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A Closer Look at Santiago de Compostela's Pilgrims through the Lens of Motivations

Abstract

This study aims to identify pilgrims' motivations to undertake the *Camiño de Santiago* and examine differences regarding socio demographics and other characteristics. An online questionnaire was used to collect data from pilgrims that had travelled the *Camiño de Santiago*. A total of 1,140 valid responses was collected from 45 different nationalities. The results indicate that pilgrims are mostly motivated by spiritual aspects, by wanting new experiences and for the nature and sports experience. Interestingly, religious motivations are the least important. The study also found that motivations differ according to several factors such as gender, nationality and the way the pilgrims undertook their journey. The findings of this study offer a better understanding of modern pilgrims, providing useful insights to stakeholders.

KeyWords: *Camiño de Santiago*, Motivations, pilgrims, pilgrimages, religious tourism, Saint James Way, Santiago de Compostela

1. INTRODUCTION

A well-known definition of traditional pilgrimage was proposed by Barber (1993) as “a journey resulting from religious causes, externally to a holy site, and internally for spiritual purposes and internal understanding” (p.1). Not only is it one of the oldest forms of population mobility (Collins-Kreiner, 2010), it exists in all of the main religions of the world (Pavicic, Alfirevic, & Batarelo, 2007). Medieval pilgrims would leave their homes, wanted others to know about their travel and some would return with souvenirs, such as the conch shell from Santiago de Compostela (Theilmann, 1987). That is why religious

pilgrimages are considered to be the early roots of tourism today (Digance, 2003; Timothy & Boyd, 2006). Thus, pilgrimages are considered to be one of the oldest forms of tourism (Mustonen, 2006; Rinschede, 1992; Štefko, Kiráľová, & Mudrík, 2015).

Pilgrimages to sacred sites are obviously related to religious tourism considered as a “type of tourism whose participants are motivated either in part or exclusively for religious reasons” (Rinschede, 1992, p. 52). However, they are also closely related to other types of tourism, such as heritage tourism (Timothy & Boyd, 2006) and cultural tourism (Rinschede, 1992). Indeed, the locations visited and the pilgrimage route itself are considered to be important heritage attractions (Timothy & Boyd, 2006) that attract tourists interested in learning about the history of a site or about religious faith and its culture (Olsen & Timothy, 2006).

A significant number of researchers have long argued that that pilgrimages are a type of tourism (e.g. Blom, Nilsson, & Santos, 2016; Cànoves, Romagosa, Blanco, & Priestley, 2012; Lois-González, 2013; Nilsson & Tesfahuney, 2016; Rinschede, 1992). Being associated to tourism raises considerable debate on pilgrims’ real motivations to undertake their journeys. Although historically a pilgrim was described as a person that walked to a shrine place with religious motivations (Rinschede, 1992), nowadays modern pilgrims travel for many other reasons (Oviedo, de Courcier, & Farias, 2014). Indeed, pilgrimage is not limited to devotional visits to historical shrines (Courtney, 2013).

An interesting development is the increase in pilgrimage (Ascoura, 2013; Nilsson & Tesfahuney, 2016), which reinforces the importance of understanding pilgrims real motivations. The pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela has become an example of increase pilgrimage in a contemporary society, reviving a medieval path, transforming the *Camiño de Santiago* in a cultural and touristic attraction (Raj & Morpeth, 2007). In fact, it is considered to be the first route to see the return of pilgrimages in the West and therefore, should be considered as a case study to promote other cultural routes (Lois-González & Santos, 2015).

Religious tourism represents an attractive market. Indeed, worldwide religious travel is one of the fastest growing segments, with 300 to 330 million tourists visiting religious sites every year, 40% of which take place in Europe (UNWTO, 2014). Religious tourism has a positive economic impact (Kouchi, Nezhad, & Kiani, 2016; Sánchez, Fernández, & Lara, 2016) and can contribute to the promotion of a region or a country. For instance,

the growth of the *Camino de Santiago* has become an important touristic product to promote Galicia, contributing for better routes, new hostels for pilgrims, rural houses and hotels and through a strong publicity campaign call for pilgrims around the world (Solla, 2006).

Given the rise in religious tourism, it is crucial to understand what motivates travelers to sacred sites (Raj, Griffin, & Blackwell, 2015). This study aims to identify pilgrims' motivations to undertake the *Camino de Santiago* and examine differences regarding socio demographics and other characteristics. Surprisingly, there are not many studies addressing this topic. Furthermore, the few that do exist do not explore the relationship between motivations and other aspects, such as nationality or type of accommodations chosen. Pilgrims should not be considered as a homogenous group. It is important that all parties interested in this target group realize that pilgrims have different motivations in order to find the best way to cater for their needs. For instance, there are now many tour operators that sell packages for a pilgrimage experience. The results of this study are valuable to create and promote these packages. This study also responds to Damari and Mansfeld's (2014) call for research on pilgrims' travel motivations and contributes to the tourism literature by providing updated insights regarding the modern pilgrim with a meaningful sample of pilgrims.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Camino de Santiago

El Camino de Santiago, also known in English as "The Way of Saint James," is the pilgrimage to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in northwestern Spain. It is here that, according to Christian tradition, the remains of Saint James, one of Jesus' disciples, are interred. According to the official history of the pilgrimage, the body of Saint James was discovered by a shepherd in the Galicia region of Spain during the 9th century. The King at the time, King Alfonso II, had a small chapel built at this place, but later in 1078 the construction of the Romanesque cathedral began. The first pilgrimages date back to the 9th and 10th centuries, but it was in the 11th century that the pilgrimage to Santiago gained its international dimension (Camino de Santiago, n.d.). The popularity of the route contributed to the region's development with hostelries and Romanesque style churches being built to accommodate the pilgrims and towns emerged along the routes (Villarrubia,

2010). By the 13th century it is estimated that 500,000 pilgrims a year arrived to Saint James's shrine (Digance, 2003; Murray & Graham, 1997). The 12th and the 13th centuries are considered the golden age of the pilgrimage. Shortly after, in the years of Renaissance and Reformation in Europe, the number of pilgrims to Santiago significantly declined (Pilgrim's Welcome Office, 2017). An additional element to this crisis was the disappearance of the apostle's remains that were lost for three centuries (Santos, 2002)

This medieval pilgrimage route saw its revival with force at the end of the twentieth century (Blom et al., 2016). In 1985, UNESCO declared the city of Santiago de Compostela a World Heritage site and in 1987, the route was acknowledged as the first European Cultural Route by the Council of Europe. In 1993, UNESCO recognized the *Camiño*'s first-class heritage sites, outstanding natural landscapes and intangible heritage and declared the Routes of Santiago (the French Way and the Routes of Northern Spain) a World Heritage (UNESCO, 2017).

In last recent decades, public authorities have invested in promoting the cultural tourist attractions of their cities and regions along the route (Lois-González, 2013). The *Camiño* is seen as a tourist product (Lois-González & Medina, 2003) and its success benefits all urban centres and rural districts it goes through (Lois-González, 2013). The promotion efforts undertaken have generated increase in the number of pilgrims in the 21st century. In 1997, 25,179 pilgrims arrived to Santiago de Compostela and received the *Compostela* certificate, proof of a "traditional pilgrim". In 2016, almost 20 years later, this number had risen to 277,915. The pilgrim of Santiago is recognized by this document given to those that travelled the *Camiño*. However, in order to receive the *Compostela* several conditions must be fulfilled. First of all, individuals must have travelled the *Camiño* at least 100 kilometers by foot or horseback or 200 kilometers by bicycle (Lois-González & Santos, 2014). Secondly, it is only given to those who declare that they travelled the *Camiño* for religious or spiritual reasons. According to the Pilgrim's Welcome Office (2017) the reasons that pilgrims most indicated were religious and others (47.75%), followed by religious (44.26%) and non religious (8%). In spite of the religious motivations being the most indicated, this does not mean that it is the real motivation, since it is a requirement to obtain the certificate (González, 2013). Thus, these data are not particularly interesting in assessing Santiago's pilgrims' motivations (Murray & Graham, 1997). Therefore, it is important to examine pilgrims' real motivations to Santiago to confirm if religion is the main motivation to walk the way of Santiago. It is

important to note that, in the particular case of the *Camiño de Santiago*, the route is more important than the final destination (Santos, 2002). This means that walking the *Camiño* is more important than visiting the Apostle's Tomb.

2.2. Pilgrims' Motivations

Historically, a pilgrim was described as a person that walked to a shrine place with religious motivations (Rinschede, 1992). There is consensus that a traditional pilgrimage was conducted with a strong religious motivation (Shinde, 2007). This relationship seems to be even more authentic considering that the Church itself encourages pilgrimages in order of "rendering a deeper and richer experience of faith" (Ambrosio, 2015, p. 131).

Nowadays, the modern pilgrim is not necessarily motivated by religion (Štefko et al., 2015) and travels for many other reasons than religious ones (Oviedo et al., 2014). Even when pilgrims travel with religious motivations, there are many secular aspects such as finding accommodation or a place to eat, that are the same as a tourist (Štefko et al., 2015). For these reasons and many others (c.f. Olsen & Timothy, 2006; Turner & Turner, 1978), it is difficult to distinguish a pilgrim from a tourist. This thought is well captured in Turner and Turner's (1978) seminal quote: "if a tourist is half pilgrim, a pilgrim is half tourist" (p.20).

Considering the broad definition that pilgrims are individuals that take a journey to a sacred place and the fact that pilgrims are compared to tourists, this raises the question of pilgrims' real motivations. Motivation is "something which commits people to a course of action, i.e. the driving force which exists in all individuals" (Raj et al., 2015, p. 109). What is the driving force that guides pilgrims on their journey to a sacred place?

Over the years, several researchers have tried to answer this question. However, it is a difficult topic to research since it is not easy for pilgrims to state their motivations (Blackwell, 2014). Many factors contribute to this difficulty. For instance, Nilsson (2016) points out that many pilgrims forget their original motivation. On the other hand, a pilgrim's motivation may be to achieve merit or remove sin, although they will not admit it (Mustonen, 2006). An interesting observation made by a pilgrim (personal communication, August, 2016) was that many pilgrims took the *Camiño de Santiago* to find a life partner, but were also not willing to admit it.

For the purpose of this study, “pilgrim” is considered to be a person who undertook a journey by foot, horse or bike, to a sacred place, regardless of their motivations.

A review was undertaken to find studies published in English and in respected academic journals addressing pilgrims’ motivations to undertake a pilgrimage. Articles were searched for in Science Direct (<http://www.sciencedirect.com>), EBSCOHost (<http://search.ebscohost.com>) and Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.com>), using keywords such as “pilgrims’ motivations”, “pilgrimages”, “pilgrims”, “pilgrimage routes”. Dozens of articles were found, but many of them were eliminated because they examined, for example, “pilgrims” motivations to visit a sacred site, not considering the journey to reach it (e.g. Collins-Kreiner & Gatrell, 2006) or because they were conceptual papers (e.g. Damari & Mansfeld, 2014). This study only considered empirical research and studies that examined pilgrims that had undertaken a pilgrimage, i.e., had taken religious routes by foot, horse or bike. Put differently, it did not include motivations to visit a sacred site, as the focus was on the motivations to undertake the journey itself. Only seven articles fulfilled these criteria (presented in Table 1). The majority of these studies were conducted with pilgrims that had walked the *Camino de Santiago*. A quick examination of the table shows that religious motivations have been losing importance. All studies were quantitative, except for the study of Nilsson (2016). The biggest sample size of pilgrims from *Camino de Santiago* was in Oviedo et al. (2014) study with 470 respondents.

Table 1 – Review of Pilgrim’s Motivations Literature

Motivations (by order of importance in study)	Data Analysis of the motivations	Sample	Authors
<p><i>Camino de Santiago results:</i> Only Religious – 40.6% Religious and other – 50.8% No religious – 8.6%</p> <p><i>El Rocio results:</i> Only Religious – 56.7% Religious and other – 26.1% No religious – 17.1%</p>	Descriptive (percentage)	300 questionnaires collected along the <i>Camino Santiago</i> in 2008 and 1,200 questionnaires obtained among pilgrims of the <i>El Rocio</i> pilgrimage in 2008.	de la Torre, Naranjo, and Carranza (2012)
Leisure and Recreation (39%) Religious (35%) Cultural (33%) Curiosity (23%) Sport (17%) Spiritual (5%) Other (17%)	Descriptive (percentage)	204 Face-to-face questionnaire survey to pilgrims doing the Portuguese routes to Santiago. Several nationalities: Portuguese, Spanish, German, Irish and English.	Fernandes, Pimenta, Gonçalves, and Rachão (2012)

Not indicated(25) Religious motivations/Pilgrimage(12) Personal Motivations (8) Don't know the reason (7) Adventure (4) Curiosity (3) Sport (2) Alternative to daily life (2) Cultural Motivation(1)	Descriptive (number)	63 Italian online travel diaries of Camino de Santiago pilgrims	Lopez (2013)
Clarification (66%) Athletic (44%) Spiritual (39%) Religious (31%) Cultural (26%) (Pilgrims could choose more than one motive)	Descriptive (percentage)	85 Camino de Santiago pilgrims contacted via internet on platforms discussing pilgrimage. 4 Nationalities: German, Austrian, Swiss and Italian.	Schnell and Pali (2013)
Scale 1 to 6 Spiritual growth (M= 4.03) Sensations seeking (M=3.91) Seeking life direction (M= 3.17) Religious growth (M=3.09) Community (M=2.74) Devotion (M=1.88)	Exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation - six factors were extracted from 48 items, which explained 54 % of the total variance	470 questionnaires collected along the Camino Santiago (French Way) during August-September of 2009 and July 2010. 40 Nationalities: Spanish, German, American, Italian, French, Brazilian, among others	Oviedo et al. (2014)
Spiritual reasons (45.2%) Religious reasons (27.9%) Cultural experience (24.0%) Sport (2.9%)	Descriptive (percentage)	104 semi-structured interviews with pilgrims along the Camino Santiago (French Way) in July and August (year not mentioned)	Kim, Kim, and King (2016)
Most of the pilgrims were looking for a subjective meaning in spiritual or/and life-reflecting ways.		53 Camino de Santiago pilgrims were interviewed (qualitative study)	Nilsson (2016)

One of the first studies is from 2012, conducted by de la Torre et al. (2012). Their study analyzed pilgrims from two major pilgrimages routes in Spain: *Camino de Santiago* and *El Rocío*. In both cases, religion was found to be the most important motivation. Indeed, even if the reason was not “only religious”, it was “religious and other”. In the particular case of the Camino de Santiago, only 8.6% of the pilgrims have no faith related reasons.

Another study, from the same year, conducted with a sample of 204 pilgrims on one of the routes to *Santiago de Compostela* (Fernandes et al., 2012) found that the most important reasons for walking the way were leisure and recreation (39%) and religious (35%). Similarly, although with a smaller sample, Lopez (2013) found that religion was also the most important motivation for pilgrims to undertake the journey. These earlier studies show the importance of religion as a motivation to conduct a pilgrimage.

However, more recent studies have evidenced that religion has not been found to be the main motivation. For instance, Schnell and Pali (2013) found that 66% of the pilgrims from their study were motivated by their need for clarification. In fact, Schnell and Pali's (2013) study found that the pilgrims' commitment with religion was low. In Oviedo et al.

(2014) study, spiritual growth, sensations seeking and seeking life directions were motivations more important than religious ones. Finally, in a more recent study (Kim et al., 2016), although the main aim was to explore the values exhibited by travelers along the *Camino de Santiago*, the authors also asked participants to state their motivations, with spiritual motivations being chosen by 45.2%.

One of the most contrasting results when comparing these studies concerns the sport-related motivations (Athletic or Sports). While some studies have found that it has been an important motivation (e.g. Schnell & Pali, 2013), others have found the opposite (e.g. Kim et al., 2016) or did not even include it in the study (e.g. Oviedo et al., 2014).

Research has shown that motivations may differ according to several factors. For example, pilgrims that walk are more motivated by spirituality reasons, while those that go by bike are more motivated by adventure and physical activity (Gallegos, Juan, & Montes, 2007). Oviedo et al. (2014) found a significant positive correlation between age and religious motivations and community motivations. Moreover, older pilgrims were less likely to be motivated by sensations seeking and life direction motivations. The present study further explores the relationships between motivations and other factors. Preliminary results of this study were previously presented at the 9th Annual International Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage Conference 28th June-1st July in Armeno, Italy.

3. METHODOLOGY

Data was collected using an online questionnaire available from August 1st to September 30th, 2015, to individuals who had travelled the Camino at least once. The online survey was chosen because of its low costs and for the ability to reach pilgrims from all over the world. The questionnaire was available in English, Portuguese, Spanish, French and German since these are the nationalities of most of the pilgrims according to the Pilgrim's Welcome Office (2017).

A set of 25 items capturing pilgrimages' motivations was available on the questionnaire for them to rate using a 5-point Likert-type scale where 1 represented "not important at all" and 5 "extremely important". These items were selected from previous literature (i.e. Battour, Ismail, Battor, & Awais, 2014; Oviedo et al., 2014). The final part of the questionnaire dealt with demographic information such as gender, age, residence, education, and marital status.

Pilgrims were targeted using several approaches. First, a link with the online questionnaire was placed on several *Camiño de Santiago* groups existent on Facebook and Twitter. The Associations of Pilgrims was also contacted and shared the survey among pilgrims. A total of 1,140 valid surveys were collected.

Descriptive analysis was used to examine respondents' profile, using means (M) and standard deviations (SD) to describe quantitative variables, while qualitative ones were summarized with counts and percentages. In order to simplify the analysis of pilgrims' motivations, a factorial analysis was conducted to reduce the 25 items into a smaller set of factors. Before this, Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett test of sphericity were examined to determine the appropriateness of factor analysis (data reduction procedure) for the collected motivational data.

The Bartlett Test of Sphericity indicated that the correlation matrix had significant correlations among the variables to conduct factor analysis ($p < 0.0005$). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy had a highly acceptable value of 0.875, which means the sample is adequate to conduct a principal component analysis on the 25 items. Thus, factor analysis (principal components with varimax rotation) was performed on the motivation items to identify underlying dimensions of the pilgrims' motivations to walk the Way of Santiago. For the subsequent analysis these factors were accounted for by taking the average value of the items corresponding to each one. The Spearman correlation coefficient (ρ) was considered to analyze the association between the motivational factors and some quantitative variables. To examine possible differences regarding to gender, educational levels and other characteristics, Mann-Whitney test or Kruskal-Wallis tests were used. When more than two groups were involved multiple comparison tests were performed. All statistical analysis were carried out with SPSS and a significant result was established if $p < 0.05$.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Respondents' Profile

The respondents were pilgrims that had travelled the *Camiño de Santiago* at least once. Most of them were Portuguese (31.7%), followed by the Spanish (17.9%), the German (12.6%), the French (6.1%), Brazilians (6.0%) and Americans (5.7%). The remaining 20.1% were from 39 other nationalities. The average number of times pilgrims had taken

the *Camino* was 2.69, ranging one time to 74 times. Respondents' mean age was 48 years old, the youngest being 18 years old and the oldest 82. In terms of gender, the respondents consisted of 56.6% male and 43.4% female, with 57% reporting to be married or having non-marital partnership. The respondents are highly educated, since more than 57% have at least a bachelor degree (see Table 2). When asked about the type of accommodation ever used on Saint James's way, 80% referred pilgrim hostels, 26.1% at Bed & Breakfast/Guesthouses, 24.8% hotels, 14.7% public buildings (like sport centers and churches), 8.2 % private accommodations and only 4% campsites. Almost 91% of respondents undertook the way by walking and a fewer percentage (13.2%) made the way by bike.

Table 2- Respondent's Profile

	Frequency	Percent
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	495	43.4%
Female	645	56.6%
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single	342	30%
Married or Non-marital partnership	650	57.02%
Divorced	127	11.14%
Widowed	21	1.84%
<i>Education Level</i>		
< than High School	37	3.2%
High School	291	25.5%
Prof. Qualification	152	13.3%
Bachelor	391	34.3%
Master's Degree	215	18.9%
Doctorate/PhD	54	4.7%
<i>How pilgrims travel the way</i>		
Walking	1036	90.9%
Cycling	150	13.2%
<i>Type of accommodation</i>		
Pilgrims' hostels	912	80%
Hotel	283	24.8%
Public buildings (sport centers, churches, etc.)	168	14.7%
Private accommodations	94	8.2%
Bed & Breakfast/Guesthouse	297	26.1%
Campsite	46	4%

Regarding pilgrim's motivations, 25 items were aggregated into eight dimensions (explained variance = 71.5 %, KMO = 0.875) as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 - Factor Loadings and Reliability for Pilgrim's Motivations

Factor and Items	Mean	Factor Loading	% of Variance	Cronbach's Alpha
F1 – Religious Motivations	2.63		15.8%	.92
To pray		.93		
By faith		.91		
Journey for devotion to God		.85		
Participating in sacraments		.78		
Devotion to St. James		.72		
F2 – Spiritual Motivations	4.15		10.5%	.78
Enjoy solitude and inner peace		.82		
Spiritual and quiet journey		.79		
Experiencing a simpler lifestyle		.62		
Detachment from material goods		.60		
The feeling of freedom		.55		
F3 – New Experiences	4.10		10.2%	.77
Learning new things to increase knowledge		.77		
Experiencing new/different		.77		
Seeing as much as possible		.70		
F4 – Cultural Motivations	3.91		8.3%	.79
Visiting great monuments of worship (Cathedrals)		.80		
Visiting historical places		.72		
Learning culture of other places		.61		
F5 – Nature and Sports	4.03		7%	.60
Outdoor experience, walking in nature		.80		
Physical activity		.78		
F6 - Escape from Routine	2.98		6.8%	.48
Getting a change from a busy job		.83		
Getting away from home		.75		
F7 – Meet new People and Places	3.32		6.5%	.61
Meeting new people		.78		
Going places friends have never been		.57		
Going places I have not been		.51		
F8 – Fulfil Promise/Tradition	2.03		6.4%	.51
To fulfil promise		.82		
By tradition		.79		

The results indicate that pilgrims are mostly motivated by *spiritual* aspects (M=4.15), by wanting *new experiences* (M=4.10), for the *nature and sports* experience (M=4.03) and for *cultural* reasons (M=3.91). Interestingly, *religious* motivations (M=2.63) and

fulfilling promises (M=2.03) are the factors with the lowest averages, demonstrating that modern pilgrims take the journey for other reasons rather than the traditional ones.

The 8 factors were further examined to verify different behaviours between gender, marital status, education levels, nationality, accommodation chosen, the way the *Camino* was taken (by foot or by bike and alone or accompanied) and the number of times pilgrims had taken the Camino.

Regarding gender, men and women follow the general pattern of the sample, both aligning with factors F2, F3, F4 and F5 more, and less with factors F1 and F8, as can be observed in Figure 1. However, women are more motivated by *spiritual aspects, new experiences, nature and sports* and to *escape from routine* than men. Male, on the other hand, are more motivated than female by *promise fulfillment*.

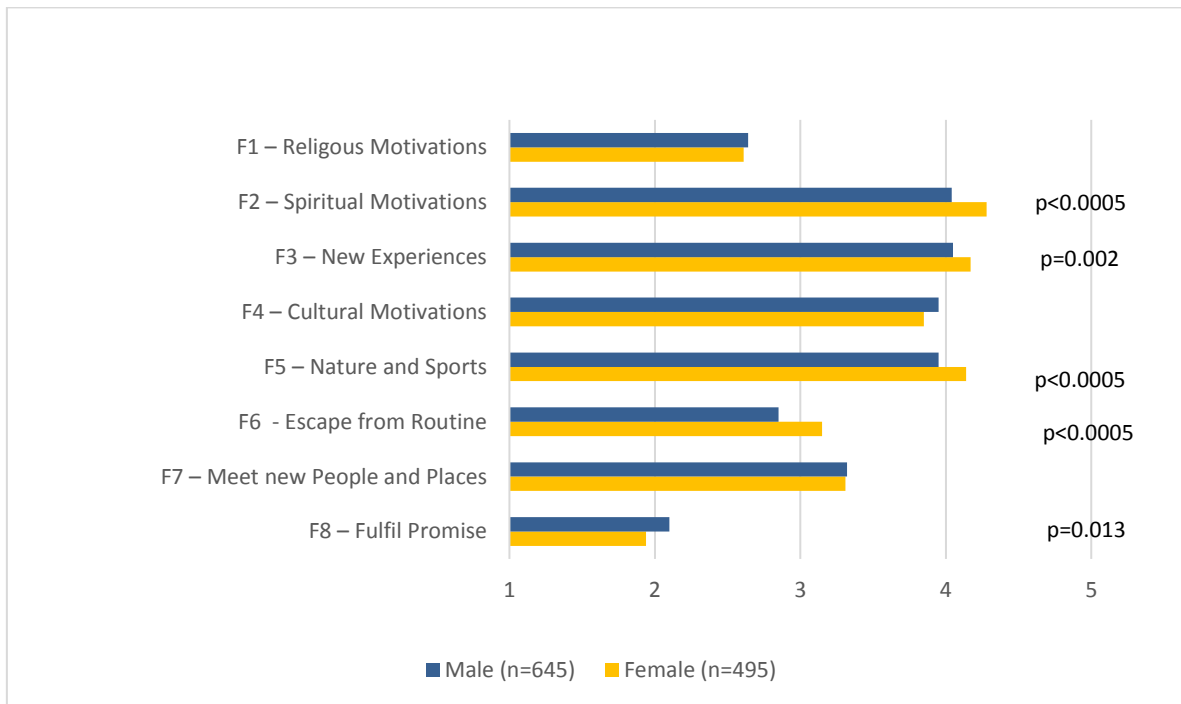


Figure 1 – Pilgrims’ Motivations by gender

Regarding age, the Spearman correlation coefficient revealed a significant negative association between age and *spiritual* motivations ($\rho = -0.137$, $p < 0.0005$), *new experiences* ($\rho = -0.149$, $p < 0.0005$), *escape from routine* ($\rho = -0.213$, $p < 0.0005$) and *meet new people and places* ($\rho = -0.134$, $p < 0.0005$). Put differently, younger pilgrims are more motivated by these factors than older ones.

Comparisons by marital status also showed significant differences (see Figure 2). The Kruskal-Wallis and multiple comparisons tests showed that *spiritual* motivations are significantly higher in single (M=4.19) and divorced (M=4.34) pilgrims compared with the ones who are married/in union (M=4.09; $p=0,025$ and $p<0.0005$ in multiple comparison tests). Married or in union pilgrims also tend to value less *new experiences*, *nature and sports* and *meet new people and places* motivations (M=4.03, M=3.97 and M=3.25) when compared with single pilgrims (M=4.22, M=4.12 and M=3.48, $p=0.003$, $p=0.027$ and $p=0.001$). The *escape from routine* factor is significantly higher for single pilgrims (M=3.33) than for all the other marital statuses (M=2.83 for married/in union, M=2.89 for divorced and M=2.48 for widowed; $p<0.01$ in multiple comparisons).

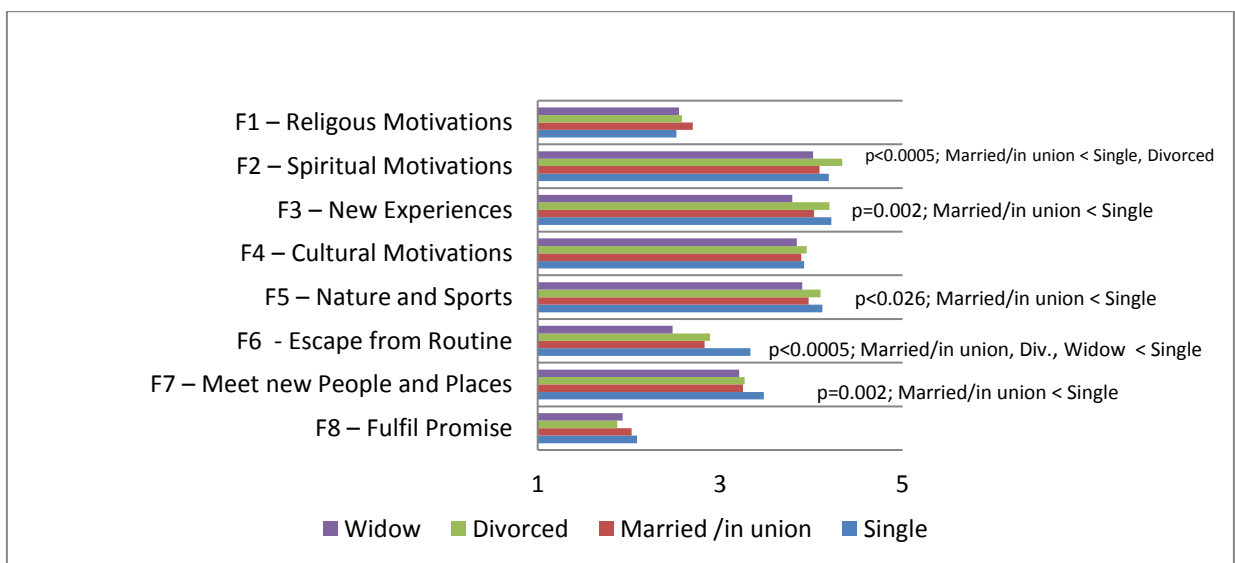


Figure 2 – Pilgrims’ Motivations by Marital Status

Nationality is also a differentiating element of pilgrims’ motivations. As shown in Table 4, *religious* motivations are significantly more valued by Portuguese and Brazilians than by Dutch, French, Spanish and German.

The Portuguese, Brazilians and Americans were the ones who most valued the *spiritual* (F2), *new experiences* (F3) and *cultural* motivations (F4), as opposed to German and Dutch, and also French. However, significant differences were only found between some of these nationalities. Motivations for *new experiences* (F3) were also less typical of French than Spanish. The Spanish also value significantly more *cultural* motivations (F4) than Dutch and German.

Nature and sports motivations (F5) and *escape from routine* (F6) were most valued by Americans and Germans. These two nationalities are significantly above Portuguese, French, Spanish and Brazilians for motivation F6. *Meet new people and places* (F7) seems to be more typical of Americans, significantly distinguishing them from the Spanish, French and German.

No significant differences were found between nationalities regarding motivation F8 – *Fulfill promise*.

Table 4 – Pilgrim’s Motivations by Nationality

	Portuguese Po Mean SD	Dutch Du Mean SD	French Fr Mean SD	Spanish Sp Mean SD	Brazilian Br Mean SD	American Am Mean SD	German Gr Mean SD	Kruskal - Wallis P	Multiple Comparisons
F1 – Religious Motivations	2.87 1.16	2.21 .88	2,23 1,25	2.32 1,29	3.19 1.05	2.68 1.34	2.29 1.12	<0.0005	Du, Fr, Sp, Gr < Po, Br
F2 – Spiritual Motivations	4.24 0.7	3.96 .65	4.04 .93	4.05 .76	4.31 .60	4.28 .65	3.90 .66	<0.0005	Gr < Po, Br, Am Du < Po, Br
F3 – New Experiences	4.20 .76	3.84 .69	3.54 1.02	4.08 .81	4.38 .72	4.32 .76	3.91 .88	<0.0005	Fr, Du, Gr < Po, Am, Br Fr < Sp
F4 – Cultural Motivations	4.07 0.78	3.50 .76	3.65 .89	3.95 .90	4.12 .78	4.07 .84	3.59 .89	<0.0005	Du, Gr < Sp, Po, Am, Br Fr < Po, Br
F5 – Nature and Sports	3.84 0.96	3.98 .76	3.95 1.05	4.09 .87	3.88 1.03	4.46 .63	4.19 .72	<0.0005	Po, Br, Du < Am Po < Gr
F6 - Escape from Routine	2.86 1.12	3.08 1.12	2.62 1.09	2.75 1.23	2.72 1.27	3.48 1.08	3.44 1,08	<0.0005	Po, Fr, Sp, Br < Am, Gr
F7 – Meet new People and Places	3.37 0.92	3.35 .74	3.13 .99	3.21 .95	3.44 1.02	3,65 .87	3.14 .85	0.001	Sp, Fr, Gr < Am
F8 – Fulfil Promise	1.98 1.05	2.11 .93	1,83 .92	2.16 1.23	1,88 1.06	2.16 1.27	1,97 .97	0.363	NS

NS – Non significant
Higher mean values for each factor are bold faced

The Portuguese and the Brazilians do not distinguish themselves regarding motivations for pilgrimage. However, they are very different from the German and Dutch pilgrims, since *religious*, *spiritual*, *new experiences* and *cultural* motivations are more important to them. The Americans resemble the Portuguese and Brazilians in the high level of *spiritual* motivations, *new experiences* and *cultural* motivations, but they differ by valuing *nature and sports* and *escape to the routine* motivations more. The Spanish are also similar to the Portuguese and Brazilian, except that they are less motivated by *religious* aspects. Germans do not differ significantly from Dutch pilgrims in any motivation factor, and French are also similar except for the levels of motivation to *escape*

from the routine which are smaller in French than in the Germans. The French are not particularly motivated by *new experiences*; differing significantly from Spanish, Portuguese, Americans and Brazilian.

Considering the two most common ways pilgrims undertake the journey – walking or by bike – more than 90% of the respondents had travelled by foot and 13.2% by bicycle. Pilgrims that walk have higher *spiritual* motivations than pilgrims that take the way in other forms (M=4.17 vs M=3.96; p=0.007), but score lower on *new experiences* (M=4.08 vs M=4.31; p=0.02) and, strangely, on to *fulfill promise* (M=2 vs M=2.33; p=0.003). Individuals that undertake the way by bike are more motivated by *meet new people and places* and *fulfill promises* than those who take the way in other forms (M= 3.47 and M=2.27 vs M=3.29 and M=1.99; p=0.034 and 0.004), but show significantly less *spiritual* motivations (M=3.94 vs M=4.18; p<0.0005).

Regarding the number of times pilgrims had taken the *Camino*, it is interesting to note that 52.5% of pilgrims had taken the *Camino* more than once and 20% had made it more than four times. This study found a significant, but low, positive association between the number of times pilgrims make the way and the *religious* motivations ($\rho=0.064$, p=0.03), but negative association with *new experiences* ($\rho=-0.085$, p=0.004), *escape routine* ($\rho= -0.061$, p=0.039), and *meet new people and places* ($\rho= -0.077$, p=0.01). In other words, a slight decreasing tendency was found between the number of times pilgrims take the *Camino* and the motivations by *new experiences* (F3), *escape from routine* (F6) and *meet new people/places* (F7), but a slight increasing tendency with *religious* motivations (F1).

Furthermore, pilgrims that walk alone are significantly more motivated by *spiritual aspects* than those who make the journey accompanied (M= 4.2 vs M=4.09, p=0.016), but less motivated by *religious* (M=2.52 vs M=2.75, p=0.002), *cultural* (M=3.83 vs M=4, p=0.001) and *meeting new people and places* (M=3.26 vs M=3.39, p=0.016).

The type of accommodation was also found to be related with pilgrims' motivations. Pilgrim hostels are associated with higher values of motivation by *religious*, *spiritual*, *new experiences* and *cultural aspects* (M=2.69, M=4.2, M=4.14 and M=3.96 for those who have used this type of accommodation vs M=2.39, M=3.93, M=3.94 and M=3.7 for those who have never used this type of accommodation; p=0.001, p<0.0005, p=0.008 and p<0.0005). On the other hand, lower values of *religious* and *spiritual* motivations were

found for pilgrims preferring a hotel than for those that choose other types of accommodation (M=2.49 and M=4.04 vs M=2.67 and M=4.18; p=0.02 and p=0.009). Those preferring the hotel seem to be significantly more motivated by *nature and sports* experience (M=4.2 vs M=3.97; p<0.0005). Pilgrims who have used public buildings, such as sport centers and churches, tend to value significantly more the *escape from routine* motivation (M=3.16 vs M=2.94; p=0.019) and less *religious, new experiences, cultural* and *fulfill a promise* motivations (M=2.4, M=3.81, M=3.64 and M=1.87 vs M=2.65, M=4.15, M=3.94 and M=2.06, p=0.013, p<0.0005, p<0.0005, p<0.039). Private accommodations were associated with higher levels of motivations by *nature and sports* and *escape from routine* (M=4.28 and M=3.52 vs M=3.99 and M=2.92; p=0.01 and p<0.0005), and lower levels of *new experiences* and *cultural* motivations (M=3.97 and M=3.76 vs M=4.11 and M=3.91; p=0.033 and p=0.032). Finally, pilgrims who have used Bed & Breakfast/Guesthouse type of accommodation were significantly more motivated by *nature and sports* experience and *escape routine* than those who had never used this type of accommodation (M=4.22 and M=3.12 vs M=3.97 and M=2.93; p<0.0005 and p=0.02). Camping accommodation did not reveal any association with pilgrims' motivations.

In sum, accommodation chosen by pilgrims is not disassociated from pilgrims' motivations. Hotels tend to be chosen by pilgrims who value *nature and sports* more, while pilgrim hostels are associated with higher *religious, spiritual, new experiences* and *cultural* motivations.

Finally, it was expected that there would be a relationship between education levels and motivations, in particular regarding religious motivations, since less educated people have been found to have stronger religious beliefs (Sacerdote & Glaeser, 2001; Voas & McAndrew, 2012). However, no motivational differences were found between education levels and motivations.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on a sample of 1,140 pilgrims to *Santiago de Compostela*, this study has contributed to the scarce literature regarding pilgrims' real motivations to walk the *Camiño*. Indeed, while there may be many studies regarding travelers' motivations to visit sacred sites, independently of how they got there, there are few that examine why people

walk hundreds of kilometers to a pilgrimage site like *Santiago de Compostela*. Moreover, the few that do exist seem to have contradictory results. Indeed, earlier studies have found that pilgrims are mostly motivated by religion (e.g. de la Torre et al., 2012; Fernandes et al., 2012; Lopez, 2013), while more recent studies have found that there are more important motivations, such as *spirituality, clarification, sports* and *sensation seeking* (e.g. Nilsson, 2016; Oviedo et al., 2014; Schnell & Pali, 2013). The present study is in agreement with these latter findings since the results indicate that pilgrims are mostly motivated by *spiritual* aspects, by wanting *new experiences* and for the *nature and sports* experience. *Religious* motivations and *fulfilling promises* are the factors with the lowest averages, demonstrating that modern pilgrims take the journey for other reasons rather than the traditional ones. In fact, research has argued that pilgrims are similar to backpackers as both want to evade the daily routine and the societal pressure to find a different kind of living (Mendel, 2014). These findings support Reader's (2007) argument that the growth in pilgrims is not due to the revival of religious sentiments, but due to a spiritual revolution. Indeed, pilgrims take the journey as a personal quest for a change or a better situation in life (Blom et al., 2016) where the *Camino* is "an arena for individual reflection and guidance in life" (Nilsson, 2016, p. 16).

The findings of this study also contributes to a better understanding of pilgrims by exploring motivational differences for gender, age, education, marital status, nationality, the way the pilgrims undertake their journey and the type of accommodation where they choose to stay.

Religious motivations are higher for Portuguese and Brazilians than for Dutch, French, Spanish and German. Additionally, evidence was given that pilgrims more motivated by religious aspects tend to stay in pilgrims' hostels. This is an interesting finding as some authors argue that a true pilgrim stays at hostels or guesthouses rather than hotels and apartments (e.g. Santos, 2002).

Regarding *spiritual* motivations, Portuguese and Brazilians also score higher, when compared with Germans and Dutch. Pilgrims with high values on these motivations are more common in female, younger pilgrims, in those who travel by foot and those who look for Pilgrims' hostels to stay. Moreover, single and divorced score higher in these motivations than married or in union pilgrims.

Similarly to what was observed with *spiritual* motivations, motivation *by new experiences* tends to be higher in female, younger pilgrims, in those who look for Pilgrims' hostels to stay, but, on the contrary, in those who do not travel by foot. Single pilgrims tend to value the search for *new experiences* more than married or in union ones. Again, Portuguese and Brazilians have demonstrated higher levels of motivation by *new experiences* than, for example, Germans, French and Dutch.

Regarding *cultural* motivations, Spanish, Portuguese, Americans and Brazilians are alongside, with higher values than Germans and Dutch. The most motivated by *culture* tend to stay in Pilgrims' hostels.

The fifth motivation found in this study, *nature and sports*, has higher values for females. Single usually score higher than married or in union. German and Americans tend to have higher values than, for example, Portuguese.

Escape from routine also tends to be higher in female, younger and single pilgrims. Americans and Germans tend to have higher values than Portuguese, French, Spanish and Brazilians.

Younger pilgrims tend to value the motivation *meet new people and places* more and single also tend to have higher values than married or in union. Those who travel by bike also tend to score higher on this motivation. Americans are more motivated by *meeting new people and places* than Spanish, French and German.

To *fulfil a promise* is more common in male and in those who travel by bicycle than those who travel differently.

Finally, it was interesting to find that there was no relationship between education levels and motivations. Indeed, it was expected that religious motivations could be related to education, since highly educated people tend to be less religious (Sacerdote & Glaeser, 2001; Voas & McAndrew, 2012).

Despite the important and significant findings, this study is not without limitations. One of the first limitations has to do with an unequal representation of the nationalities. Indeed, the top nationalities on the Camino de Santiago are Spanish, Italian, German, Americana's, Portuguese, French, Irish and English. However, less than 5% of the respondents were from Italy or Ireland. The questionnaire was not available in Italian, which may explain, in part, the low percentage of Italian answers. Future research should,

therefore, consider having a questionnaire also in Italian. Nevertheless, the sample seems to be representative in terms of gender, age and the way the journey was undertaken. Indeed, according to the Pilgrim's Welcome Office (2017), in 2016 there were 52% male and 48% female pilgrims (our sample: 43% male, 57% female), 92% had undertaken the journey by foot (our sample: 91%) and pilgrims under 30 years old represented 27%, between 30 and 60, 55%, and over 60, 18% (our sample: under 30- 10%; 30-60 - 73% and over 60 -17%).

Another limitation is that the questionnaire was distributed online. Despite the high Internet penetration worldwide, many of the older pilgrims, for example, may not have had access to the questionnaire. It would be worthwhile to collect data from pilgrims on the *Camino* and compare the results with the one obtained in this study to see if there are significant differences. Furthermore, the questionnaire did not include a question to know when the respondents had undertaken their last journey. This is an important issue, since respondents motivations could vary over time.

Another line of investigation for future research is to explore the motivations of pilgrims on other routes. This is also important considering that there is scarce research investigating motivations of pilgrims on other routes rather than the *Camino de Santiago*. Future research could also examine if money spent by pilgrims during their pilgrimage differ according to motivations.

Religious tourism growth brings unprecedented opportunities for sustainable development by creating jobs, allowing infrastructure and investment and stimulating local culture, crafts and food (UNWTO, 2016). Policy makers and managers who want to promote religious tourism need to realize that pilgrims' motivations are different and therefore, it is necessary to create tourism products and services that appeal to these different needs.

There are limited studies into motivations for pilgrimage (Blackwell, 2014) and understanding these motivations is of paramount importance to meet the needs of pilgrims during their journey and stay (Raj et al., 2015). The Route to Santiago is considered to be a tourist product in the sense that "there is an attraction, a series of facilities, a demand and promotion and marketing" (Santos, 2002, p. 45). As such, it needs to be managed just like any other tourist product. The findings of this study offer a better understanding of modern pilgrims, providing useful insights to several stakeholders (e.g.

Destination Management Organizations, tour operators that specialize in guided *Camino de Santiago* tours, accommodation owners) that can not only develop suitable marketing strategies, but appeal to diverse types of pilgrims and better cater for their needs.

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