

Article

Preferences of Experiential Fishing Tourism in a Marine Protected Area: A Study in the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador

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Abstract: Destinations with marine protected areas due to their resources can offer visitors experiential fishing tourism. The tourist can carry out the fishing activity with the community and experience its culture in this activity. The present study's objectives are (1) to establish which are the preference dimensions for experiential fishing tourism, (2) to determine which dimensions influence the interest to book an experiential fishing tour, and (3) to identify which dimension influences the importance of the visit. The research was carried out in the Galapagos Islands, a destination declared a marine protected area and a World Heritage Site. The study was conducted online with 229 tourists who had visited the destination. For the data analysis factorial analysis, the varimax rotation method, and the Kaiser criterion were used. In the second stage, the Multiple Regression Method was implemented. The results show that preferences in experiential fishing tourism are made up of two dimensions: "Conservation and local culture" and "Quality of services." The conservation and local culture dimension positively influence the interest in booking a fishing tour and the importance of the visit. The results will serve as management guides for managers of destinations within marine protected areas and for the community that offers experiential fishing tourism.



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1. Introduction

After COVID-19, people are more prone to nature-based and adventure tourism where they can also ensure safety and quality [1]. In this sense, coastal and marine tourism offers natural sites for recreation. In addition, coastal tourism includes various activities such as sports, wellness experiences, nature and wildlife observation, as well as educational or cultural activities [2]. Likewise, coastal tourism can be understood as part of marine activities since both are closely linked. The coastal zone is the departure and return point for marine tourism, which offers activities such as sailing, diving, taking cruises, deep-sea fishing, and whale watching [3]. Coastal tourism has faced enormous challenges in balancing environmental concerns and tourism activities [4]. In addition, coastal and marine destinations can offer a wide range of tourist activities: visiting local communities, practicing water sports, spotting marine flora and fauna, undertaking ecotourism, and trying the local cuisine [5].

Marine protected areas (MPAs) are the preferred tool to prevent the loss of marine biodiversity [6]. When managed well, they effectively protect natural resources, habitats, and species from multiple local stressors, such as destructive fishing and pollution [7]. In addition, they are believed to generate beneficial results for both nature and humans [8]. MPAs are implemented to conserve and restore vulnerable species, fisheries, and coral reef habitats [9]. They also limit fishing and allow research to be carried out to improve the effectiveness of environmental protection [10].

The initiatives offered as 'experiential tourism' consist of tourists seeking new emotions and feelings through the experiences they live with a community [11]. Sotomayor [12]

states that the authenticity of the experiences offered is an enigma in experiential tourism. While experiential tourism depends on the authenticity of community offerings, the desire to meet the needs and expectations of tourists can pose a threat to authenticity itself. Gómez-Suárez and Yagüe [13], in their study in Mallorca (Spain), concluded that positive evaluations of a tourist event by people had a positive impact on their word-of-mouth recommendation of the brand. Therefore, the experiential and multisensory experience of the visitors created a positive link and a better assessment of the activity. In this sense, Batle et al. [14] indicated that the enthusiasm and predisposition to carry out a tourist activity is the central factor to take into account in the experiential, along with other personal factors such as self-perception of management, other emotional and communicative skills of everyone involved.

Fishing is an activity that goes beyond obtaining basic food since interactions and habits close to nature and culture create knowledge, techniques, and skills that are transmitted from generation to generation [15]. Beeharry et al. [16] stated that tourists carry out different types of fishing activities, where a common one is recreational fishing, which consists of capturing and releasing the caught fish.

The Galapagos Islands in Ecuador house a national park and a protected marine area. However, sport fishing tourism, commonly known as catch and release, is not legally allowed within the Galapagos Marine Reserve (RMG) due to its possible repercussions on the conservation of marine life [17].

However, fishing tourism can be enjoyed through what is known as experiential artisanal fishing (PAV), an activity established in 2005. In general terms, it offers the visitor, a taste of their catch as part of the tour, and a real learning experience of local artisanal fishing. PAV arose from the need to lower the fishing effort in the RMG in the face of the reduction of the most important commercial fishing stocks, offering artisanal fishermen alternative livelihoods complementary to extractive fishing. Those fishermen involved in this tourist activity have their fishing license along with the experiential fishing tourist license assigned to a boat. However, the artisanal fishing activity of the fishermen must be carried out with a different boat. Therefore, the PAV tourism activity is related to a context of experiential tourism oriented towards sustainability and fisheries conservation [17].

In this context, up to the present, there are no studies on tourist preferences for experiential fishing in a protected marine area such as the Galapagos Islands. That is why this issue is crucial for the sustainable development of this destination. Thus, the present study has the following objectives: (1) to determine the dimensions of the preferences for experiential fishing tourism, (2) to determine which dimension influences the interest in booking an experiential fishing tour, and (3) to identify which dimension influences the importance of the visit. The results will contribute to destination managers who are part of marine protected areas to create management guides and experiential fishing tourism service providers.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Experiential Fishing Tourism

Experiential tourism is one of the modalities related to other concepts of cultural tourism, such as ethnotourism, community tourism, agrotourism, and rural tourism, whose value begins with the practice of human exchange with the natural habitat [18]. According to Aliaga et al. [19], this type of tourism is a comprehensive experience where the local community interacts with the tourist and shares their customs and routine activities making the cultural exchange prevail. For Vilimková [20], experiential tourism is related to walks through nature and taking part in the daily work in the field, such as grazing and agriculture. Likewise, the author mentions that it helps preserve cultural resources, including spiritual traditions.

Fishing tourism is the type of fishing or seafaring tourist activity carried out on board a fishing boat by professionals in the sector, in which travelers can interact and exercise [21]. For the European Commission [22], fishing tourism is important to achieving

more sustainable fishing. This modality allows the traveler to have the experience of participating in work related to fishing, where the boat trip can include observation of marine life and the existing landscapes on the high seas, which is usually a motivation for urban tourists. In addition, the tourist is allowed to stay in the fisherman's house and understand their daily life [23]. However, according to Nimmo and Cappell [24] and Lowitt [25], the economic impacts are not different from those of other modalities, which become a potential instrument for the development of local coastal communities, where the benefits from participation in sun and beach tourism are scarce.

Pardellas and Padín [26] concluded that fishing tourism is a complement or a combination of sun and beach tourism, in which the primary motivations are connected with preferences towards the landscape and gastronomy and, to a lesser extent, measure the interest in learning about the daily life and culture of local fishermen.

Lai et al. [27] described pescaturism as a day trip on a fishing boat with local fishermen. Tourists participate in fishing activities by casting and retrieving nets and performing other tasks, such as eating freshly caught fish cooked on board and visiting fishing villages. Likewise, Tsafoutis et al. [28] highlight the global relevance of the transformation of the fishing industry into tourism. Given declining fish landings and profits, commercial fishermen turn to marine tourism, offering distinctive experiences to visitors such as fishing tourism. This is a relatively new type of sustainable tourism, where tourists are allowed to actively participate in fishing operations, fishing their own catch which later is cooked and served on board.

For Moreno Muñoz [29], fishing constitutes an experiential activity in contact with an ecosystem, such as the marine one, full of suggestions and nuances. It is an experience that arouses great interest for the visitor, its natural fishing and cultural resources (lighthouse, ports, fish markets, traditional fishing systems, and gear, contact with the people of the sea and their vocabulary, a set of intense festive manifestations associated with the sea as an inspiring framework and a stage where they take place, its museums and interpretation centers, gastronomy, monuments, and crafts). Butler et al. [30] suggest that tourist fishing can increase the value of the catch while providing alternative income sources for local small-scale fishermen. Moreover, the conservation of fish populations tends to be minimally affected since recreational fish catch is often released.

Yujiale is a distinctive form of Chinese tourism that takes place on islands and coastal regions. It encourages fishing families to benefit economically by hosting or serving visitors using their existing fishing resources and local knowledge, thereby sharing fishing lifestyles and cultures with tourists. Yujiale started in the coastal areas of the Shandong province in the late 1990s and it has since become widespread on the eastern coast of China [31].

On the other hand, Moreno Muñoz [32] stated that fishing in Spain is a historical activity rich in traditions, which plays an important role from an economic and sociocultural point of view. The fishing sector has been one of the primary sources of wealth for Spanish coastal towns. Liu et al. [33] talk about the importance of recreational fishing and how it contributes to the local cultural heritage, customs, and traditions, developing and transferring local ecological knowledge and fishing experience to youth for their well-being. Finally, Li et al. [34] highlighted the importance of stating that the recreational fishing sector supports various economic activities related to fishing, such as trips, accommodation, boat rental, construction or repair of engines, supply of bait and tackle, infrastructure, and restaurants.

2.2. Preferences in Experiential Fishing Tourism

Sertkan et al. [35] stated that eliciting tourists' preferences and needs is a challenge, as people often have difficulty expressing them explicitly, especially in the initial phase of trip planning. Smeulders et al. [36] expose the importance of preferences and that each choice tells us something about the decision maker. In other words, choices reveal preferences and thus provide information about an underlying utility function. As decision makers' choices are observed over time, more and more information is gathered. Dai et al. [37] assert

that tourism is an industry where visitors' decisions are based on an extensive interaction between experiences and motivations determined by emotional, physical, or spiritual needs. Likewise, Yachin [38] concludes that tourists' choices are a result of decisions between destinations, operators, transportation, and lodging, among similar options throughout the trip.

Tsafoutis et al. [28] explain that, in fishing tourism, tourists may be served a meal on board, tasting the freshly caught fish along with other traditional recipes. 82.5% of fishermen consider eating on board an essential part of the fishing experience, thus incorporating it into the trip. This is because food is valued as a key part of the whole process, thus witnessing the fish being scaled, cooked, and finally enjoying the catch on your plate must be part of the visitor's experience. In Puerto López, Ecuador, implementing economic alternatives such as experiential fishing, according to Chóez Suarez [39], is essential since there are great benefits for the fishing sector, including receiving additional economic income. The author highlights that fishermen are the most suitable to develop this activity since they know the maritime space.

Joshi et al. [40] studied fishing in Oklahoma rivers and found that increasing the size and number of fish increases fish demand and economic value. Fishing in the rivers and streams of Oklahoma offers a unique experience for anglers. The size and quantity of fish play a vital role in determining fishery demand and economic value which can have important management implications.

Wang et al. [41] applied the generalized corner solution model to understand the recreational behavior of surf and marsh fishing trips at six sites in coastal Louisiana. The results showed statistically significant effects of the individuals' demographic characteristics and the site's physical and environmental characteristics.

Chen [42] conducted a study in Taiwan showing that preferences for tourism resources related to fishing villages differed between tourists and residents. Furthermore, tourists' and residents' perceptions about the environmental impacts related to fishing tourism were found to be significantly influenced by individual characteristics such as age, education, and income.

Pokki et al. [43] conducted an analysis that revealed that the travel patterns of registered and unregistered recreational fishermen in Finland show strikingly similar preferences for fishing destinations. However, registering allows fishing with a much greater variety of styles/teams and sites and allows for specialization. It also demonstrates the important role of easy access to fishing spots close to home. Although, most Finnish recreational anglers still tend to fish only within their province of residence.

Fishermen in Galapagos are more interested in settling down to operate bay and diving tours, sport fishing, and daily tours. While tourism business operators have identified each of these activities as opportunities for growth, the overall perceived demand is low relative to the large number of fishermen wishing to set up their own businesses. For example, the data indicate that there may be an opportunity for no more than three or four sport fishing operations per island (some have already started to appear). The data show that more than 30 Galapagos fishermen could be interested in starting sport fishing operations [44].

Miret-Pastor et al. [45] carried out a study in Spanish ports. They observed that it is not uncommon to find former fishermen who have become skippers of pleasure boats, expert guides in recreational fishing, or maintenance managers. Nautical and recreational fishing has provided an alternative to professional fishing or extra income for fishermen, although generally informal.

Fishing tourism has had a greater development in countries such as Italy. Since 1992 they have had legal recognition for this modality. In 1999 an update called "Lega Pesca" was carried out, which has become a benchmark as the most stable experience in reports from the European Union [26].

A study carried out by Wang and Zhang [46] concluded that the development of fishing tourism has little support due to the growth of the yacht industry. Therefore, it requires a greater contribution to developing innovative products to satisfy the needs of

tourists. On the other hand, in the research carried out by academics King et al. [47] in one of the national parks of Indonesia, they point out that despite the cessation of international travel caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it shows the operators and agents of trips show resilience against shocks.

In relation to the importance of experiential tourism and the benefits of this typology with the protection of nature, for the Hehir [48] academics, nature-based tourism offers tourists the opportunity to see first-hand both wildlife and wildlife. the conservation efforts of organizations and individuals to protect habitats and species. A study by Cajiao et al. [49] in Antarctica determined that the majority of traveling tourists already possessed high levels of pro-environmental attitudes and behavioral intentions, resulting in little significant change after the trip. In this sense, for Hofman [50], nature-based tourism experiences have the potential to inspire visitors to adopt conservation behaviors that protect natural environments. However, for Notaro and Grilli [51] the places of residence and the growth of tourists influence preferences. Therefore, for Cheng and Chen [52], the cognitive, emotional, and cultural experiences delivered from cultural heritage tourist destinations positively affect the environmentally responsible behavior of tourists. In this line, for Grilli, et al. [53] prospective tourists are interested in the broader aspects of the tourism experience which, in turn, require careful management of social and environmental resources in Small Island Developing States.

Since the literature on preferential in experiential tourism is still scarce, our study poses the following research questions:

- RQ1: What are the dimensions of the preferences for experiential fishing tourism?
- RQ2: What dimension influences the interest in booking an experiential fishing tour?
- RQ3: What dimension influences the importance of the visit?

3. Study Area

The Galapagos Islands are an archipelago of volcanic islands located in the Pacific Ocean 972 km (525 nautical miles) west of the coast of Ecuador. It has a total area of 8010 km², with an inland sea of 45,666 km² and an insular territorial sea of 17,392 km². They are known as Darwin's islands, as he visited them while writing his book on evolution. It comprises 7 major islands (Isabela, Santa Cruz, Fernandina, Santiago, San Cristóbal, Floreana, and Marchena), 14 minor islands, 64 islets, and 136 rocks. The islands have unique flora and fauna in the world since the islands are separated from the mainland allowing animals to develop without any particular predator. The Galapagos Islands were declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2001, in addition to having two protected areas: the Galapagos National Park, which covers 97% of the land surface, and the Galapagos Marine Reserve, which protects the sea around it.

A group of unique islands offers activities such as visiting Tortuga Bay beach on Santa Cruz Island. This beach is a nesting site for the black turtle. On San Cristóbal Island, you can call on El León Dormiente, also known as Kicker Rock, which are two immense volcanic rocks, named for their characteristic shape of a sleeping lion, that rise more than 100 meters above sea level. Another important site is La Lobería on the island of San Cristóbal, where dozens of sea lions can be seen resting among the rocks or diving into the sea. The most famous activities within the islands are snorkeling and diving, where tourists can swim with rays, sharks, sea lions, and schools of fish, in addition to observing marine flora and fauna. Hiking is also popular. Tourists enjoy nature excursions in the twins (Santa Cruz), Sierra Negra Volcano (Isabela), and tour to the wall of tears (Isabela). Kayaking and surfing allow tourists to play sports in a paradisiacal environment.

The gastronomy is also worth emphasizing since the sea surrounds them, and the islands offer endless seafood and fresh fish. The most representative dishes are fish encocado, lobster, and ceviche. The places to eat can be the hotels or restaurants the island offers or a street stall offering a more authentic tasting experience. Puerto Ayora (Santa Cruz Island) is full of these food stalls, which are very characteristic at night (Figure 1).

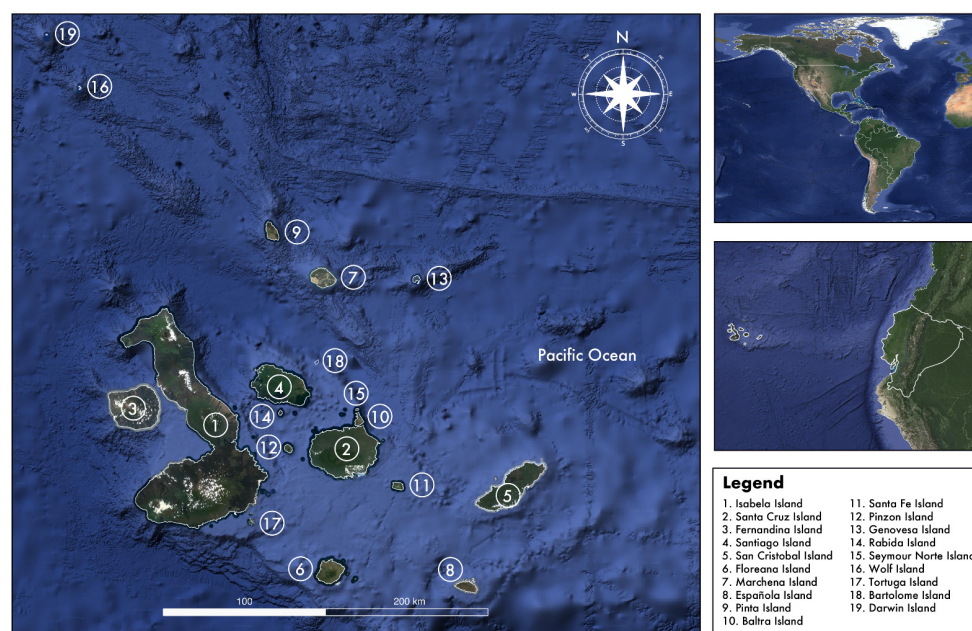


Figure 1. The geographic location of the Galapagos Islands (Ecuador).

Experiential Fishing Tourism in the Galapagos Islands

According to current regulations [48], PAV is carried out in fishing boats adapted for tourism, where the tourist lives the experience of artisanal fishing together with local fishermen through demonstration and stake. Visitors can catch permitted fish species up to 50 pounds for their consumption within the trip, respecting the minimum sizes established within the RMG. In addition to the artisanal fishing experience, within the PAV tour, snorkeling, swimming, or panga riding are authorized. Rest areas are close to the fishing sites on the three main islands of the RMG (Santa Cruz, Isabela, and San Cristóbal).

Each PAV trip can operate with a maximum of 10 passengers and requires a captain and a sailor accompanied by an authorized naturalist guide. The guide's mission is to lead the group, help interpret the fishing activity within the RMG and ensure compliance with the rules and regulations for tour safety. The authorized fishing gears are the traditional ones allowed within the RMG, such as draglines, hand lines, and rods. The boats must have a maximum length of 12.5 meters, be built of fiberglass or other material except for wood, and it can have two 300 HP motors maximum. In addition, these vessels must comply with the authority's technical standards, have the required safety and navigation equipment, and adjust as best as possible to the RMG ecotourism model concerning clean technologies.

Based on data from 2013, the experiential fishing activity counted 28 fishing boats operating these tours. The majority of them (43%) carried out their activity on San Cristóbal Island, 28.5% on Isabela, and the remaining 28.5% on Santa Cruz Island [17].

All activities involved in PAV are carried out in non-extractive and conservation zones, which allow public or tourist use subject to the fulfillment of existing conservation measures for biodiversity, tourist load, terrestrial and marine access limitations, and even specific schedules according to the type of subzone [54]. Therefore, PAV is not expected to create a conflict with the nature protection intended by the zoning scheme and it is the zoning that enables the activities of PAV and its scope.

4. Methodology

The methodology used a questionnaire, constructed based on previous works on motivations and segmentation in coastal and marine destinations, distributed to visitors to the Galapagos Islands. The questionnaire consisted of 14 questions and 3 sections. The first section includes sociodemographic and visitor characteristics. This section includes closed questions adapted from Lee et al. [55]. The second section aimed at defining the preferences

for experiential fishing tourism through eight items. These questions were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 was not important at all and 5 was very important. The last section of the questionnaire measured the interest in the fishing tour and the importance of the visit, these being the dependent variables of the study. It was measured on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 was slightly in agreement, and 5 was in strong agreement. The questionnaire was designed by scholars of the University of Florida according to the objectives of the study and relevant individual, environmental and recreational variables found in the literature. To guarantee the validity process of the questionnaire, it was analyzed by 5 experts in the field of experiential fishing tourism, who identified whether the questionnaire had the capacity to measure what it was designed for, in addition to analyzing the simplicity, brevity, and clarity of the questions. Likewise, a pilot study was carried out on 20 participants, which allowed the appropriate modifications to be made to the questionnaire. The questionnaire did not present inconveniences or doubts on the part of the participants, so it was filled out without presenting any difficulty. For the reliability process of the questionnaire, the internal consistency of the questionnaire in preferences for experiential fishing tourism was analyzed. For this case, Cronbach's alpha statistical method was used, which resulted in 0.8, being the reliable preference scale.

The data were collected from previous visitors to the Galapagos Marine Reserve (RMG). Tourism information was obtained from tourist arrival/departure registration forms collected in 2007 by the tourism monitoring department of the Galapagos National Park Service. Of the total 97,390 international visitors registered in 2006, 46% came from the United States. Given its documented importance among the international tourist group [56] and to reduce survey costs, the focus of the study was limited to U.S. visitors. A random sample of 2500 households was selected, and a letter was sent inviting them to respond to an online survey in August 2009. A total of 229 letters were returned as undeliverable. Ultimately, 282 complete responses (12.4% response rate) were received and used for analysis. Considering the data were collected several years ago, we argue they are still relevant due to several factors. First, although during the COVID-19 pandemic, the percentage of international visitors has decreased relative to national visitors, by 2021 most international tourists still come from the United States [57]. In addition, the implementation of PAV in the RMG has been slow since the time of original data collection [17], and currently, to the best of our knowledge, there is no documented evidence of a particularly significant difference in PAV operations in terms of the trip characteristics and technology involved. Considering that visitors to the Galápagos are mainly motivated by conservation consciousness, the opportunity of experiencing marine life and novel and uncommon activities, as well as its unique flora and fauna biodiversity [58], preferences of tourists for virtually the same product, still aligned to their main motivations, are not expected to be significantly different in comparison to the context of the available data. Finally, after COVID-19 there is an indication that nature-based, rural and cultural activities will be more preferred than before for some populations [59], which suggests that even after changes in the tourism industry induced by the pandemic it is still reasonable to assume very small changes, if any, in visitors preferences for places such as the Galápagos Islands. For these reasons, it is possible to assume that the results obtained from the available data remain relevant.

A margin of error of $\pm 5\%$ and a confidence level of 95% was used. In addition, a variation of 50%. Regarding the technical statistics, a factorial analysis was used to reduce the preference variables in a few factors. The varimax rotation method was used to order the factor loadings. In addition, the Kaiser criterion was implemented to find the eigenvalues greater than 1. In the second stage, the Multiple Regression Method was implemented to find the most important predictors in the interest of a fishing tour and the importance of the visit. The data were tabulated and analyzed with the SPSS Version 26 program.

5. Results

The sociodemographic variables of experiential fishing tourists were analyzed, and the following results were obtained. Men (48%) and women (52%) had similar visiting

percentages to these destinations. Most of the tourists (65.2%) were older than 51 years, 98% had a university education, and 72.6% of these tourists stayed more than five days visiting the destination. At the same time, 50.4% had an annual family income between 50,000 and 149,999. Results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Sociodemographic variables.

Variable	Category	Percentage
Gender	Male	48.0
	Female	52.0
Age ranges	Less than 20 years	0.7
	21–30 years old	8.1
	31–40 years	9.1
	41–50 years	16.9
	51–60 years	24.0
	More than 61 years	41.2
Level of education	Secondary	2.4
	University	97.6
Days visiting the islands	Three days and two nights	3.0
	Four days and three nights	10.1
	Five days and four nights	14.2
	More than five days	72.6
Annual family income level	Less than USD 50,000	9.1
	From USD 50,000 to USD 99,999	23.0
	From USD 100,000 to USD 149,999	27.4
	From USD 150,000 to USD 199,999	14.5
	From USD 200,000 to USD 499,999	19.3
	More than USD 500,000	6.8

5.1. Preferences for Experiential Fishing Tourism

A factor analysis was carried out to obtain several factors that improve the interpretation of the items. The varimax rotation method was used to order the factor loads. In addition, the Kaiser criterion was used to determine the number of factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. The two factors found represented 63.67% of the total variance. Cronbach's Alpha in the factors presents values between 0.806 and 0.8, indicating a strong relationship between the elements that make up each factor. The factor loadings presented values between 0.678 and 0.878, exceeding the value of 0.50 proposed by Hair et al. [60]. The KMO index reached the value of 0.751, indicating that the factorial analysis was adequate. In addition, Bartlett's sphericity test was significant ($\chi^2 = 851.357$, $p = 0.000$), making it appropriate to perform factor analysis. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Factor analysis of the preference for experiential fishing tourism.

Variables	Conservation and Local Culture	Quality in Services
Direct financial support to residents	0.878	
Direct exposure to local culture	0.839	
Help fish conservation	0.760	
Small boat trips	0.678	
Poor English language skills		0.825
Boats are not from known companies		0.789
Lack of crew experience		0.770
Lack of amenities on large boats		0.737
Eigenvalues	3.264	1.830
Cronbach's α	0.806	0.8
Explained variance (%)	40.796	22.873
Cumulative explained variance (%)	40.796	63.669

According to the results, the first dimension of experiential tourism preferences was called “Conservation and local culture.” It was related to direct exposure to local culture, fish conservation, and small boat trips. This dimension included 40.80% of the total variance. On the other hand, the second dimension of the preferences of this type of tourism was called “Quality of services.” It was related to a lack of company recognition, a lack of crew experience, and a lack of boat comfort. This dimension included 22.87% of the total variance. These results answer the research question RQ1: What are the dimensions of preferences for experiential fishing tourism?

5.2. Relationship between the Preferences of Experiential Fishing Tourism and the Interest in Reserving a Fishing Tour

Multiple regression was used to analyze tourist preference dimensions that predict interest in booking an experiential fishing tour. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Preferences of experiential fishing tourism and interest in booking a fishing tour.

Variable	Beta	T	Sig.	Tolerance
Conservation and local culture	0.252	4.450	0.000	1.000
Quality of services	−0.030	−0.537	0.592	1.000
(Constant)		30.452	0.000	
F-statistic	10.046			
Sig.	0.000			
Durbin–Watson	1.726			

According to the results, the regression model was significant in the F test ($p < 0.05$). In addition, there was no collinearity, with tolerance values between 0.7 and 1. The Durbin–Watson statistic was found between the values of 1.5 and 2.5, indicating that there was no autocorrelation in the errors. This means that the model was adequate. Concerning the results, the dimension of the preference for “Conservation and Culture” had a significant relationship (sig. < 0.01) with interest in booking a fishing tour. Hence, the interest in booking a fishing tour depends on the preference for the conservation of fish and the local culture the destination possesses. Therefore, while the aspects of the destination related to the conservation of fishing and the local culture are improved, the interest in booking a fishing tour was higher. Therefore, greater importance should be given to the conservation of fishing and the local culture of these destinations. These results answer the research question RQ2: What dimension influences the interest in booking an experiential fishing tour?

5.3. Preferences of Experiential Fishing Tourism and the Importance of Visiting the Destination

Multiple regression was used to analyze the dimensions of tourist preference that predict the importance of visiting the destination. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Preferences for experiential fishing tourism and the importance of visiting the destination.

Variable	Beta	T	sig.	Tolerance
Conservation and local culture	0.237	4.181	0.000	1.000
Quality of services	−0.074	−1.311	0.191	1.000
(Constant)		101.340	0.000	
F-statistic	9.600			
Next	0.000			
Durbin–Watson	2.009			

According to the results, the regression model was significant in the F test ($p < 0.05$). There was no collinearity, presenting tolerance values between 0.7 and 1. The Durbin–Watson statistic was greater than 1.5 and less than 2.5, so there was no autocorrelation in the errors. Therefore, the model was appropriate. The dimension of the preference for “Conservation and Culture” had a significant relationship (sig. < 0.01) with the importance of visiting the destination. Hence, visiting these destinations depends on the preference for conserving fish and the local culture the destination possesses. Therefore, while there are improvements in the aspects of the destination related to the conservation of fishing and the local culture, the importance of tourists visiting the destination is higher. Therefore, greater importance should be given to fishing conservation and the local culture of these destinations that offer experiential fishing tourism. These results answer the research question RQ3: What dimension influences the importance of the visit?

6. Discussion

The first proposed objective of this study was to establish the dimensions of preferences for experiential fishing tourism, for which the first research question, RQ1, was posed. The results show two dimensions. The first dimension of experiential tourism preferences was called “Conservation and local culture” and was related to direct exposure to local culture, fish conservation, and small boat trips. Meanwhile, the second dimension of the preferences of this type of tourism was called “Quality of services.” It was related to a lack of company recognition, lack of crew experience, and lack of comfort in large vessels. The results coincide with Yachin [38], who identified the service providers.

Furthermore, scholars Tsafoutis et al. [28] also stated that food on board is important between services. Otherwise, scholars Wang et al. [41] identified the importance of the physical and environmental characteristics of the site. Therefore, our main contribution to the academic literature in this area is to have found two dimensions of preferences in fishing tourism (conservation and local culture and quality of services) that other authors have not found in fishing tourism. This is one of the pioneering studies analyzing experiential fishing tourism in a marine protected area. In this context, it is important to note that in recent years, initiatives to incentivize the diversification of local fishermen’s livelihoods to other economic activities including tourism, like PAV, have received increased attention [28,61]. Shifting part of commercial fishing effort to experiential fishing tourism has the potential to help marine protected areas managers lower fishing pressure on stocks, supporting fish stocks conservation and consequently fisheries sustainability, given a low risk of overtourism like in the case of PAV due to its artisanal nature. Hence, our findings and the study of experiential fishing are relevant for future marine conservation actions and policies in marine protected areas.

The second objective of this study was to determine which dimension influences the interest in booking an experiential fishing tour, for which we asked ourselves the second research question RQ2. The results show that the dimension of the preference for

“Conservation and Culture” had a significant relationship with the interest in booking a fishing tour, which indicates that the interest in booking a fishing tour depends on the preference for fish conservation. Moreover, the local culture that the destination possesses. Consequently, while the aspects of the destination related to the conservation of fishing and the local culture are improved, the greater the interest in booking a fishing tour will be. No previous findings have analyzed the relationship between the dimensions of preferences concerning the interest in buying a tour, so this is a clear contribution to the academic literature.

As a third objective, the present study aims to identify which dimension influences the importance of the visit. To achieve this objective, we proposed the third research question, RQ3. The results show that the dimension of the preference for “Conservation and Culture” is significantly related to the importance of visiting the destination. Therefore, the importance of visiting these marine reserve destinations depends on the preference for the conservation of its flora and fauna and its local culture. This indicates that while there are improvements in the aspects of the destination related to the conservation of fishing and the local culture, the importance of tourists visiting the destination is higher. Since no previous findings have been found that analyze the relationship between the dimensions of the preferences of experiential fishing tourism with the importance of sight, the results of the present study are a clear contribution to the scientific literature.

As for practical implications, this research recommends improving the dimensions of preferences for experiential fishing tourism (conservation and local culture, and quality of services), for which it is necessary to implement environmental management plans for the sustainable conservation of the destination. Furthermore, involving the community in executing projects to benefit the environment is necessary. Cultural management agencies can also develop plans for the conservation of the culture of the local population, for which they could rescue their gastronomy, typical dances, local languages, costumes, traditional games, forms of local fishing, and traditional housing design.

To increase interest in booking an experiential fishing tour, aspects of the destination related to fisheries conservation and local culture will need to be improved. For this reason, it is recommended that environmental conservation programs, conservation workshops with tourists, cultural events, gastronomy conservation programs, typical dances, handicrafts, costumes, and everything that represents the local culture be carried out.

To improve the interest in the importance of the visit, it is recommended to pay greater attention to the conservation of fishing and the local culture of these destinations that offer experiential fishing tourism. Therefore, workshops on the conservation of marine fauna and flora, local gastronomy, environmental conservation, and management of marine ecosystems could be given. Furthermore, public institutions should work with local communities to rescue traditional dances, handicrafts, traditional games, costumes, and local ways of life. The results will serve tourism service providers to improve their services and for destination managers to develop management plans to benefit experiential fishing tourism.

Results are also useful from a fisheries management perspective, especially in a marine reserve. Diversification of small-scale fishermen into tourism has been increasingly considered as an alternative to reduce extractive capacity on commercial fish stocks, contributing to the sustainability of the resource and of the livelihoods in fishing communities. Fisheries management authorities could complement the suggested initiatives in the tourism sector by identifying critical factors that efficiently engage fishermen in experiential fishing tourism as well as by facilitating financial plans to provide all the training and capital needed for diversification of fishing efforts.

7. Conclusions

Experiential tourism has a value that begins in the practice of human exchange with its natural habitat. It is a type of tourism where the local community interacts with the tourist and shares their customs and routine activities where cultural exchange prevails.

For this reason, experiential tourism relates to nature walks and helps preserve cultural resources and traditions.

Experiential fishing tourism allows the tourist to have the experience of participating in the work related to fishing with the community, where the boat trip can include fishing and observation of marine life and landscapes. In addition, the tourist can stay in the fisherman's house and get to know his daily life.

It has been found that the preference for experiential fishing tourism is made up of two dimensions: "Conservation and local culture" and "Quality of services." Other findings show that while there are improvements in the aspects of the destination related to the conservation of fishing and the local culture, the greater the interest in reserving a fishing tour. Likewise, the greater the importance of tourists visiting the destination. Therefore, aspects related to the conservation of fish and local culture must be improved so that the offer of experiential tourism in these destinations that are marine protected areas improves.

As theoretical implications, two dimensions of experiential fishing tourism have been found (conservation and local culture and quality of services) that had not been found in previous studies. Furthermore, it was also identified that the conservation and local culture dimension influences the interest in buying a tour and visiting the destination. These results are a clear contribution to the scientific literature in this area.

As practical implications of the present study, the results will contribute as guides for the design of environmental management plans in destinations that are marine protected areas. The community will also understand the importance of preserving and showing its culture to tourists. Service providers will also be able to improve their experiential fishing service.

The main limitation of the present study was that the tourists filled out the survey upon their return from the trip. As a future line of research, a study could be implemented that analyzes experiential fishing tourism preferences concerning the demand's sociodemographic aspects. These results are expected to contribute to the sustainable development of destinations that are marine protected areas.

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