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## **Introduction**

We are a market research based company who has received an offer from the Government of Gran Canaria to carry out a market research of the attitudes the tourists have towards this island because he feels that the tourism business is becoming of less importance day by day and it wants to find out ways to overcome this problem. To know all the required information we will conduct a market research which will consist of searching information, recording and analysing the results in order to meet our objectives which are defined as following.

## **Objectives**

The main objective of our market research is to find out the attitudes of tourists above 35 years old concerning their stay in Gran Canaria, in other words, what the tourist do for entertainment, what they spend their money on and what they are looking for during their stay on this island. Our other objective is to find out the reasons why tourists visit this island.

We will obtain these data using:

- *Primary information*, which we have obtained by:
  - Employing questionnaires, interview in Reina Isabel Hotel and also interviewing Gina Segura Macías who works in the tourist information centre in Puerto Rico.
- Additionally, we will employ *secondary information* which consist of:
  - ISTAC (Institute of Statistics in Canarias), the Internet, the newspaper ("La Provincia" and "Canarias7") and other leaflets.

## **Methodology**

For our Market Research of the attitudes of tourists towards Gran Canaria we aimed at tourist above the age of 35, since they represent the majority of tourists and are the higher quality tourists that spend more money and time on the island. Their answers are more differential and more qualitative due to their experience with other trips.

In order to get the direct opinions of this group of tourists we chose to use primary research such as questionnaires and short interviews. This enabled us to get direct information and feedback on specific questions we had thought of beforehand. We also found this way to be more reliable and faster.

Furthermore, we had short interviews in hotels and tourism information centres in Las Palmas and Puerto Rico to collect other point of views and additional data from specialists. We hoped for new ideas and since this interview gave us more time, we were able to ask deeper and more specific questions.

By means of the primary research, we were able to attain both, qualitative and quantitative information. We require qualitative information for our market research to get to understand the motivations, feelings, and emotions that drive tourist behavior. For our source of secondary information, we collected and analysed newspaper articles and statistical data from the Internet website of ISTAC. This type of data was very

detailed and therefore not always perfectly matched our research objectives, but gave us a chance to compare our primary information with the secondary information obtained.

The Internet is a cheap and speedy instrument to find all kinds of statistics and opinions in a short amount of time and to collect articles from large newspaper databases.

As far as the sampling methodology is concerned, we have employed a stratified random sample that will consist in dividing the population into exclusive groups (in this case, tourists above 35 years old) and then carrying out a random sample of this exclusive group.

### **Analysis**

In the following, we are going to analyse the questionnaires that we had formulated. The questions we asked the tourist were all related to their stay in Gran Canaria since the purpose of doing the same was to attain the attitude of tourists towards the island.

In our questionnaires, we first asked the tourists about their nationality and where they have come from. Looking at the results after analysing the information, we have come to the conclusion that the majority of tourists that visit the island are Germans and these are also the ones that are willing to spend the most money. Looking at the graph we can see that 36.6% of the tourists were Germans and 86.7% of these Germans thought this place was good. After the Germans, the majority of tourists came from England, which made up 26.82% of the total number of tourists interviewed.<sup>1</sup> Another 4.87% came from Italy and another 4.87% from the Netherlands. The rest of the visitors came from places like Finland, Norway, Denmark, Ireland, Sweden, etc. and these constituted 17% of the questioned sample. This information was not to be found in the Instituto Canario de Estadística (ISTAC) or any of the secondary information sources and therefore we obtained this from the questionnaires. This information tells us the nationality of the tourists we get on this island and this is important because like this we know which tourists are ready to spend more money and what interest them the most. For example, Germans on this island are the tourists that spend the most money.

The majority of the English tourists generally thought that their visit to this island was excellent as well as the Italians. However, the Scottish tourists thought that Gran Canaria was just good and their expectations were generally fulfilled. According to the information obtained from the Internet<sup>2</sup>, 34.94% of the tourists have an excellent impression of the island after visiting it and 46,18% think it is good. This question was also part of our questionnaire but ISTAC information is probably more efficient and precise since they must have used a larger sample.

The reasons for which tourists visit Gran Canaria vary however the great majority come here for the climate, sun, and the beach. This is a fact that has been proved by the primary research we have obtained and the information we have found from the ISTAC web page which says that 92,27% of the visitors come here for its climate, about 50% for the beach and the other majority, 16.47%, come here because

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<sup>1</sup> See graphs and tables in appendix.

<sup>2</sup> See appendix

they think it is a cheaper destination, and it is safer at the moment due to war. This information was also published in the newspaper on the 30/03/03<sup>3</sup>, which said that many tourists have cancelled their flights to destinations such as Turkey, Egypt, etc. because they consider Gran Canaria to be a safer place. 20% say this place is quite calm, they like the locations they visit, like boat trips, footpaths, and caves, etc., which we have already mentioned before. These statistics are very similar to the ones we have found through the questionnaires although they might not be as accurate as the ones found in ISTAC because the sample we have chosen is probably smaller.

Having analysed the secondary information found on the website of ISTAC<sup>4</sup>, we can see that in the year 2002 this island received mostly tourists who came as a couple. This statistics say that 42,56 % came in groups of two and only 1.36 % families with more than 5 members. Therefore, we can suggest that tourists think that this place is not much for large families as there are very few attractions for children.

Another important thing found in the statistics obtained from ISTAC is where the tourists had gone in their last vacations. According to their results, 11.58% of the tourists that visit Gran Canaria, also visited this island in the previous year and this means that their attitude towards Gran Canaria is fairly good and they enjoy coming back here. From the statistics we acquired through the questionnaires and interviews, we have come to the conclusion that the majority of tourists on the island today have already been here at least twice, especially the Germans since 40% of them came here for their second time.

We also asked the tourists where they were currently staying<sup>5</sup>. Having analysed this question, we have found out that most of the tourists from Germany stayed in a hotel (67 %) <sup>6</sup>, whereas most of the English tourists stayed in apartments (73%). These figures again suggest that the German tourists are of a higher quality as they spend more money. This is also proved with the secondary information that we have, where it shows that 31.91 % of German tourists stayed in 4-5 star hotels and spend more money as an average in accommodation whereas, only 21.16% of English tourists stayed in that category of hotel.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, as seen on the graph, those asked from Italy and Scotland all stayed in apartments again signifying that they are low-quality tourists and come here generally for an economic holiday. However, the results obtained for Scotland, Italy, Netherlands and Others may not be very accurate as only a very small sample of tourists were asked so it might not be quite representative but just gives us a slight idea.

In general, we have found out that during the tourists' stay in Gran Canaria most of the tourists visited Las Palmas (the main capital city) and Playa del Inglés mainly for beaches and a in search of a better climate. Moreover, a reasonably high number of tourists have visited Puerto de Mogan, which is a relaxing and quieter place. Many of them visited specific places such as Palmitos Park, Sioux City, Aquasur and Crocodile Park, which are also in the south and only a few of them visited Telde for the golf course. Consequently, we can see that most of the tourists have come for shopping (in the north) and for sun and beach (in the south) and very few for its culture because none

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<sup>3</sup> See Canarias 7 - in Appendix

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.gobiernodecanarias.org/istac/>

<sup>5</sup> See nº 6 in the questionnaire

<sup>6</sup> See Graph

<sup>7</sup> Istac, Gasto medio por paises 2002, Alemania y Reino Unido.

of them mentioned places such as Cenebio de Valerón, Gáldar, etc. Nevertheless, the Government is currently trying to change the image of Gran Canaria and is trying to bring in more cultural and higher quality tourists by promoting Gran Canaria as a place rich in culture, history and in golf. However, by analysing our questionnaires we can conclude that the attitudes of tourists towards this island are yet mainly of sun and beach.

We have also asked our sample open ended questions such as number 10 to find out what would tourists improve in this island. This question was chosen to be an open ended one because it varies upon each individual as all have different impressions about this island and there is no specific answer to it. A variety of answers were collected but the most highlighted ones are that the environment as a whole has to improve. This means that there should be more greenery, less traffic, and less hotels and noise. This shows some of the negative attitudes the tourists have of this island. Moreover, many of them suggested that there should be more clubs and that the prices were quite expensive and this explains that not all tourists think that Gran Canaria is a cheap place, which differs from our initial opinion.

Finally, most of the tourists that were asked said that they spent most of their money on gifts and food. In the gifts, many of them included perfumes, cigarettes, etc. again suggesting that a great majority of the tourists also come to Gran Canaria mainly for shopping.

### **Conclusion**

As a conclusion, we would say that after talking to forty-one tourists, having interviewed people from hotels and tourist information centers, we can say that the general attitude of tourists above 35 years old towards Gran Canaria is between good and excellent since many of them visit the same places more than twice and more than thrice too. Nevertheless, some points on this island create a slightly negative attitude in the tourists' mind like Black women in the South that follow tourists to get money and very few public bathrooms around the island especially in the South. Another problem mentioned in the hotel interview<sup>8</sup> was that most tourists that don't travel with a tour operator like TUI find it hard to organize tours around the island.

### **Recommendations**

As a result, we would recommend the Government to improve the infrastructure of this island and provide more public services all around. Furthermore, the amount of immigration should be controlled so that this problem doesn't cause a negative impression on the tourists. Moreover, the Government should focus more on public tours for tourists that come without any tour operator. In addition, we believe that in the future the golf and cultural tourism will become more important day by day in Gran Canaria. At last, we also put forward that the Government should improve the entertainment offered for large families that come for holidays so that we can attract more tourists of that kind to this island.

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<sup>8</sup> See interview with the hotel Reina Isabel in Appendix.

## **APPENDIX**

### ***Interview Hotel Reina Isabel, Las Palmas***

In order to find different point of views and to collect additional primary data we shortly interviewed the Reception at the Hotel Reina Isabel situated directly at the Paseo Canteras in Las Palmas.

We concentrated on the following six questions :

1. How long is the average stay of tourists on the island ?

Most tourists stay between 5 and 7 days.

Only few stay longer than 10 days.

2. Most common nationality ?

Most tourists originate from Germany, followed by the British.

3. Mostly sold tours ?

Most tourists want to see the centre of the island tour, mostly organized by their travel agents such as Neckermann and TUI.

4. What are the most complaints about the island ? What do they like most ?

Tourists that come without a travel agency find it very difficult to organize tours to anywhere on the island, mostly they can only see the rest of the island if they rent a car and drive themselves.

What they liked about the island were the towns and countryside in the centre of the island.

5. Busiest time of travel ?

The busiest time is wintertime between October and April.

6. How often do tourists return to the island ?

Many tourist come back 2-3 times, depending on the economical and political situation .

### *Newspaper article*

Domingo

30 Marzo 2003

**Economía**



**Canarias registrará una ocupación del 90% durante la próxima Semana Santa  
Los isleños se desplazarán en su mayoría dentro del propio Archipiélago así como  
a la Península, donde las Islas serán uno de los destinos preferentes**

E STEFANÍA MORÁN CASTELLANO

Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

Canarias registrará una buena ocupación durante la próxima Semana Santa, en torno al 90% de las plazas hoteleras y extrahoteleras de las Islas estarán cubiertas pese al conflicto bélico en Irak y la crisis económica alemana y que afecta asimismo a varios países nórdicos. Algunos establecimientos, hoteleros en su mayoría, colgarán incluso el cartel de completo en este período vacacional que comenzará el lunes día 14 de abril y se prolongará hasta el día 20.

Los destinos preferidos por los canarios serán en este período vacacional las propias islas, entre las que se desarrollarán la mayoría de los desplazamientos, con especial incidencia en Lanzarote y Fuerteventura, destinos hacia los que ya es complicado encontrar plazas. Asimismo, y tras las islas, ocuparán un lugar destacado los viajes hacia la Península, especialmente la España verde, según destacó el presidente de la Asociación de Agencias de Viajes, Rafael Gallego.

Los viajes al extranjero serán en esta ocasión mucho menores que otros años, especialmente en países de Oriente Próximo y la Cuenca Mediterránea. debido a la guerra que está teniendo lugar, por lo que «las agencias hemos optado por ser previsoras y ofrecer destinos alternativos» subrayó Gallego. Línea similar se ha seguido en la Península, en la que Canarias ha sido más demandada por las mismas razones, e incluso, altamente recomendada en las agencias de viajes.

De hecho, la aerolínea Iberia ha anunciado que dispondrá de 86 vuelos adicionales entre todos los aeropuertos isleños y la Península desde el día 11 al 22 de abril mientras Air Europa añadirá al menos un vuelo más a su oferta por isla el día 20 y Spanair optará por medidas similares. Respecto a las compañías aéreas interinsulares, Binter Canarias incorporará su nuevo avión a las rutas, lo que significa 12 saltos más para vuelos entre Gran Canaria, Tenerife y Fuerteventura además de su aeronave de reservas a aquellas rutas que precisen refuerzo. Islas Airways, por su parte ya tendrá operativos sus dos aviones para cubrir las mismas rutas.

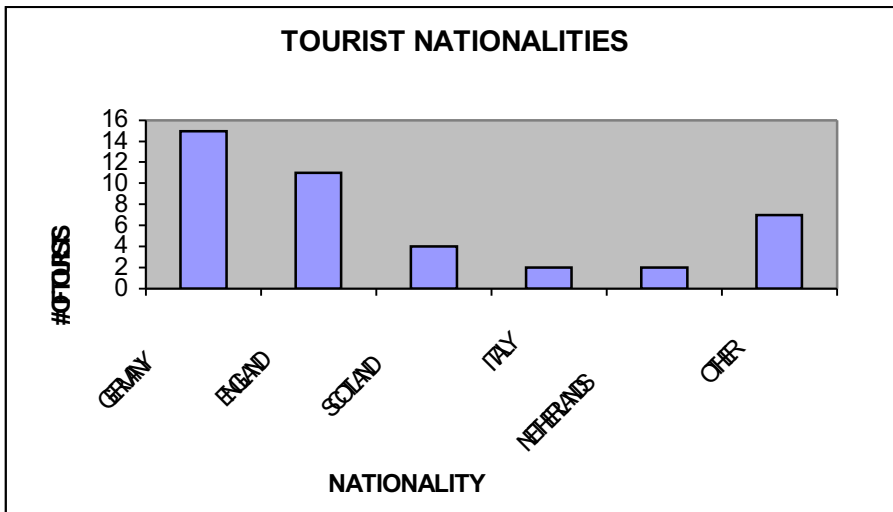
Respecto al turismo extranjero, turoperadores como TUI, pese a la menor importancia de la Semana Santa para el resto de Europa puesto que no se celebra, aumentará la capacidad de los vuelos, en fechas anteriores incluso, de Hapag-Lloyd a Canarias en 5.000 plazas. Entre otros incrementos de capacidades se encuentra un aumento de 184 plazas en cada uno de los vuelos desde Hamburgo, Hannover y Frankfurt con destino a Fuerteventura. Asimismo, para el próximo día 12 de abril, se aumentarán las capacidades de asientos en varios centenares de plazas en los vuelos desde Düsseldorf y Stuttgart a Gran Canaria aparte de aumentarse el próximo 13 de abril desde los vuelos procedentes de Munich, Stuttgart y Düsseldorf a Lanzarote. Con respecto a las

previsiones en el Aeropuerto de Gran Canaria se espera un movimiento de más de 436.000 pasajeros en 3.164 operaciones desde el 11 al 21 de abril, unos 90.000 menos que el año pasado, según los datos suministrados por Aeropuertos Españoles y Navegación Aérea (AENA).

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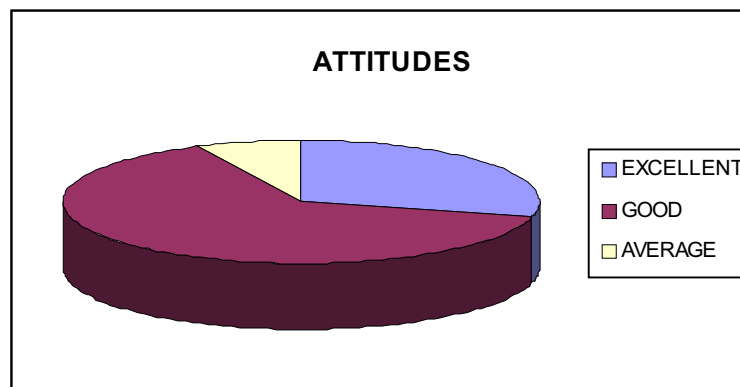
## GRAPHS

Graph to show the different nationalities where tourists come from



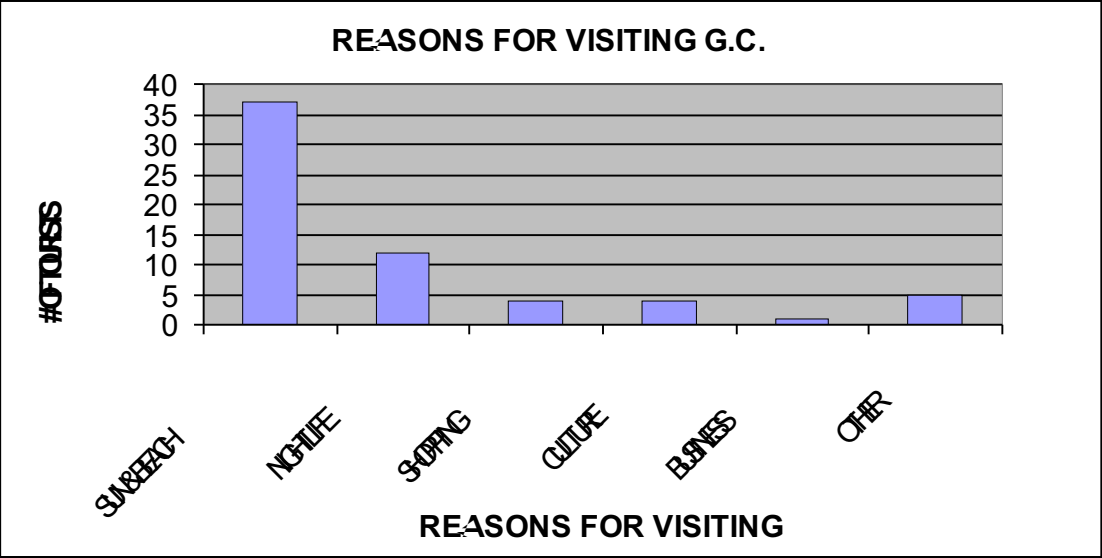
NATIONALITY	# TOURISTS
GERMANY	15
ENGLAND	11
SCOTLAND	4
ITALY	2
NETHERLANDS	2
OTHER	7
TOTAL	41

Graph to show the attitudes of Tourists

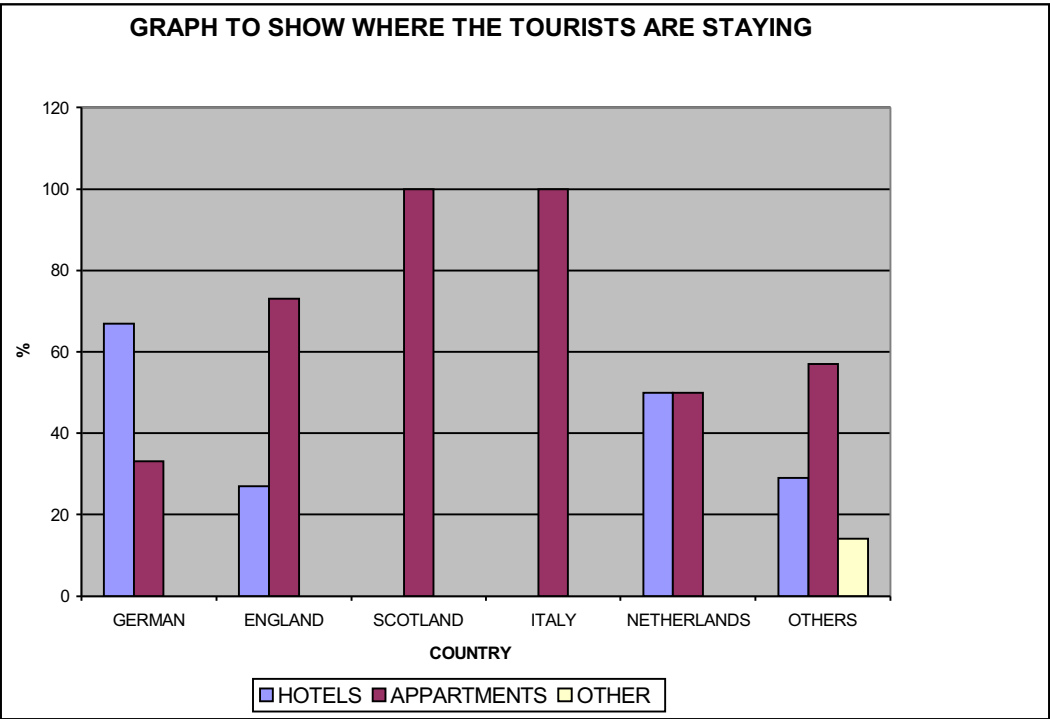




Graph to show the different reasons for visiting Gran Canaria



Graph to show where the tourists stay during their stay



***Statistical information from ISTAC***