

# Factors of visitor satisfaction in museums of Puerto Varas, Chile: Valued attributes and visitor profile

## Factores de satisfacción de los visitantes en museos de Puerto Varas, Chile: Atributos valorados y perfil de visitantes

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### ABSTRACT

*This study analyzes the factors that determine visitor satisfaction in museums located in an emerging tourist destination, an area still underexplored in the literature on cultural tourism. Using a quantitative approach, data from 380 on-site surveys in Puerto Varas, Chile, were analyzed through descriptive statistics, chi-square tests (with Cramer's V), and multiple linear regression. Results reveal a distinct visitor profile: predominantly non-resident tourists (61.8%), young (68.4% aged 18-34), and highly educated (79.5% with higher education). While recreational (33.6%) and cultural (32.1%) motivations prevail, significant associations with age, education, and gender were found ( $p < .05$ ). Crucially, the regression model identifies that global satisfaction ( $M=5.85/7$ ) is primarily driven by the story behind objects ( $\beta=0.163$ ,  $p<.01$ ), the exhibition objects themselves ( $\beta=0.137$ ,  $p<.01$ ), and infrastructure ( $\beta=0.110$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Segmentation analysis further uncovers divergent patterns, where narrative content significantly predicts satisfaction for women and residents, while men and non-residents prioritize tangible attributes. It is concluded that visitor satisfaction depends on the interaction between museum environment attributes and visitor characteristics, providing guidelines for differentiated management in emerging cultural destinations.*

**Keywords:** Visitor satisfaction, Cultural tourism, Emerging museums, Market segmentation, Heritage management.

### RESUMEN

Este estudio analiza los factores que determinan la satisfacción de los visitantes en museos ubicados en un destino turístico emergente, un ámbito aún poco abordado en la literatura sobre turismo cultural. A partir de un enfoque cuantitativo, se aplicaron 380 encuestas presenciales en museos de Puerto Varas, Chile, cuyos datos fueron analizados mediante estadísticas descriptivas, pruebas de chi-cuadrado (con V de Cramer) y regresión lineal múltiple. Los resultados evidencian un perfil predominante de turistas no residentes (61,8%), jóvenes (68,4% entre 18 y 34 años) y con educación superior (79,5%). Las motivaciones principales fueron recreativas (33,6%) y culturales (32,1%), con asociaciones significativas entre edad, educación y género ( $p < ,05$ ). El modelo de regresión indica que la satisfacción global ( $M = 5,85/7$ ) se explica principalmente por la historia detrás de los objetos ( $\beta = 0,163$ ,  $p < ,01$ ), los objetos exhibidos ( $\beta = 0,137$ ,  $p < ,01$ ) y la infraestructura ( $\beta = 0,110$ ,  $p < ,05$ ). El análisis por segmentos muestra que el contenido narrativo incide más en la satisfacción de mujeres y residentes, mientras que hombres y no residentes valoran atributos tangibles. Se concluye que la satisfacción depende de la interacción entre los atributos museográficos y las características de los visitantes, ofreciendo directrices para la gestión diferenciada en destinos culturales emergentes.

**Palabras clave:** Satisfacción del visitante, Turismo cultural, Museos emergentes, Segmentación de mercado, Gestión patrimonial.

## INTRODUCTION

Museums play a fundamental role in preserving cultural heritage and building meaningful connections between historical and contemporary contexts (Mohammadi & Basouli, 2024). In recent decades, these institutions have undergone a substantial transformation, shifting from an exclusive focus on conservation towards a visitor experience orientation (Janes & Sandell, 2019). This reconfiguration positions visitor satisfaction as a key performance indicator, especially in cultural tourism contexts where museums act as drivers of economic development and identity cohesion (Richards, 2018).

This study is grounded in two complementary conceptual frameworks: Falk and Dierking (2016) Contextual Model, which conceptualizes the museum experience as resulting from the dynamic interaction between personal, sociocultural, and physical contexts; and the meta-analytic evidence from Faerber et al. (2021), which quantifies significant satisfaction predictors organized into dimensions including tangible (e.g., infrastructure, signage) and intangible attributes (e.g., emotions, authenticity). These approaches are articulated with Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, which explains how prior cultural background structures individuals' practices and perceptions (Bourdieu, 2012). Together, this theoretical triangulation allows for the analysis of satisfaction determinants by integrating experiential, evaluative, and sociocultural dimensions, overcoming unidimensional perspectives still present in the literature (Packer & Ballantyne, 2016).

However, an empirical gap persists in understanding these mechanisms in emerging cultural destinations, characterized by incipient institutional structures, mixed audiences, and limited resources (Brulon, 2021; Richards, 2018), where the intersection between accelerated cultural tourism and incipient museum development creates particular dynamics. Although research such as Faerber et al. (2021) has underscored the role of experiential components and environmental conditions in generating satisfaction, and studies in comparable contexts have confirmed basic relationships between museum experience and satisfaction (Preko & Gyepi-Garbrah, 2021), their operation in specific contexts, such as small-scale museums with a strong tourist orientation, remains underexplored.

Chile offers a suitable setting to address this gap. Its regional museum development presents marked contrasts, with consolidated institutions coexisting alongside local museums of growing tourist projection and museum spaces of varying magnitude (Subdirección Nacional de Museos, 2024). Puerto

Varas, a lakeside destination in southern Chile, constitutes a representative case by articulating German-Chilean heritage with a sustained flow of national and international visitors. Recent research highlights the role of tour operators in promoting heritage routes and configuring a diversified tourist offer in the city, where museums are embedded in a broader ecosystem of cultural mobilities (Riquelme et al., 2022). This dynamic is framed by global trends where museums and creative industries establish strategic collaborations to drive sustainable development, revaluing cultural heritage as a resource for innovation and community cohesion (Gaitán et al., 2025).

This context is enhanced by the phenomenon of "lifestyle migration" documented in the Chilean Norpatagonia, where individuals with high cultural capital—coinciding with the majority profile of museum visitors—settle in the region seeking a better quality of life, self-reinvention, and meaningful experiences, acting as agents of cultural transformation (Zunino et al., 2016). This socio-cultural context offers a natural laboratory to examine the interactions between museographic attributes, visitor characteristics, and satisfaction in contexts of emerging cultural development.

From this integrated framework, the central hypothesis posits that overall visitor satisfaction is determined by the interaction between specific museographic attributes (narrative and tangible) and visitors' sociodemographic characteristics (gender, residence, educational level, and age). It is expected that (H1) narrative attributes—such as the stories behind the exhibited objects—will be stronger predictors of satisfaction among women, residents, and visitors with higher cultural capital, whereas (H2) tangible attributes—such as infrastructure and displayed artifacts—will exert a greater influence on satisfaction among men, non-residents, and segments with lower levels of heritage familiarity.

Within this context, the specific objectives are: (1) to characterize the sociodemographic and motivational profile of visitors; (2) to identify the most valued museum attributes; (3) to determine significant predictors of global satisfaction; and (4) to analyze differential patterns according to sociodemographic segments.

The article is organized into five sections. Following this introduction, the methodology details the exploratory-descriptive quantitative design and analytical techniques employed. The results present findings on visitor profile, motivations, valued attributes, and satisfaction determinants. The discussion interprets these results in light of existing literature, while the conclusions synthesize the main

contributions and study limitations. The findings aim to provide a conceptual and practical framework for the strategic management of cultural institutions in similar contexts, balancing operational sustainability with community relevance and tourist appeal.

### STUDY AREA

Puerto Varas (41°19'S 72°59'O), located in the Los Lagos Region in southern Chile, constitutes an emerging tourist destination of high heritage value. Known as the "City of Roses," it is situated on the western shore of Lake Llanquihue and offers a privileged view of the Osorno and Calbuco volcanoes, configuring a natural environment that underpins much of its tourist appeal (Municipalidad Puerto Varas, 2023).

Founded in 1853 during the context of German colonization, the city retains a marked Teutonic cultural and architectural heritage, visible in its urban landscape, gastronomy, and local traditions (Municipalidad Puerto Varas, 2023). This legacy distinguishes it within the southern Chilean lake circuit, making it an ideal setting for studying cultural tourism in contexts of incipient development.

The study area comprises municipal and private museums located within the urban radius of Puerto Varas, institutions that face the dual challenge of preserving local cultural heritage and responding to an expanding and increasingly diversified tourist demand. According to data from the National Tourism Service, the commune received approximately 266 thousand visitors in 2022, while tourism-related sales reached approximately 144.4 million USD in 2021 (Universidad San Sebastián, 2024).

The selection of Puerto Varas as a case study is justified by its paradigmatic status as an emerging cultural destination, characterized by: (1) a museum sector in the process of consolidation; (2) a hybrid audience comprising local residents as well as national and international tourists; and (3) structural tensions between heritage conservation and tourism development, as documented in recent research on the processes of touristification and gentrification in the city (Hernández, 2022). These conditions render it an ideal empirical setting for analyzing the determinants of museum satisfaction in non-metropolitan contexts.

Figure 1 illustrates some of the most representative museums and cultural attractions in the city.

Figure 1. Museums and cultural attractions in Puerto Varas.



Museo Pablo Fierro<sup>1</sup>



Museo Antonio Felmer<sup>2</sup>



Centro de Arte Molino Machmar<sup>3</sup>



Casa Kuschel<sup>4</sup>

Source:<sup>1-3</sup>[www.tripadvisor.cl](http://www.tripadvisor.cl),<sup>2</sup> [www.registromuseoschile.cl](http://www.registromuseoschile.cl),  
<sup>4</sup> [franciscomorande.cl](http://franciscomorande.cl)

## METHODOLOGY

The study employed a cross-sectional quantitative design with an exploratory-descriptive approach. Data collection was conducted through intentional non-probabilistic sampling, obtaining a final sample of 380 adult visitors to Puerto Varas. This sample size provides a margin of error of  $\pm 5\%$  for a 95% confidence level under maximum heterogeneity ( $p=q=0.5$ ), and a statistical power of 0.95 to detect small to medium effects ( $f^2 = 0.10$ ) in multiple regression analysis.

Data were collected through an in-person structured survey that included: (1) sociodemographic variables (age, gender, education, income, and place of residence); (2) binary scales of visit motivation (cultural, recreational, educational, and social); (3) binary scales assessing valued attributes (infrastructure, atmosphere, exhibition objects, historical narrative, quality of the guide, and service experience); and (4) an overall satisfaction measure using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = completely dissatisfied to 7 = completely satisfied). The instrument was validated through expert judgment by three specialists in tourism and research methodology.

The data analysis comprised: (1) descriptive statistics (frequencies, measures of central tendency, dispersion, and shape); (2) contingency tables with Chi-square and Cramer's V tests; (3) independent-samples t-tests and ANOVA for mean comparisons; and (4) multiple linear regression to identify predictors of overall satisfaction, with assumption testing based on Variance Inflation Factor ( $VIF < 5$ ) and model fit statistics ( $R^2$ , adjusted  $R^2$ ). Segmented models were estimated by gender, residence, education, and age group to explore differential predictive patterns. The general regression model was expressed as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \dots + \beta_kX_k + \varepsilon$$

where Y represents global satisfaction,  $\beta_0$  the constant,  $\beta_1$ - $\beta_k$  the regression coefficients for the significant predictors, and  $\varepsilon$  the random error.

All analyses were performed with IBM SPSS Statistics v.28, establishing a significance level of  $\alpha = .05$ . The study complied with the ethical principles of social research, guaranteeing the anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent of the participants..

## RESULTS

### Visitor profile

Table 1 describes the sociodemographic composition of the sample of visitors surveyed (N=380). The distribution by sex was balanced, with 50.8% men, 47.4% women, and 1.8% who identified with another gender. The sample showed a marked

concentration in young age groups. The segments between 18-24 years (36.3%) and 25-34 years (32.1%) together constituted 68.4% of the total. Visitors showed a notably high educational level, with 73.2% having higher education and 6.3% postgraduate studies, totaling 79.5% of the sample with university training.

Regarding origin, the majority of visitors (61.8%) did not reside in Puerto Varas, thus identifying as tourists. The monthly income distribution was varied, with a concentration of 36.1% in the USD 300 to USD 999 range, followed by the USD 1000 to USD 1999 range (22.6%). 17.9% of the sample reported having no income.

**Table 1. Visitor sociodemographic characteristics (n = 380).**

Variable	Segment	%
Gender	Male	50.8
	Female	47.4
	Other	1.8
Age Range	18 - 24 years	36.3
	25 - 34 years	32.1
	35 - 44 years	12.4
	45 - 54 years	10.8
	55 years or more	8.4
Education	Basic education	0.5
	Secondary education	20.0
	Higher education	73.2
	Postgraduate education	6.3
Income Level	Less than USD 300	12.1
	USD 300 to USD 999	36.1
	USD 1000 to USD 1999	22.6
	USD 2000 or more	11.3
	No income	17.9
Resident of Puerto Varas	Yes	38.2
	No	61.8

Note. Exchange rate: CLP 1000/USD approx.  
 Source: Author's own survey data.

The results on visitor behavior in Table 2 reveal distinctive patterns in planning, experience, and expenditure. Regarding visit planning, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are predominant, with Social Networks (SN) being the most used tool (38.4%), followed by Websites (29.7%) and Mobile Applications (26.9%). Only 5.0% reported not using ICT for this purpose. Consistently, Social Networks are also the main source of information for visitors (58.0%), doubling the

Table 2. Visitor Behavior (n = 380).

Variable	Segment	%	Variable	Segment	%
Preferred ICT for planning visit	Social Networks	38.4	Preferred information medium	Social Networks	58.0
	Mobile Applications	26.9		Email	27.7
	Websites	29.7		Local Advertising	12.2
	Other/None	5.0		Other	2.1
Expenditure per visit (per person)	Less than US 10.1	53.4	Number of companions	None (Alone)	5.0
	USD 10.1 – USD 15	26.1		One person	58.2
	USD 15.1 – USD 20	12.4		3 to 4 people	30.5
	USD 20.1 – USD 25	4.5		5 people or more	5.3
	More than USD 25	3.7		Did not visit museums	1.1
Last visit	Less than a month ago	20.3	Preferred visit type	Guided visit	17.1
	1 to 6 months ago	32.9		Free visit	40.0
	6 months to 1 year ago	15.3		Both types of visits	42.6
	More than 1 year ago	30.3		None	0.3
	Never visited a museum	1.3			

Note. Exchange rate: CLP 1000/USD approx.  
 Source: Author's own survey data.

preference for Email (27.7%) and quintupling the use of Local Advertising (12.2%).

Regarding the on-site experience, a clear preference for flexibility and autonomy is observed. Although an almost identical proportion prefers "Free visit" (40.0%) or "Both types of visits" (42.6%), only 17.1% lean exclusively towards "Guided visit." The frequency analysis indicates that the majority of visitors (53.2%) have visited a museum in the last six months, although 30.3% reported that their last visit was more than a year ago.

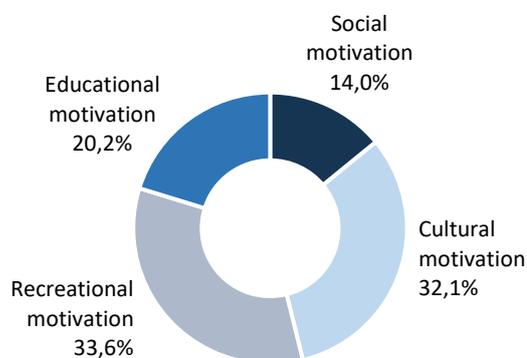
In terms of expenditure and group composition, the data show a profile of moderate economic consumption. More than half of the visitors (53.4%) are willing to spend less than USD 10.1 per visit, and 26.1% would spend between USD 10.1 and USD 15. The museum experience is predominantly social, as the vast majority (58.2%) visit museums as a couple, and another 30.5% do so in small groups of 3 to 4 people. Only 5.0% report visiting museums alone.

### Motivations for visiting museums

Descriptive results indicate that recreational (33.6%) and cultural (32.1%) motivations are predominant among visitors, representing together 65.7% of responses. Educational motivation was reported by 20.2% of respondents, while social motivation showed the lowest frequency (14.0%).

The complete distribution of motivations is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Motivations for Visiting Museums (n = 380).



Source: Author's own survey data.

### Association between motivations and sociodemographic variables

Contingency table analysis revealed statistically significant associations between visit motivations and specific sociodemographic variables. The details of these cross-tabulations, including association statistics, are summarized in Table 3.

A statistically significant association of moderate strength was identified between social motivation and age ( $p = .033$ ,

**Table 3. Association between Motivation and Sociodemographic Variables (%).**

Motivation	Variable	Category	% of Visitors	p-value ( $\chi^2$ )	Cramer's V
Social	Age	< 25 years	24.6	0.033*	.166
		25–34 years	27.0		
		35–44 years	23.4		
		45–54 years	7.3		
		55 or more	9.4		
Cultural	Education Level	Basic	0.0	0.015*	.165
		Secondary	47.4		
		Higher (Undergraduate)	49.3		
		Higher (Postgraduate)	79.2		
Recreational	Gender	Male	47.7	0.031*	.153
		Female	58.9		
		Other	75.0		

Note. Significance level: \*p < .05. Cramer's V: < 0.10: weak association, 0.11-0.30: moderate association.  
 Source: Authors' own survey data.

Cramer's V = 0.166). The highest percentages of visitors with social motivation were found in the younger age groups (25% in <25 years; 27% in 25-34 years).

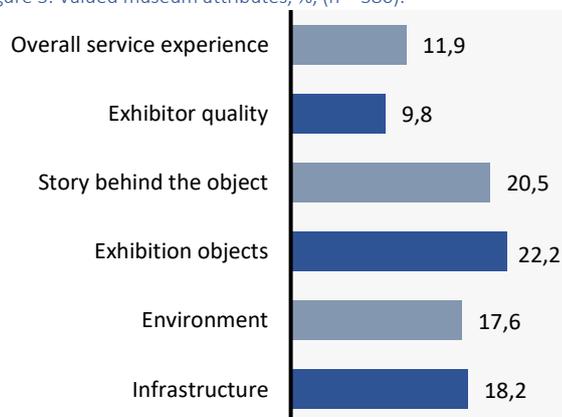
Cultural motivation showed a significant association of moderate strength with education level (p = .015, Cramer's V = 0.165). The proportion of visitors with this motivation was 0% at the basic level, 47% in secondary education, 49% in undergraduate higher education, and 79% in postgraduate studies.

Finally, recreational motivation showed a significant association of moderate strength with sex (p = .031, Cramer's V = 0.153). This was reported by 48% of men, 59% of women, and 75% of people identifying with another gender.

### Valued museum attributes

Descriptive results on the attributes valued by visitors are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Valued museum attributes, %, (n = 380).



Source: Author's own survey data.

The attribute "exhibition objects" obtained the highest proportion (22.2%), followed by the "story behind the object" (20.5%). Together, these two attributes related to museum content represent 42.7% of the valuations.

The attributes "infrastructure" (18.2%) and "ambiance" (17.6%) were the next most valued. Meanwhile, the "overall service experience" (11.9%) and the "quality of the exhibitor" (9.8%) recorded the lowest proportions among the evaluated attributes.

### Association between valued attributes and sociodemographic variable

Contingency table analysis revealed statistically significant associations between the valuation of specific museum attributes and sociodemographic variables. The detailed results are presented in Table 4.

A significant association was identified between the valuation of infrastructure and age (p = .03, Cramer's V = 0.168). The percentages of visitors who valued this attribute were higher in the younger age groups (57%-60% in under 44 years) compared to the older age groups (39% in 45-54 years; 34% in 55 or more years).

The valuation of infrastructure also showed a significant association with sex (p = .015, Cramer's V = 0.166). This attribute was valued by 59% of women and 51% of men.

Finally, a significant association was found between the valuation of ambiance and age (p = .002, Cramer's V = 0.209). 62% of visitors under 25 years valued this attribute, while the percentages were 32% and 34% in the 45-54 years and 55 or more years groups, respectively.

**Table 4. Association between valued attributes and sociodemographic variables (%).**

Attribute	Variable	Category	% of Visitors	p-value ( $\chi^2$ )	Cramer's V
Infrastructure	Age	< 25 years	57.2	.030*	.168
		25–34 years	58.2		
		35–44 years	59.6		
		45–54 years	39.0		
		55 or more	34.4		
Infrastructure	Gender	Male	51.3	.015*	.166
		Female	58.9		
Ambiance	Age	< 25 years	62.3	.002**	.209
		25–34 years	51.6		
		35–44 years	53.2		
		45–54 years	31.7		
		55 or more	34.4		

Note. Significance level: \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01. Cramer's V: < 0.10: weak association, 0.11-0.30: moderate association.  
 Source: Authors' own survey data.

### Visitor satisfaction level

The general satisfaction of visitors to the museums of Puerto Varas is at high levels (91%), with a mean of 5.85 out of 7 and a median of 6, indicating that the majority of visitors perceive the experience positively. The mode, also at 6, reinforces this concentration at the maximum score of the scale.

The negative skewness coefficient (-1.24) evidences that the distribution is skewed towards high values, meaning a significant number of visitors gave the highest scores. The positive kurtosis (2.35) confirms the predominance of high evaluations and the existence of a small group with lower perceptions.

The moderate standard deviation (1.10) and the range of 6 points show that, although high evaluations predominate, there is sufficient variability to identify differences in the

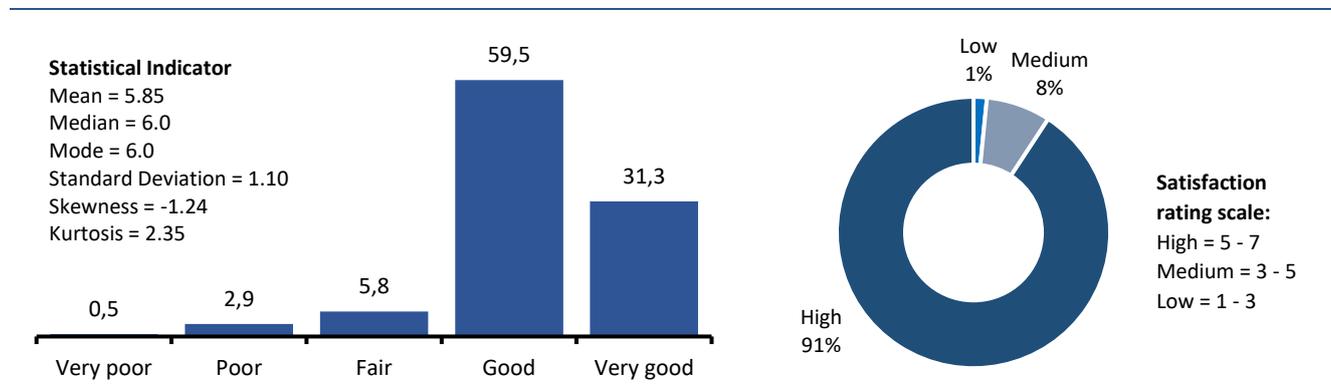
perceived experience among different visitor segments (Figure 4).

The analysis of mean differences did not reveal statistically significant associations between satisfaction and the analyzed sociodemographic variables: sex ( $F(3, 376) = 2.36, p = .071$ ), age ( $F(4, 375) = 0.655, p = .624$ ), education ( $F(3, 376) = 0.351, p = .788$ ), residence ( $t(378) = -0.694, p = .488$ ) and income ( $F(8, 371) = 1.59, p = .127$ ).

### Visitor satisfaction estimation model

Multiple linear regression analysis revealed that visitor satisfaction is significantly explained by three specific museum attributes. As detailed in Table 5, the story behind the objects ( $\beta = 0.163, p < .01$ ), the exhibition objects themselves ( $\beta = 0.137, p < .01$ ), and, to a lesser extent, infrastructure ( $\beta = 0.110, p < .05$ ) emerged as consistent predictors of satisfaction.

**Figure 4. General satisfaction of museum visitors**



Source: Authors' own survey data.

**Table 5. Determinants of Visitor Satisfaction by Sociodemographic Subgroups.**

Variable	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p	95% CI	VIF
Object story	0.368	0.113	0.163	3.252	.001**	[0.145, 0.591]	1.010
Exhibition object	0.318	0.116	0.137	2.745	.006**	[0.090, 0.546]	1.002
Infrastructure	0.243	0.111	0.110	2.194	.029*	[0.025, 0.461]	1.008
Constant	5.286	0.127	-	41.747	< .001***	[5.037, 5.535]	

Note. N = 380. R<sup>2</sup> = .063, Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .055, F(3, 376) = 8.37, p < .001. All VIFs < 5, indicating absence of multicollinearity problems. The dependent variable is global satisfaction with previous museum experiences (scale 1-7). B = unstandardized coefficient;  $\beta$  = standardized coefficient; CI = confidence interval. \*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001. Source: Authors' own survey data.

The global model demonstrated statistical significance (F (3, 376) = 8.37, p < .001), explaining approximately 6.3% of the variance in satisfaction. The variance inflation values (VIF < 1.1 for all predictors) confirmed the absence of multicollinearity problems.

#### Sociodemographic subgroup analysis

To contrast the central hypothesis, which posits a significant interaction between museum environment attributes and sociodemographic characteristics, segmented regression models were estimated. The results, summarized in Table 6, show differentiated predictive patterns according to sex, residence, education level, and age group, confirming that the influence of narrative (H1) and tangible (H2) attributes on

global satisfaction varies substantially among visitor segments. The analysis by income level did not show consistent relationships and was therefore excluded from the results presentation.

**Differences by sex:** Notably distinct predictive patterns were identified between men and women. For men, only infrastructure emerged as a significant predictor ( $\beta$  = 0.151, p = .038), albeit with a model of limited explanatory power (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .018). In marked contrast, for women both the story behind the objects ( $\beta$  = 0.263, p < .001) and the exhibition objects ( $\beta$  = 0.184, p = .010) constituted robust predictors, with a model that explained 10% of the variance in satisfaction.

**Table 6. Determinants of Visitor Satisfaction by Sociodemographic Subgroups.**

Sex, Residence and Education	Men (n=193)	Women (n=180)	Non-Residents (n = 235)	Residents (n = 145)	Without Higher Education (n=78)	With Higher Education (n=302)
Object story	0.054 (.455)	0.263 (<.001***)	0.051 (.430)	0.328 (< .001***)	0.329 (.148)	0.355 (.007**)
Exhibition object	0.082 (.255)	0.184 (.010*)	0.178 (.006**)	0.078 (.309)	0.312 (.165)	0.331 (.015*)
Infrastructure	0.151 (.038*)	0.052 (.460)	0.043 (.508)	0.215 (.006**)	0.042 (.844)	0.282 (.029*)
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.018	.100	.025	.158	.020	.053
F (p)	2.20 (.090)	7.63 (<.001***)	3.02 (.031*)	9.98 (<.001***)	1.52 (.215)	6.65 (< .001***)

Age Groups	< 25 years (n=138)	25-34 years (n=122)	35-44 years (n=47)	45-54 years (n=41)	> 54 years (n=32)
Object story	0.362 (.088)	0.526 (.011*)	-0.289 (.231)	0.297 (.231)	0.636 (.167)
Exhibition object	0.444 (.045*)	0.478 (.019*)	0.066 (.821)	0.047 (.847)	-0.189 (.692)
Infrastructure	0.331 (.114)	0.256 (.204)	0.062 (.798)	0.252 (.287)	0.410 (.384)
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.059	.079	.032	.004	.016
F (p)	3.87 (.011*)	4.44 (.005**)	0.53 (.667)	1.05 (.380)	1.16 (.341)

Note. Values presented as  $\beta$  (p). \*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001. The dependent variable is satisfaction with previous museum experiences (scale 1-7).  $\beta$  = standardized coefficient. Source: Authors' own survey data.

**Residence effects:** Residents of Puerto Varas showed the most solid and comprehensive predictive pattern (Adjusted  $R^2 = .158$ ), where both the story behind the objects ( $\beta = 0.328$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and infrastructure ( $\beta = 0.215$ ,  $p = .006$ ) emerged as significant predictors. For non-resident visitors, only the exhibition objects demonstrated significant predictive capacity ( $\beta = 0.178$ ,  $p = .006$ ), with a model of lower explanatory power (Adjusted  $R^2 = .025$ ).

**Influence of education level:** Visitors with higher education presented a significant model where the three evaluated attributes—story ( $\beta = 0.154$ ,  $p = .007$ ), objects ( $\beta = 0.138$ ,  $p = .015$ ), and infrastructure ( $\beta = 0.124$ ,  $p = .029$ )—contributed significantly to predicting their satisfaction. Conversely, for visitors without higher education, the complete model did not reach statistical significance ( $p = .215$ ) and none of the individual attributes emerged as a significant predictor.

**Variation by age groups:** The analysis by age cohorts revealed a notable evolution in the determinants of satisfaction. The 25-34 years group stood out for presenting the highest number of significant predictors, with both content attributes—story ( $\beta = 0.225$ ,  $p = .011$ ) and objects ( $\beta = 0.209$ ,  $p = .019$ )—emerging as significant. The youngest visitors (<25 years) showed a more limited pattern, where only the exhibition objects reached predictive significance ( $\beta = 0.171$ ,  $p = .045$ ). The middle-age groups (35-54 years) did not reveal significant predictors, while in those over 55 years, although no attribute reached statistical significance, the story showed the highest standardized coefficient of all analyzed groups ( $\beta = 0.258$ ).

## DISCUSSION

The study presents empirical evidence on the determinants of visitor satisfaction in museums located in emerging cultural destinations, offering consistent validation of the central hypothesis. The results confirm that global satisfaction is shaped by a significant interaction between museum environment attributes and sociodemographic characteristics, holistically integrating the profile, motivations, and visit behaviors. The findings not only reaffirm the relevance of specific museum attributes, such as narrative content, exhibited objects, and infrastructure, but also demonstrate how these factors are modulated by the visitor's cultural capital and personal context, in coherence with the Visitor Experience Notion (Falk & Dierking, 2016) and the meta-analytic evidence on satisfaction predictors (Faerber et al., 2021).

The predominance of a young, highly educated, and non-local audience reflects the typical dynamics of emerging cultural destinations and embodies the profile of the "lifestyle

migrant" identified in the Chilean Norpatagonia (Zunino et al., 2016). The combination of recreational and cultural motivations, together with the extensive use of social networks to plan the visit, configures an audience that seeks meaningful, flexible, and digitally mediated experiences. This digitally competent profile suggests opportunities to implement museum technologies that, according to recent research, can enhance the immersive experience, sense of presence, and visitor engagement through specific psychological mechanisms (Yang & Huang, 2025), coinciding with the observations of Riquelme et al. (2022) on tourist mobility practices in Puerto Varas, where visitors especially value the integration between architectural, landscape, and cultural heritage in their experiences. Crucially, these findings suggest that visit motivations transcend occasional leisure and respond to deeper existential searches for self-reinvention and "full life" that characterize these contemporary migrants, motivational patterns that find support in recent research on self-development and self-therapy as key drivers of museum satisfaction (Yi & La, 2023), in line with global trends of collaboration between museums and creative industries to drive sustainable development (Gaitán et al., 2025).

The associations between motivations and sociodemographic variables broaden the understanding of valuation processes. The prevalence of social motivations among visitors under 34 years suggests that the museum is perceived as a space for encounter and coexistence, surpassing the traditional conception of the museum as an exclusively contemplative environment, in coherence with its transformation towards the visitor experience (Janes & Sandell, 2019). In contrast, the relationship between education level and cultural motivation validates the concept of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2012), by showing that those who possess greater institutionalized cultural capital orient their experience towards content and interpretation.

The general regression model, in which the story behind the objects and the objects themselves stand out as predictors of satisfaction, underlines the centrality of narrative and material authenticity in the perception of quality. These findings align with established models in the services marketing literature that posit quality attributes as direct antecedents of visitor satisfaction (Yoon et al., 2010), validating the transferability of these conceptual frameworks to the museum context. Nevertheless, the segmented analysis reveals divergent patterns that nuance this model and evidence the heterogeneity of evaluative processes, particularly relevant in the diverse Chilean museum ecosystem characterized by institutions of varying scale and projection (Subdirección Nacional de Museos, 2024).

The differences observed by sex and residence show distinct valuation regimes. Women and residents place greater relevance on narrative elements, while men and non-resident visitors prioritize tangible aspects, such as objects and infrastructure. These variations in attention and valuation patterns find support in studies mapping museum experiences, where systematic differences are documented in how diverse audiences approach and value cultural contents (Kirchberg & Treondle, 2015). These differences are accentuated in cultural tourism contexts, where the search for authenticity and institutional expectations condition visitor experiences (Kim et al., 2020), a dynamic especially pertinent in the context of touristification documented in Puerto Varas (Hernández, 2022).

The influence of education level reinforces the role of cultural capital as an interpretive lens within the visitor's personal context (Falk & Dierking, 2016). The significance of the model only among those with higher education indicates that this group translates the valuation of specific attributes into global evaluations in a more structured manner. In contrast, among visitors with lower academic training, satisfaction seems to depend on emotional or contextual factors not captured in the model, which reveals the need to develop community engagement strategies that respond to these differences in cultural capital (Morse & Munro, 2015).

The age pattern identified, with a point of maximum sensitivity between 25 and 34 years, suggests that the relationship with heritage evolves throughout the life cycle. In later stages, valuation tends to shift towards dimensions associated with comfort, accessibility, or sociability, reinforcing the notion of a dynamic and contextual engagement that must be considered in contemporary museum management (Mohammadi & Basouli, 2024).

Together, the segmented analysis provides solid and nuanced empirical support for the central hypothesis. Hypothesis H1 is confirmed by observing that narrative attributes, particularly the story behind objects, are significantly stronger predictors among women, residents, and visitors with higher education, groups that present greater cultural capital or familiarity with the context. In a complementary manner, hypothesis H2 also finds support: tangible attributes (infrastructure and, to a lesser extent, exhibited objects) emerge as key determinants for men and non-residents. Although the variation by age was not the subject of a specific hypothesis, the observed pattern reveals an evolutionary component that enriches the model, showing that engagement with content attributes reaches its peak in the young adult cohort (25-34 years).

In synthesis, museum satisfaction in emerging destinations manifests as a relational phenomenon, resulting from the interaction between the objective characteristics of the offer and the interpretive frameworks of visitors. These findings evidence the need to advance towards analytical models that explicitly integrate the sociodemographic and contextual dimensions of the visitor, overcoming institutional approaches and recognizing the diversity of contemporary cultural experiences, particularly in contexts characterized by incipient institutional structures and mixed audiences (Brulon, 2021; Richards, 2018).

### Theoretical and practical implications

From a theoretical perspective, the study reinforces the validity of models based on the visitor experience (Falk & Dierking, 2016) and satisfaction predictors (Faerber et al., 2021), by demonstrating that satisfaction is mediated by differences in gender, residence, education, and age. These variations support the idea that cultural experiences are socially mediated processes dependent on the cultural (Bourdieu, 2012) and biographical capital of each visitor. The consistency of these findings with studies in other emerging destinations (Preko & Gyepi-Garbrah, 2021) suggests the existence of cross-contextual patterns in the sociodemographic mediation of museum satisfaction, while highlighting the need for models that capture local particularities and the influence of specific attributes.

In the management realm, the results suggest the implementation of differentiated strategies according to segments: (1) strengthen narrative content and interpretive mediation for women and residents; (2) improve infrastructure and object visibility for men and non-resident tourists; (3) design educational programs adapted to different training levels; and (4) focus curatorial interventions on young adults, for their greater capacity for cognitive and symbolic involvement. These strategies could be optimized through "edutainment" approaches that balance education and entertainment, thus enhancing the perceived authenticity of the materials and the museum experience (Komarac et al., 2024), in line with global trends of strategic collaboration between museums and creative industries (Gaitán et al., 2025).

### LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The moderate explanatory power of the models suggests the influence of variables not included, possibly associated with emotional, situational, or social factors. Future research should integrate mixed-methods approaches that combine quantitative analyses with qualitative techniques, such as

interviews or experiential observation, to capture the subjective dimensions of cultural enjoyment. It is also recommended to replicate the model across different museum and cultural contexts to validate its comparative applicability, particularly within Chile's diverse regional museum landscape (Subdirección Nacional de Museos, 2024). Finally, future research could incorporate innovative methods, such as observational studies or visitor interviews, to gain a deeper understanding of the cognitive and emotional mechanisms underlying visitor satisfaction.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates that visitor satisfaction in museums of emerging cultural destinations constitutes a complex and dialectical phenomenon, fully confirming the central hypothesis of a significant interaction between museum environment attributes and sociodemographic characteristics. The main contribution of this research lies in empirically integrating the analysis of museum offerings with a comprehensive characterization of the visitor profile, revealing that the experience is configured through the intersection between the public's cultural capital, residence, gender, and age with the institution's objective attributes.

The findings demonstrate that contemporary museums in emerging contexts function as polysemic spaces, simultaneously responding to recreational, educational, and social demands. This multifunctionality is reflected in differentiated patterns of valuation: while young and digitally connected visitors prioritize autonomous and meaningful experiences, audiences with higher cultural capital tend to value interpretive and narrative depth. Such diversity poses the core challenge of designing museological proposals that combine experiential accessibility with heritage rigor, addressing multiple motivations without compromising authenticity.

From a theoretical perspective, the study reaffirms the validity of visitor experience and perceived quality models, demonstrating that their explanatory power is significantly enhanced when incorporating sociodemographic variables as moderators. The validation of the concept of accumulated museum capital in the Latin American context enriches the available theoretical framework, while the identification of segmented patterns according to gender, residence, and age provides evidence of the social mechanisms that mediate the perception of cultural value. Specifically, this study provides empirical evidence on how museums in emerging destinations constitute meaningful spaces for lifestyle migrants, acting as platforms where these agents of cultural transformation

exercise and update their cultural capital in their new residence context.

In the methodological realm, the segmented analytical approach demonstrates its utility for revealing evaluative patterns that aggregate measurements tend to hide, offering a replicable model for future research in similar contexts. The identification of the 25-34 age group as a window of maximum cognitive engagement with museum content represents a particularly relevant finding for designing cultural mediation strategies.

In practical terms, the results demonstrate that museum management in emerging cultural destinations should be oriented toward differentiated strategies that integrate three interdependent dimensions: (1) curatorial narratives coherent with the expectations of specific publics; (2) infrastructure that facilitates diverse appropriations of the exhibition space; and (3) cultural mediation aimed at reducing interpretive gaps. Likewise, the need to articulate museum offerings with the broader system of routes and tourist flows identified in the city is emphasized, establishing strategic collaborations with tour operators to position local museums within emerging cultural circuits.

As a main limitation, the moderate explanatory power of the models suggests the influence of unconsidered variables, particularly of an emotional and social nature, indicating the need to incorporate mixed methodological approaches in future research. We recommend exploring the application of this model in other Latin American museum contexts and deepening the analysis of the qualitative dimensions underlying the identified differentiated satisfaction experiences.

Ultimately, this study contributes to the advancement of more adaptive and inclusive museum management models, capable of balancing heritage authenticity, experiential innovation, and cultural sustainability within the dynamic context of emerging cultural destinations. It reinforces the role of museums as spaces that foster meaningful connections between local communities and visitors in territories undergoing socio-cultural transformation.

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