Analyzing the determinants of tourists’ visit patterns in Lanzarote Island

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Tourism is an activity based on the trips made by people travelling away from their usual place of residence. Therefore, understanding the movements made by visitors during their trips has been of interest for research for years. In fact, recent investigations have managed to track visitors through the destinations employed various techniques, such as GPS devices, photographs uploaded to different websites or surveys. Knowing how visitors move makes possible to know which places are really visited by tourists and the means of transport and itineraries they use to connect the visits done during a trip. However, the previous research carried out seem not to have considered the differences presented by visitors, which motivate them to travel and visit different places during their trips.

To carry out this work, the previous research carried out to track visitor’s movements has been reviewed. This has allowed to create a list of possible techniques that researchers may use to study tourist’s mobility patterns. In addition, with this research we intend to know which are the determinants that condition tourists to visit some places instead of others in the case of Canary Islands. Thanks to the collaboration of the Canary Islands Statistics Institute and the Data Center of Lanzarote it has been possible to get information collected from 257,687 visitors surveyed in the archipelago between 2010 and 2016. Given the huge amount of information, it has been decided to limit the study to the case of the island of Lanzarote, having 43,301 surveys answered by visitors of this island for the period mentioned. In the survey, visitors are asked about various socioeconomic characteristics, for their motivations to travel and for data related to the trip made, as if they have hired all-inclusive packages or if they had previously visited the destination. In addition, the survey includes a question regarding the visit of 12 attractions and points of interest on the island. Thanks to this information, it has been possible to apply structural equations and discrete choice models to know which are the determining factors that condition the visits made by visitors to the places studied.

Being able to know how visitors behave and the places they visit is of interest for tourism destination managers as well as for managers of companies in the sector. For destination management organizations, the knowledge of the points of interest of the destination and the itineraries made by visitors allows to identify which are the tourist areas of the destination and how the visitors arrive at them. Knowing this, measures can be implemented with the purpose
of increasing or redirect the influx of such visitors to a certain area. In addition, knowing what are the characteristics of visitors interested in visiting a specific place facilitates the design of destination promotion campaigns aimed at attracting a specific tourism segment. For companies, this type of study allows the creation of new tourism products that are aimed at attracting a specific segment of visitors who have shown to be more prone than other segments to carry out similar activities.