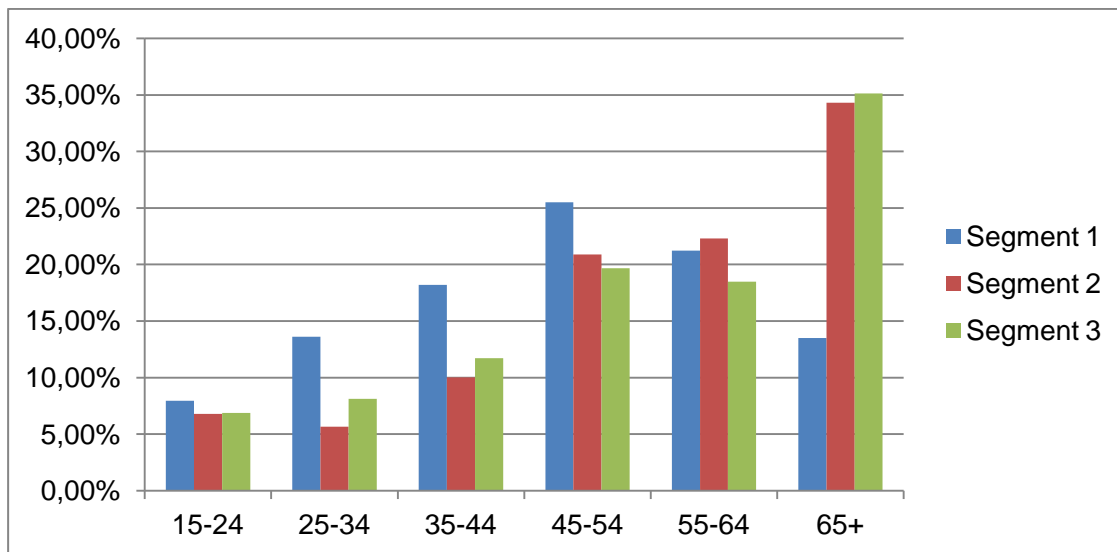
5.3. Characterization of segments according to covariables

Age

According to the results of the age of the respondents, Segment 1 has its highest percentage, over 25, 50 per cent (375), in people between 44 to 54 years old. If we sum the percentages between 15 to 54 years old, we will obtain more than 65%, so we can say that the most of the segment is formed by young people. In return, Segment 2 and Segment 3 show a clear tendency to be formed by people older than 65 years old with 34, 32 per cent (330) and 35, 14 per cent (197) respectively.

Here, it is important to mention that, as it has been identified the Segment 1 profile with a tendency towards mavenism, the results shown above in Graphic 2 exhibit the theory of some authors that affirmed that market mavens are significantly younger than the average (Williams and Slama, 1995; Wiedman et al., 2001; walsh et al., 2002).

Graphic 2: Age of the different segments



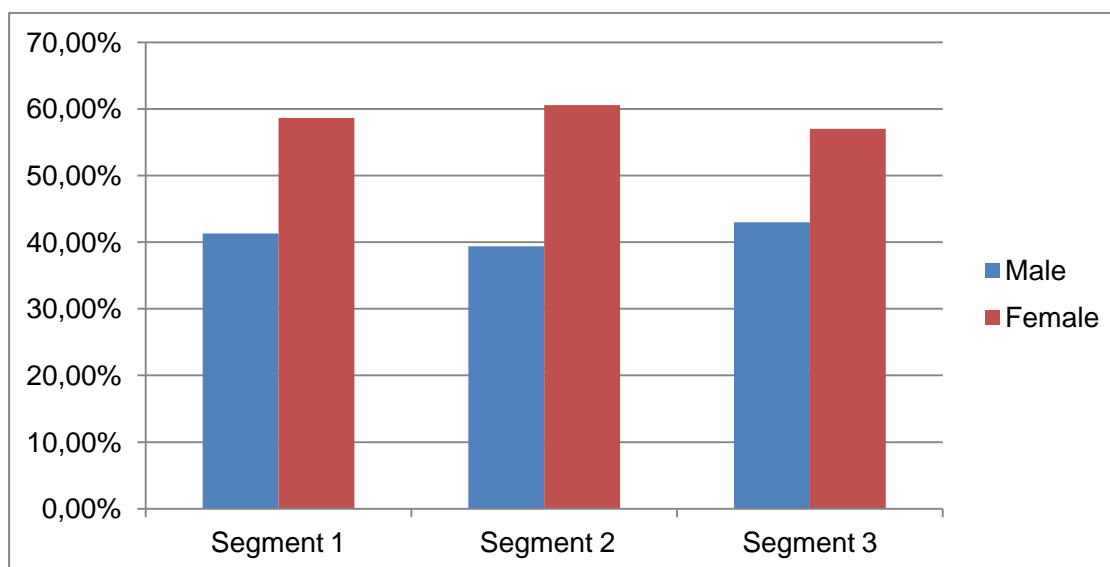
Source: own elaboration

Gender

As it can be seen in Graphic 3, the percentage of women highlights over males. The three segments overcome the half of the sample, with 58,67 per cent (863) for Segment 1, 60,59 per cent (583) for Segment 2 and 57,03 per cent (321) for Segment 3.

This aspect is remarkable because some authors such as Feick and Price (1987), Higie et al. (1987) or Williams and Slama (2001) affirmed in their surveys that market mavens are more likely to be female. Although, it is fair to say that there are no big differences among the three segments.

Graphic 3: Differences according to the gender



Source: own elaboration

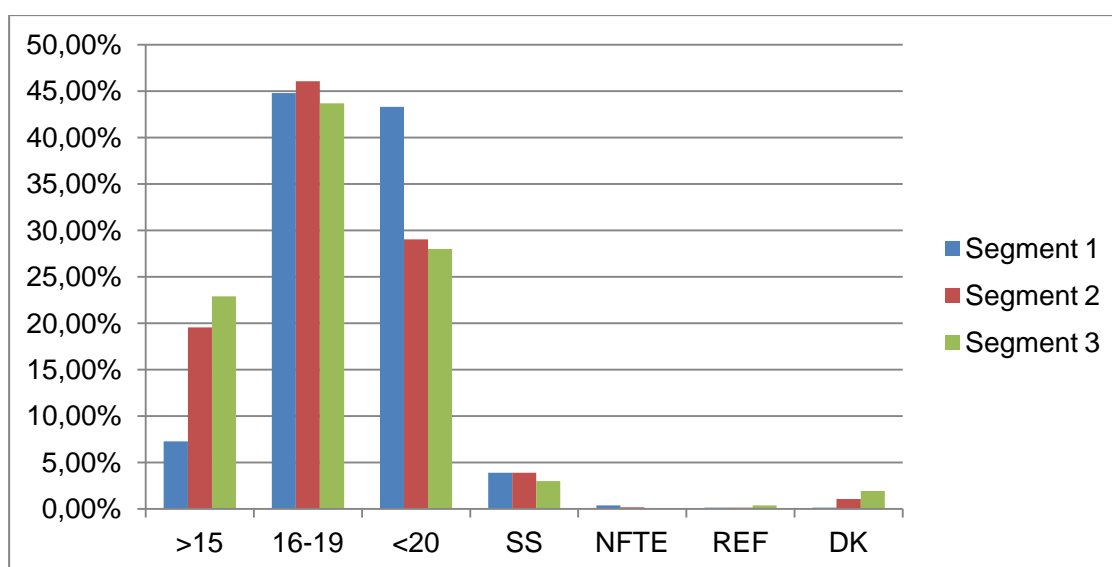
Education

It is important for this research to know the level of education of the respondents because in case of market mavens, many authors like Feick and Price (1987) or Williams and Slama (2005) affirmed through their studies that mavens' education is slightly lower than the average.

As it is shown in Graphic 11, the most of people, 44,80 per cent (659), in Segment 1 finished their studies between 16 to 19 years old, which indicates that probably they have secondary or bachelor education. But we can see also, a high percentage, 43,32 per cent (637), in column <20, which means that they possibly studied a superior degree. So in this case, Segment 1 is quite equilibrate and it cannot be established a tendency. Then, these results doesn't support the hypothesis mentioned above but that of some authors such as Higie et al. (1987), Slama and Williams (1990) or Wiedmann et al. (1991), who said in their surveys that there were not any differences as regards to education. Even, we can say that mavens are likely to be well educated (Brancaleone and Gountas, 2007).

On the other hand, Segment 2 and Segment 3 represent the highest percentages in the column 16-19 years old, 46,08 per cent (444) and 43,70 per cent (246) respectively. Thus, it can be concluded that they have a tendency to be less educated.

Graphic 4: Age of completion of education



Source: own elaboration

Caption

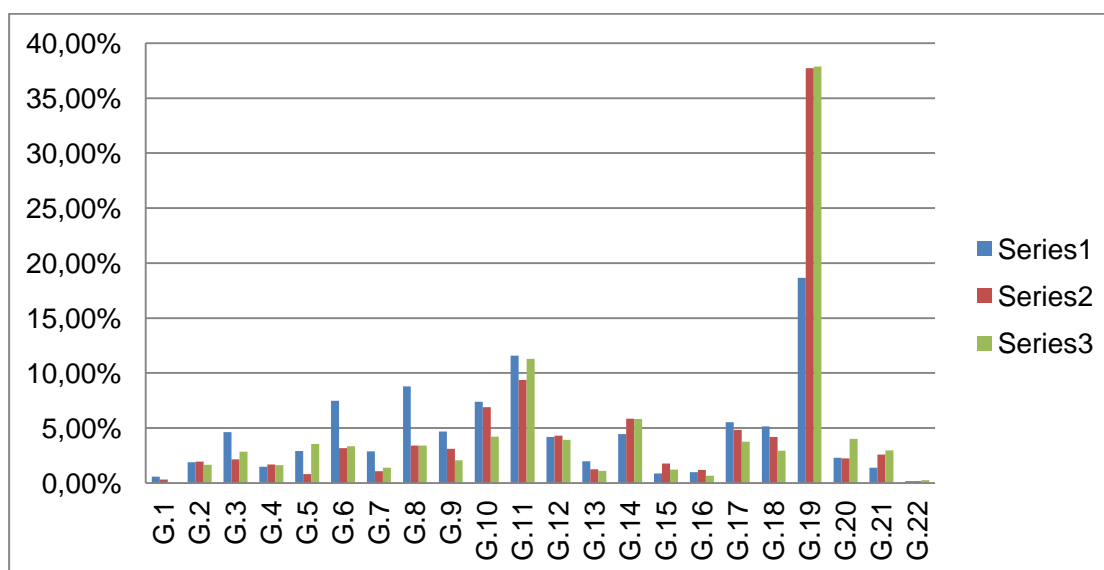
- **>15:** up to 15
- **16-19:** between 16 to 19
- **<20:** greater than 20
- **SS:** Still studying
- **NFTE:** No full-time education
- **REF:** Refusal
- **DK:** Don't know

Occupation

As we can see below in Graphic 13, the three segments coincide in the same result: the respondents of the survey are more likely to be retired. Specially, this characteristic is represent with high percentages in Segment 2 and Segment 3 with 37,72 per cent (363) and the 37, 88 per cent (213) respectively.

In Segment 1, despite the fact that the most of the sample are retired, 18, 65 per cent (274), this percentage is not as high as in the other segments, so, we can see also, signifcant results in options like G11, which refers other type of employee like nurse, salesman, etc.

Graphic 6: Occupation



Source: own elaboration

Caption

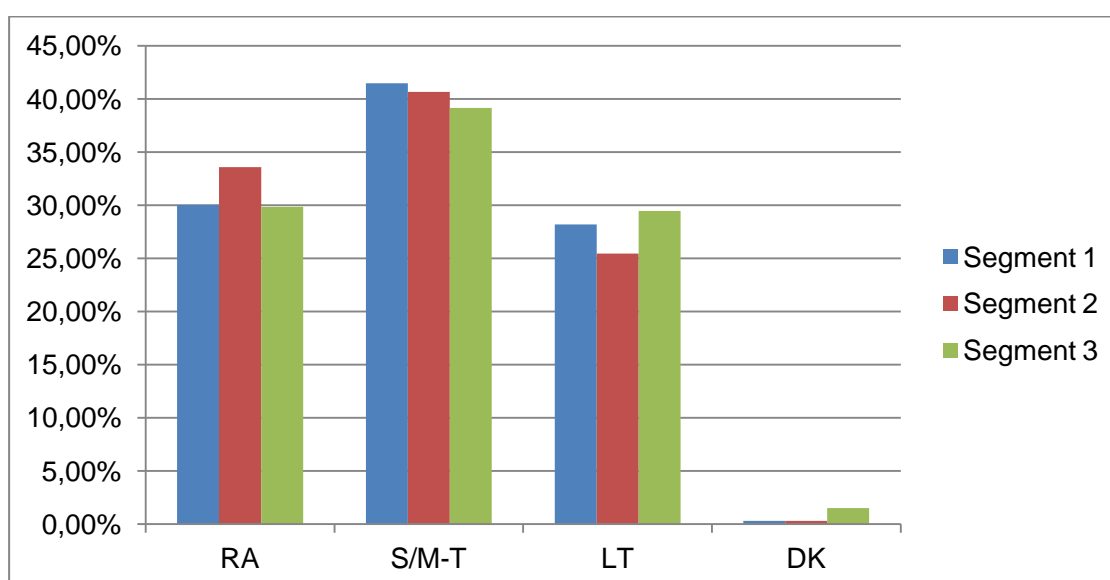
- **G1:** Farmer, forester, fisherman
- **G2:** Owner of shop, craftsman
- **G3:** Professional (employed doctor, lawyer, accountant, architect...)

- **G4:** Manager of a company
- **G5:** Other (Self-employed)
- **G6:** Professional (employed doctor, lawyer, accountant, architect...)
- **G7:** General management, director or top management
- **G8:** Middle management
- **G9:** Civil servant
- **G10:** Office clerk
- **G11:** Other employee (salesman, nurse, etc...)
- **G12:** Other (Employee)
- **G13:** Supervisor/foreman (team manager, etc ...)
- **G14:** Manual worker
- **G15:** Unskilled manual worker
- **G16:** Other (Manual worker)
- **G17:** Looking after the home
- **G18:** Student (full time)
- **G19:** Retired
- **G20:** Seeking a job
- **G21:** Other (Without a professional activity)
- **G22:** Refusal

Housing area

In the Graphic 5, it is shown the type of area where the respondents of the sample live. Most of the interviewees in the three segments affirm to live in a small-medium town, 41,48 per cent (610), 40, 65 per cent (391) and 39,15 per cent (220) respectively. Thus, it can be conclude that there are no differences between the segments according to the housing area.

Graphic 5: Type of area you live



Source: own elaboration

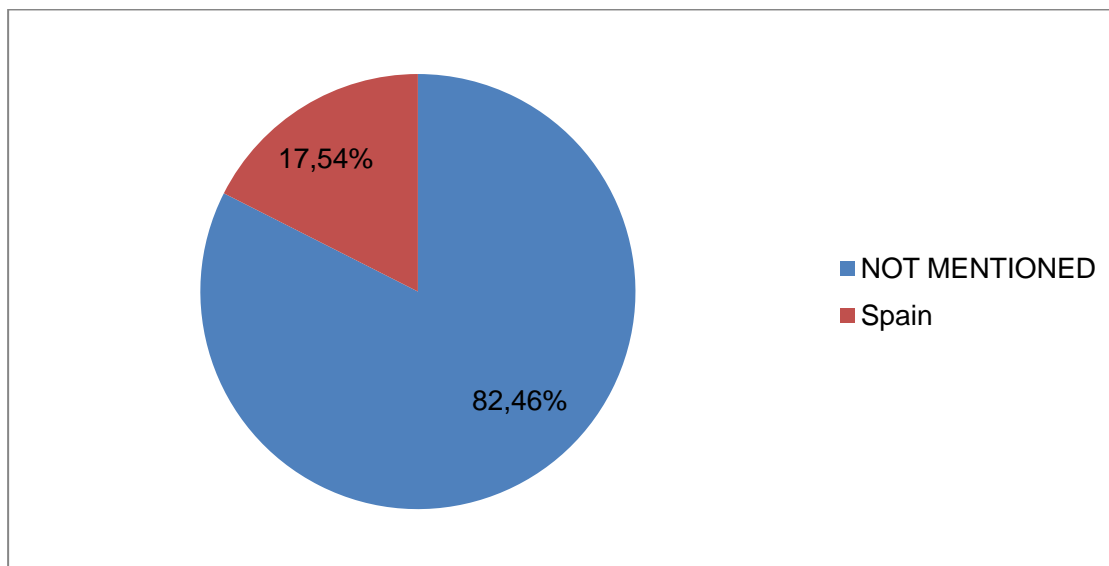
Caption

- **RA:** rural area or village
- **S/M-T:** small or medium-size town
- **LT:** large town or city
- **DK:** Don't know

Spent the holidays in Spain in 2011

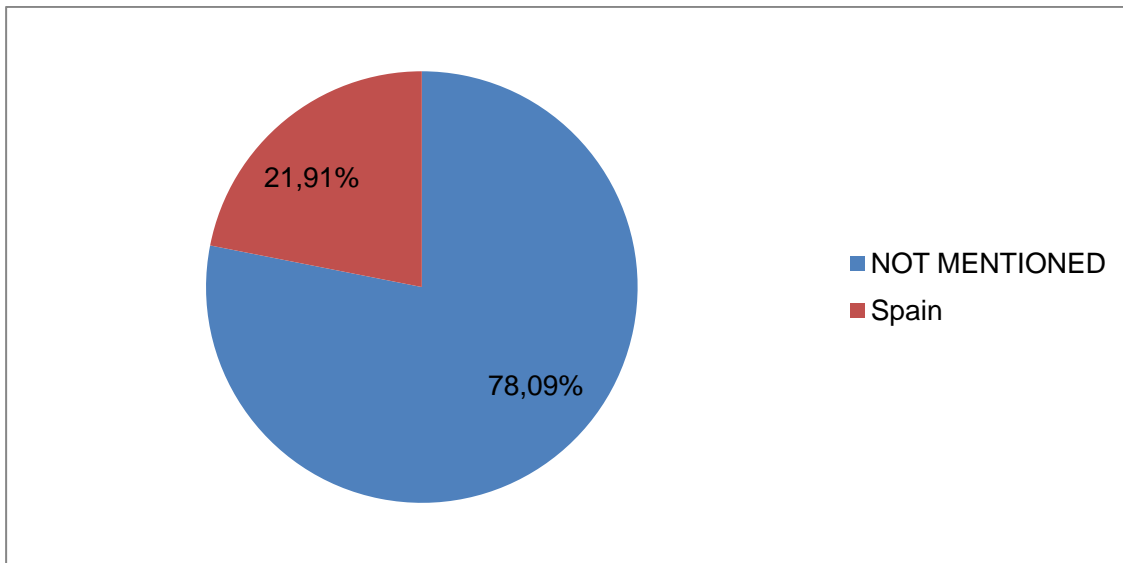
According to this survey, the number of German and British tourists in Segment 1 that visit Spain was 17,54 per cent (258) and 21, 91 per cent (211) in Segment 2. These results are quite positive compared to Segment 3, which only 7, 82 per cent (44) of the respondents visited Spain in 2011 during their holidays. For a better view, see below Graphic 7, Graphic 8 and Graphic 9.

Graphic 7: Visited Spain in 2011 (Segment 1)



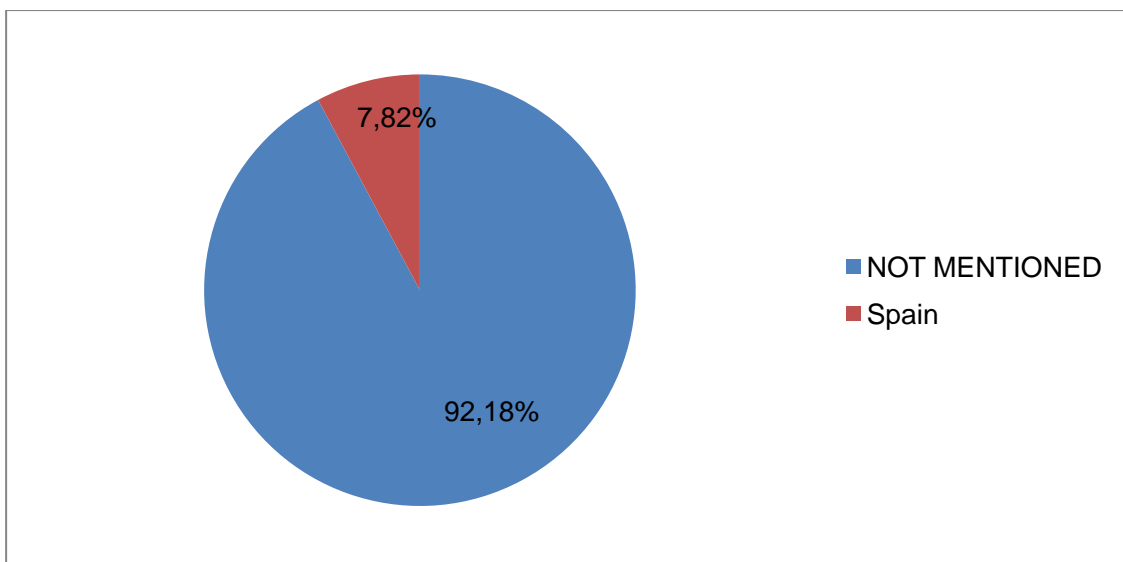
Source: own elaboration

Graphic 8: Visited Spain in 2011 (Segment 2)



Source: own elaboration

Graphic 9: Visited Spain in 2011 (Segment 3)



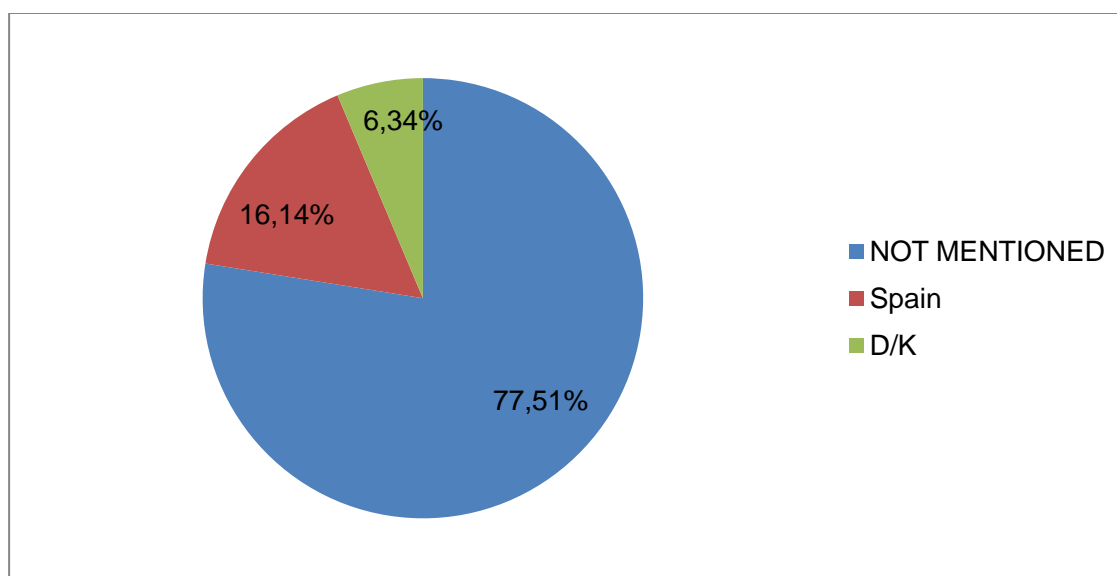
Source: own elaboration

Spending holidays in Spain in 2012

As we can observed, the results shown in the Graphic 10, Graphic 11 and Graphic 12 about the intention of spending holidays in Spain in 2012, are quite similar to those shown in the previous ones of people who visited Spain in 2011.

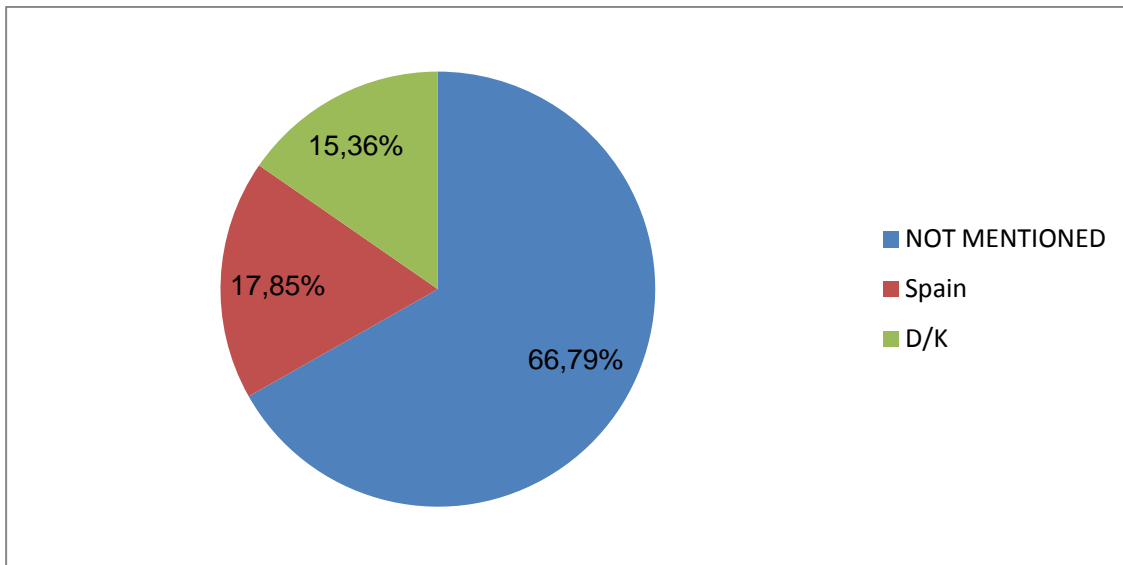
In spite of showing a low percentage in Segment, which report only 6,10 per cent (34), Segment 1 and 2 still shown positive percentages with 16, 14 per cent (237) and 17, 85 per cent (172) , which means that these consumers probably have the intention of go back to Spain in the next holidays. This aspect refers to an involvement with the mentioned destination, so we can say that Spain is a preferred destination for some people in Germany and the United Kingdom.

Graphic 10: Intention to visit Spain 2012 (Segment 1)



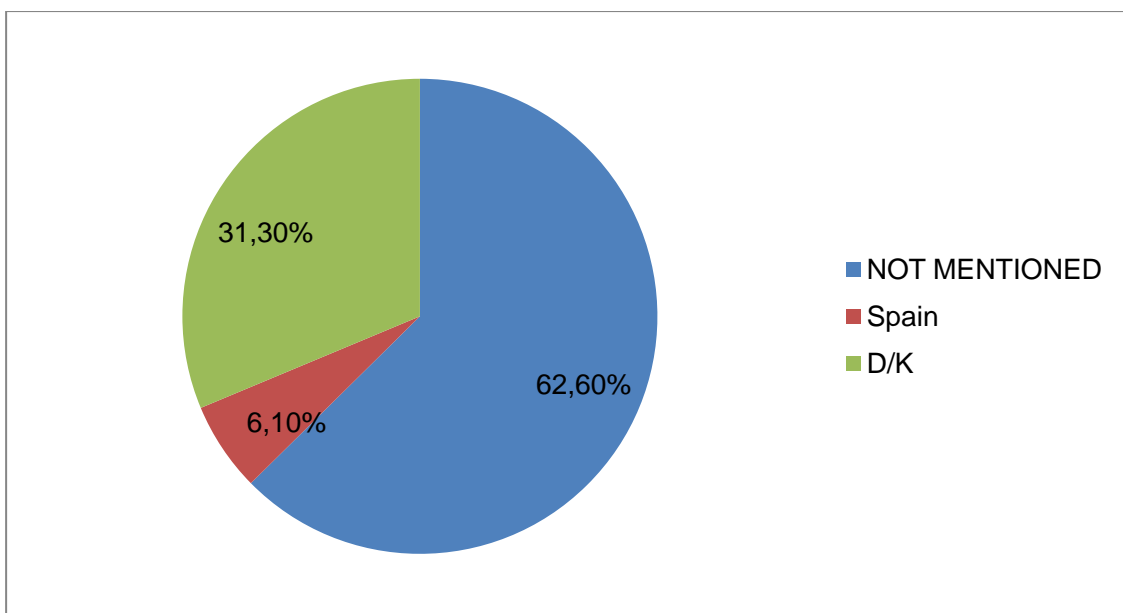
Source: own elaboration

Graphic 11: Intention to visit Spain in 2012 (Segment 2)



Source: own elaboration

Graphic 12: Intention to visit Spain in 2012 (Segment 3)



Source: own elaboration

6. Managerial implications

The main objective of this research is to give tourism professionals proposals for a better promotion of Spain and become it in a more attractive tourist destination. Despite Spain has always enjoyed of a privileged position inside the tourism market, receiving a good amount of tourists each year, the growing number of already existed destinations and the appearance of new ones makes the competition harder each time. This is the reason why is essential to assume new strategies to promote the destination.

Because market mavens are likely to spread their information among other consumers and thanks to the generalized nature of their knowledge, these experts of the marketplace are an important and valuable target for marketing, even more than other consumers like innovators or opinion leaders. (Clark and Goldsmith, 2005),

Due to the necessity to know the preferences of consumers to construct the fittest marketing strategy, the present survey has tried to reveal the behavior of market mavens towards tourism and specially, towards Spain as a holiday destination. In this way, we need to know their preferences because they are a strong tool in the promotion of destinations, as they spread their information and experiences with others. The results of this investigation give us the possibility to make fair proposals to reach new ways of promoting a destination.

6.1. Strategic proposals based on market mavens' behavior in tourism

If we consider the results of the study, we can observed that the people of the segment identified as market mavens (Segment 1) are very active in the use of Internet, visiting web pages and arranging the services through this media. That is why the main strategies should be focused on:

- The promotion of the destination through the Internet.

Market mavens: knowledgeable consumers as a promotion tool for Spanish tourism

- The best media to promote a place is through the official pages of the destination.
- It is essential to keep these internet sites updated with the last and the major amount of information of the destination. In the case of Spain, where the most of the tourist come from the United Kingdom, Germany or even France, the page should be translated in these languages in order to make more accessible the information for all the people.
- The Internet saves costs and time and facilitates changes in the promotion in order to keep the content updated.

According to the results, market mavens give a lot of importance to the natural features of the destination. The following actions could be adopted:

- To highlight the natural conditions of the place, for example, the landscape in the case of the north of Spain or the beaches in the case of the coast of Spain, for instance a good example would be Almeria's beaches or even the dry landscape that characterize the province, highlighting the Desert of Tabernas.
- To show visually the natural features of the destination through high quality pictures of the main places and landscapes to visit.
- To foreground the sustainability of the place. Nowadays, the environmental awareness is growing harder in people, so it would be interesting to create, for example, a section inside the website describing actions performed to keep the natural features.

On the other hand, as it is shown above in the results, mavens give a lot of importance to the quality of the accommodation. Some measures would be useful for highlight this aspect:

- To show a good quality in the different types of accommodation that has the town, city or region, for example, showing or mentioning any kind of recognition of the quality of the hotels, hostels or any kind of accommodation.

Market mavens: knowledgeable consumers as a promotion tool for Spanish tourism

- To catch the attention of the tourists with high quality images of the hotel, especially pictures of the rooms because this is the place where customers spend most of the time and what they pay for. Although, it is not enough uploading general photos of the room, but pictures showing details of the bedroom, the bath, etc., that are supposed to make the space special. And it is advisable to make a description below the photo of the characteristics shown at it.
- To show positive comments of other customers highlighting the quality of the services or to make videos of professionals of the sector or even famous people or celebrities talking about their experiences in the accommodation.

Finally, as we can see above, Segment 1 considers the rest their main reason to go on holidays. In this sense, it would be recommended:

- To highlight those accommodations with wellness services such as massages, jacuzzi in the room spa facilities, etc.
- To remark those rural houses or hotels situated in a rural landscape for tourists who look for a quiet environment or a place to disconnect from the stress of the daily routine.

6.2. Strategic proposals based on market mavens' characteristics

According to the results, market mavens are more likely to be women so then, it would be important to focus marketing strategies towards this segment. Normally, women are more actively than men in the search of information about those products or services that they are planning to buy, they are active consumers of magazines looking for information, or in the case of mavens they are extremely active visiting web pages to find what they want.

Apart from being mainly women, we can see that the Segment 1 is characterized also for being young people, the most of them between 45-54 years old who live in urban areas, they are mostly retired and more likely to be well educated.

Thus, we should focus the different actions towards a female audience, young but mature women who have presumably more time than other consumers to seek for information and plan their holidays in a more careful way.

In relation with the previous section, some actions to perform could be:

- To highlight the different elements that hotels or other types of accommodation have to satisfy the necessities of women, for example, a good hairdryer or hair iron, perfume samples, bathroom products as intimate hygiene products, tampons or compresses, etc., those kind of products that facilitate women to stay away home without carrying out everything they need every time they go on holidays.
- To encourage the promotion of those hotels which have rooms created especially for women.

Furthermore, thinking about their motivation of rest during holidays, the promotion should be focus on:

- Wellness services such as beauty treatments like masks for skin care, cellulite reduction, firming face skin or anything else that women could be interesting in.
- The marketing message should transmit that apart from resting during their holidays at the same time they can also take care and improve their beauty.

Finally, taking into account the strong feeling of spreading information that characterize market mavens it is important to see this point as a great opportunity for touristic marketing to promote a destination. Some interesting ideas to carry out could be:

- To give discount coupons to those mavens who has blogs where they talk about the destination. As we know, market mavens are heavy users of coupons and even they like to give them to others, so this could be a good incentive for them to promote a destination, and also, to their readers to visit the place.
- To create a section inside the web pages where they can tell their experiences and share the information with others, which make possible not only share their knowledge with people they know as friends or relatives but with people they don't know.
- To propose questions about the destination every week or month, such as how to improve the services or products provided in order to create debates of opinions which make easier the access to consumer's opinions.

As long as these knowledgeable consumers are satisfied with the service provided, a sense of wanting to repeat the experience will be established, creating a connection between the tourist and the place. So then, they will transmit their information with other potential consumers, encouraging them to visit the destination.

7. Limitations and future research

The results I have obtained, they help to understand better the behavior of market mavens in tourism sector and I have tried to propose some ideas for the promotion of Spain as a destination, through these consumers as marketing tool. But the survey has some limitations that they have to be taken into consideration.

The questionnaire used for the analysis of the behavior of mavens in tourism is not the one which can get the best results. The Flash Eurobarometer 34 survey does not provide the enough information to determine a true sample of market mavens because they questions are not the fittest with market mavens´ behavior or personality traits. For instance, related to their activity as seekers of information or the activity of spreading their knowledge among consumers, are some questions necessary to find the most appropriate segment to be identified as market mavens.

In addition, one clear limitation of the study is the small piece of sample taken, as it only involved Germany and the United Kingdom respondents. Due to the short length of the thesis, the best option was to select only two countries and, in this case, those which are the main exporters of tourists to Spain. Another present limitation in the study has been to study the sample as a whole instead of differentiate the characteristics of the consumers of each country.

Hence, taking into account these limitations, it would be recommended for further research to select a questionnaire that involves questions more related to market mavenism , to extend the number of countries studied and their respondents and finally, to differentiate among countries in order to reach the best marketing strategy for each one.

8. Conclusions

The principal goal of this research is to find out if market mavens can be used as a promotion tool and how to carry out a marketing strategy through these market experts. Along the project, we have seen the special features that characterized these consumers such as their impetus of seeking for information for the pleasure of spreading their knowledge or their feeling of helping others altruistically.

Mainly, the study has been focused on how to promote Spain as a preferred destination, analyzing the tourists' behavior of the selected countries, Germany and the United Kingdom.

As the results concluded, one of the segments analyzed was identified as potential mavens. They are more likely to be women and most of them not working people, so then probably spend a lot of hours searching for information before their holidays. Actually, they affirm to use the Internet as the main tool for buying their holidays. They are quite interested in the quality of the accommodations and the natural conditions when they select a destination for their vacation. Furthermore, their principal motivation when travelling is to rest and relax.

Taking into consideration these findings, I give some managerial implications that could be useful for marketing, for example, to perform, mostly, the promotion through official web pages of the destination keeping them updated and with detailed and attractive information about the accommodation options giving importance to the quality and specially, those hotels which include wellness treatments or are situated in quiet locations; to foreground the natural conditions of the place, highlighting the environmental awareness. Finally, it would be recommended to encourage market mavens to spread their knowledge developing a section for opinions or debates in web sites.

To sum up, covering the expectations of market mavens they will become in a strong tool for promoting a destination.

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