

## EXTENDED ABSTRACT

### THE COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY OF TOURISM COMPANIES. PERCEPTION OF TOURISM STUDENTS

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The related tasks with commercial activity, especially with individual selling are the marketing activities that generate more resources in the companies (Barat y Spillan, 2009; Concha, Kumar, Tarail y Wilson, 2014). However, from the view of society, the work of the seller does not have sufficient knowledge to stand up to be considered as a professional seller (Honeycutt, Ford, Swenson y Swinyard, 1999; Wiles y Spiro, 2004; Waldeck, Pullins y Houlette, 2010; Bahnhout, Spillan y Karsakalian, 2014).

The general perception that the society has of sellers is negative. Joyful perception is more related with the door-to-door seller, with the commercial agent, is very necessary in another activity that wishes to reach success. Maybe for him, a lot of persons with university training don't consider developing their professional careers in the environment of business management and sales (Manning, Reece y Ahearne, 2010; Ballestra, Cardinali y Palanga, 2017).

On the other hand, in more and more competitive environments and more and more informed and demanding customers, it's producing a change in the commercial structures of the companies. In the touristic sector particularly, the tourism companies are obliged to be more centred with the customer, leaving the worrying side only for the offer. The sellers have changed a lot into like creators of value for present and future customers (Weitz y Bradford, 1999; Blocker, Cannon, Panagopoulos y Sager, 2012). This new generating management of value is very relevant in the touristic sector (Lillo, Ramon y Sevilla, 2007; Lillo, 2009)

For all these reasons, the current touristic companies need sellers that are different to those of the past. The companies of the touristic sector need brilliant, motivated and formed employees that have the necessary skills to adapt to a business environment in constant change (Pettijohn y Pettijohn, 2009). The university students will be excellent candidates because they will usually be young, intelligent and with the ability to learn (Caballero y Walker, 2010) to put in enthusiasm in the current outlook of the commercial function in the enterprises.

After this introduction, the objectives of this present study are centred in knowing the opinion of the university students of tourism with respect to the tasks of business management of the touristic companies and their professional expectations in said companies. Specifically, we can indicate as main objectives the following:

- To know how the tourism students, notice the tasks of business management as a possible professional way out after finishing their university studies.
- To analyse the vision, from a point of view of the behaviour in the development of their professional activity, university students of tourism have on the behaviour of sellers.
- To know the opinion of the students about certain guidelines of non-ethical behaviour bit by bit of the sellers in the development of commercial activity.

To bring about the present study, we have conducted that an important revision of the existing literature in the subject.

First of all, we have analysed the perception that the university students have of the commercial activity in the touristic sector. This has allowed us to know that in the great majority of the carried out investigations, the interest of the university students with respect to following a professional career in sales is not very high. Furthermore, it usually shows a negative view of said profession like a future professional career (Dubinsky, 1980; Honeycutt, Ford, Swenson y Swinyard, 1999; Wiles y Spiro, 2004; Caballero y Joonas, 2009; Waldeck, Pullins, Sojka y West, 2014). The possible explanation to this negative insight can be due to the traditional image of the seller that pushes to his potential customers to achieve more sales than his competitors in a competitive and very aggressive environment and in that the offer exceeds the demand (Kerin, Hartley y Rudelius, 2009). However, to weigh up these not very positive perceptions, the commercial activity and the activity of sales is a fundamental element of the marketing strategies in the touristic companies. Nowadays, a commercial strength of success uses an active form of value approaches for the customer in order to keep them satisfied and loyal to their company. In addition, the training of the client must be understood and applied as an element of motivation of the commercial team.

Secondly, we have analysed the ethical behaviour touristic commercial management. For ethical behaviour it is understood “the perceptions of the seller about the ethical standards that reflect in the practices, the procedures, the rules and the values of the organisation for the one that works” (Babin, Boles y Robin 2000; Schewepke 2001). The participants of the study were university students, university students of Tourism (degree or master) that were studying in a Spanish university. These students in a voluntary manner during one of the sessions answered the questions that the questionnaire presented to them. The total number of questionnaires that they considered valid after a process of revision were 348.

To carry out the statistical analysis, the statistical pack SPSS 22.0 was used using the descriptive analysis and the analysis of media differences (ANOVA) to respond to the questions that are to be investigated. Additionally, it resorted to the Factorial Analysis of Principle Components with the purpose of confirming the analysed constructs. In order

to analyse the reliability of every one of these scales, the correspondent  $\alpha$ -Cronbach has also been calculated.

Furthermore, with the objective of classifying the students with respect to their professional future, in activities of a commercial type, a cluster analysis or of hierarchical conglomerates has been performed responding to their interest in commercial activities, posteriorly, to analyse their assessments about this type of work.

Then we show some obtained conclusions of this investigation and we suggest some recommendations and implications that can improve the commercial activity in the touristic sector and so, the opinion of the university students about this activity are:

1. The majority of the university students of tourism are conscious that their professional future can be developed to carrying out commercial activities.
2. Therefore, from the point of view of the training, and given the levels of unemployment or of jobs of a lower level to the training of the candidates to occupy them, it seems appropriate to incorporate in the university students of tourism any type of training related with the work of sellers in the touristic sector, and not only with marketing training.
3. A good university training in commercial activities will facilitate the achievement of job positions in the commercial environment and it will give conscience to the tourism students of the quantitative and qualitative importance of this professional activity in the touristic sector. Moreover, the increase of the training also improves the workers' salary of the touristic sector (Ons-Cappa, Garcia-Pozo y Sanchez-Ollero, 2017).
4. If the contact in the classrooms with related subjects with the commercial work in touristic companies is of quality, this will make the attitude of the students better towards this type of work (Peltier et al., 2014). So, its recommendable that the content of these subjects allow the students to understand the work of a professional seller in an adequate manner.
5. The sellers in the present are one of the basic pillars of success for touristic companies thus, they must know how to work in a team, to use the different available technological resources and to know how to be centred in knowing and satisfying the needs and demands of the customers; this implies that it's a creative, innovative and possibly an attractive activity for the university students of tourism.
6. The training in sales affects the behaviour of future businesses with the company, in a way that integration will be easier and the same with the compromise. The sellers have to be able to make expectations and emotions in the potential customer so that this takes the decision of buying, they must accomplish that the purchase-sale becomes a positive experience.
7. Given that the commercial work environment can trigger non-adequate behaviours and to facilitate the unemployment of non-ethical actions, it's important that the inclusion in the relative essence of university training is of importance of the ethical analysis in all their decisions.

As a whole investigation, this work has certain limitations, fundamentally centred in the analysed sample. The surveyed students do their studies in a unique university, although in different courses; it would be adequate to repeat the study in other universities in order to be able to generalize the results. Also, it is posed as a future investigation, the comparison of the results with those of students of other related areas, for example, those related with business management and other varieties.