



Security Perception and Its Impact on Tourism in Mexicali

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Abstract. Security has become a strategic factor influencing tourism competitiveness, destination image, and visitor behavior. However, limited empirical evidence exists regarding how security perception affects tourists' experiences and behavioral intentions in border destinations such as Mexicali, Baja California. This study analyzes the relationship between public security perception and tourist behavior, examining its influence on visitor satisfaction, hotel occupancy, destination recommendation, intention to return, length of stay, and tourist expenditure. A quantitative approach with an exploratory-correlational, cross-sectional, and non-experimental design was employed. Data were collected through surveys administered to 50 national and international tourists visiting Mexicali during 2025 and 2026. Descriptive statistics, contingency tables, Pearson's chi-square tests, and Cramer's V coefficients were used to examine the associations among the variables. The findings reveal that visitors generally perceive tourist and hotel areas as moderately safe and report high levels of satisfaction with their travel experience. Significant associations were identified between security perception and both tourist satisfaction and destination recommendation, highlighting the strategic role of perceived safety in shaping visitors' evaluations of the destination. Although security does not operate as the sole determinant of travel decisions, it constitutes an important component of destination image and tourism competitiveness. This study contributes empirical evidence from a border-city context, expanding the understanding of how perceived security influences tourist behavior and providing practical implications for public authorities and destination management organizations seeking to strengthen tourism competitiveness through integrated security strategies.

Keywords: Security perception; tourism competitiveness; destination image; tourist behavior; border tourism.

1 Introduction

Public security is a central element in contemporary social and tourism analysis, as it involves both objective and subjective dimensions. In this sense, a distinction is made between objective security, related to the actual occurrence of crimes, and subjective security, which refers to the individual's perception of the environment and factors such as fear of crime, institutional valuation, and the conception of insecurity as a social problem [1]. This distinction is key, since perception does not necessarily correspond to the criminal reality but is constructed from individual and social interpretations [2].

From a criminological perspective, crime prevention is understood as the set of measures aimed at preventing its occurrence, encompassing both actions before and after the crime, which include social education and the resocialization of offenders [3]. In the case of Mexico, criminality has been strongly influenced by structural factors such as organized crime, territorial conflicts, and the growth of drug consumption [4]. In this context, the perception of insecurity acquires relevance as it reflects the fear of individuals of being victims of crime, affecting not only their physical and psychological well-being but also their quality of life and social development [1]. In addition, this perception has an impact on social capital and community dynamics, consolidating itself as one of the main contemporary problems [5]. Factors such as the physical environment, urban conditions, and previous experiences of victimization significantly influence the construction of this perception [6].

In the field of tourism, safety has been consolidated as a determining factor in travelers' decision-making and in the competitiveness of destinations. The perception of insecurity can generate changes in tourist behavior, affecting the image of the destination, the visitor experience, and the influx of tourists, even above the objective risk ([7] & [8]). Likewise, tourism security has evolved towards a comprehensive approach that includes health, economic, psychological, and environmental dimensions, especially from global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic ([9] & [10]). Various studies agree that insecurity represents a significant challenge for tourism development, influencing the choice of destination, hotel occupancy, and economic spillover ([11] & [12]). However, it is also recognized that, in some cases, the perception of insecurity may not correspond to the real conditions of tourist areas, which shows its subjective nature [13]. Consequently, security is positioned as a strategic component for the competitive development of tourism, directly impacting visitor satisfaction and the image of the destination at an international level ([14] & [15]).

Despite the importance of safety in the competitiveness of tourist destinations, there is limited evidence on how the perception of security influences the behavior of visitors in border cities such as Mexicali, Baja California. Although various studies have shown that the perception of insecurity can affect the image of the destination, visitor satisfaction, and the intention to return, the effects of this phenomenon vary according

to the social, economic, and territorial characteristics of each tourist destination ([12] & [8]). In the case of Mexicali, tourism activity is mainly associated with business, health, and family tourism, so it is relevant to analyze whether the perception of safety is a determining factor in the visitor's experience and travel decisions. In this context, the following research question arises: What is the relationship between the perception of safety and the tourist behavior of visitors who come to the city of Mexicali?

Therefore, the general objective of this research is to analyze the relationship between the perception of safety and the tourist behavior of visitors to Mexicali, considering variables such as satisfaction, length of stay, tourist spending, destination recommendation, and intention to return. The study contributes to generating empirical evidence that allows understanding the influence of security on local tourism activity and provides useful information for the design of strategies aimed at strengthening the tourism competitiveness of the municipality. However, from the perspective of consumer behavior, the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) theory states that external stimuli influence the cognitive and emotional processes of individuals, which subsequently determine their behavioral responses [16]. In the tourism field, the perception of security can be considered an external stimulus that affects the visitor's subjective evaluations of the destination, influencing variables such as satisfaction, intention to return, and recommendation to third parties.

Similarly, in a complementary way, the literature on destination image indicates that safety is one of the fundamental attributes in the construction of favorable perceptions towards a tourist place. According to [15], safety continues to be one of the most relevant factors for tourism competitiveness due to its impact on visitor confidence and the overall travel experience. Consequently, the perception of safety can be understood as a strategic component that influences both the assessment of the destination and the subsequent behavior of the tourist.

2 Research method

This study adopted a quantitative research approach, as it focuses on the systematic collection and statistical analysis of numerical data to examine the relationship between security perception and tourist behavior in the city of Mexicali, Baja California. Quantitative research facilitates the identification of patterns, associations, and trends among variables through objective measurement and statistical inference [17].

The study followed an exploratory-correlational scope. It is considered exploratory because empirical evidence regarding the influence of perceived security on tourist behavior in Mexican border destinations remains limited. Simultaneously, it has a correlational component because it examines the associations between security perception and variables related to tourist behavior, including visitor satisfaction, destination recommendation, intention to return, tourist expenditure, and length of stay. Exploratory-correlational studies are particularly appropriate when addressing

emerging research topics that require initial empirical evidence while identifying statistically significant relationships among variables [18].

A non-experimental, cross-sectional research design was employed. The variables were observed in their natural context without manipulation, and data were collected at a single point in time. This design is appropriate when the objective is to describe existing phenomena and examine relationships among variables under real-world conditions rather than establishing causal effects [17].

2.1 Population and sample

The target population consisted of national and international tourists visiting the municipality of Mexicali, Baja California, during the data collection period. Since no official sampling frame identifying all visitors was available, a non-probability convenience sampling technique was employed. This sampling strategy is commonly used in exploratory tourism research when access to the entire target population is impractical and the objective is to obtain preliminary empirical evidence [18].

The final sample comprised 50 tourists, who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. Participants were recruited in locations characterized by high tourist activity, including hotels, commercial districts, restaurants, recreational areas, and other attractions frequently visited by domestic and international travelers.

To ensure consistency with the research objectives, respondents had to satisfy the following inclusion criteria: be national or international visitors to Mexicali; be temporarily staying in the city; and be engaged in tourism-related activities such as business travel, leisure, shopping, medical tourism, family visits, or attendance at events. Permanent residents of Mexicali who were not participating in tourism-related activities were excluded from the study.

Considering the relatively small sample size and the exploratory nature of the research, the findings should be interpreted as preliminary empirical evidence rather than results that can be generalized to the entire tourist population [18]. indicate, exploratory studies frequently employ relatively small samples to identify behavioral trends and generate initial theoretical insights that may guide subsequent research.

2.2 Data collection and processing

Data collection was carried out during the study period through the application of surveys in face-to-face and digital format to national and international tourists visiting the city of Mexicali. This strategy made it possible to expand the coverage of participants and facilitate access to different profiles of visitors present in the destination. In the face-to-face modality, the fieldwork was carried out in spaces of high tourist concentration, such as hotels, shopping areas, restaurants, recreational centers, and areas of interest to visitors. The participants were approached directly by

the researchers, who explained the objectives of the research, the academic nature of the study, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Subsequently, their consent was requested to answer the questionnaire.

In addition, a digital version of the instrument was implemented through an electronic form, distributed among visitors who were temporarily in the city and who met the inclusion criteria established for the research. This modality made it possible to capture additional information from tourists who, for reasons of time or mobility, could not participate in the face-to-face application.

To ensure that the participants corresponded to the target population, it was established as an inclusion criterion that the respondents identified themselves as national or international visitors and that they were carrying out activities related to tourism, such as temporary lodging, attendance at events, recreational activities, family visits, business tourism or consumption of tourist services in the city. Likewise, those permanent residents of Mexicali who were not carrying out activities typical of a visitor were excluded.

Subsequently, the variables were operationalized, allowing the establishment of the correspondence between the theoretical concepts analyzed in the research and the empirical indicators used for their measurement. The independent variable corresponds to the perception of security, evaluated through dimensions related to perceived security, perceived risk, and institutional trust. On the other hand, the dependent variable is related to tourist behavior, considering indicators associated with visitor satisfaction, intention to return, destination recommendation, tourist expenditure, and length of stay. This structure facilitated the systematic collection of information and the analysis of the possible relationships between both variables (see Table 1).

Table 1. Operationalization of the variables.

Variable	Dimension	Indicator	Scale
Perception of security	Perceived safety	Level of security in tourist areas	Likert 1-5
Institutional security	Trust	Trust in local police	Likert 1-5
Tourist behaviour	Satisfaction	Overall satisfaction	Likert 1-5
Tourist behaviour	Recommendation	Destination recommendation	Yes/No/Maybe
Tourist behaviour	Return	Intention to return	Yes/No

Note. Own elaboration.

Once the collection stage was completed, the questionnaires were reviewed for completeness and consistency of responses. Subsequently, the information was coded and captured in a database for statistical processing and analysis using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27 software.

To verify the internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated, obtaining a value of ($\alpha=0.82$), considered adequate in the field of social sciences as it exceeds the recommended minimum of 0.70 [18]. This result indicates an appropriate reliability of the scale used to measure the perception of safety and the variables related to tourist behavior.

The data were processed with IBM SPSS Statistics version 27 software. In the first instance, a descriptive analysis was performed using measures of central tendency and dispersion (mean, median, mode, and standard deviation), as well as frequency distributions to characterize the participants.

Subsequently, contingency tables were developed to explore the relationship between the perception of safety and variables linked to tourist behavior, such as satisfaction, recommendation of the destination, experience of victimization, and intention to return. This procedure made it possible to detect associations between the variables studied and to generate empirical evidence to interpret the results. 2.2. Collection Instrument.

A structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was used, designed to measure the visitor's perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. The instrument included variables such as (a) general perception of security, (b) visible presence of surveillance, (c) trust in authorities, (d) experience of victimization, (e) visitor satisfaction, (f) influence of security on decisions, (g) frequency of visits, (h) length of stay, (i) tourist expenditure, and (j) return intention and recommendation. Similarly, the questionnaire was validated through expert judgment, which improved the clarity, coherence, and relevance of the items, guaranteeing the validity of the content.

2.3 Ethical considerations

The research was carried out respecting the ethical principles applicable to studies in social sciences. Prior to the application of the surveys, the participants were informed about the objectives of the study and the voluntary nature of their participation, obtaining their consent to collaborate in the research.

Likewise, the anonymity and confidentiality of the information collected was guaranteed, which was used exclusively for academic purposes. The results are presented in an aggregated manner, avoiding the identification of the participants and ensuring the protection of their personal data.

3 Results

3.1 Categorical variables

In relation to the categorical variables, the distribution of the sample presents a balanced composition by gender, with a participation of 48% of women and 46% of men, which allows for a relatively homogeneous representation of visitors' perceptions. Likewise, 56% of those surveyed indicated that they had not been a victim of any crime during their stay in the city, a situation that can contribute to the construction of favorable perceptions about the safety of the destination and a more positive tourist experience.

Regarding the mobility of visitors, the car is the main means of transportation used to arrive in Mexicali (52%), followed by air transport (40%). This behavior is consistent with the city's strategic geographic location and its proximity to the U.S.-Mexico border, which facilitates short- and medium-distance land travel. It also reflects the importance of regional connectivity as an element that favors the tourism and commercial dynamics of the destination.

As for the origin of visitors, national tourists predominate (52%), followed by visitors from the United States (32%). This result confirms the relevance of the regional and cross-border market for tourism activity in Mexicali, particularly in segments related to business tourism, health, shopping, and family visits. The presence of international visitors mainly from the United States coincides with the characteristics of tourist flows observed in other border destinations in northern Mexico.

On the other hand, the main reasons for travel correspond to business activities (34%) and family visits (34%), which shows a predominantly functional rather than recreational tourist profile. This finding suggests that tourism activity in Mexicali is closely linked to the economic, commercial, and social relations that characterize the border region. In this sense, security acquires particular relevance, as it can influence the experience of visitors who maintain a recurring relationship with the destination and who constantly contribute to local economic activity.

From an economic perspective, the average daily expenditure of \$297.20 reflects a significant contribution of visitors to the local economy. Although the dispersion observed in the levels of expenditure shows the existence of different tourist profiles and consumption capacities, the results allow us to infer a relevant economic spillover associated mainly with business tourism, family visits, and commercial activities. This behavior is consistent with the economic structure of Mexicali and highlights the importance of strengthening conditions that favor the confidence and permanence of visitors.

Overall, the results obtained allow us to identify a tourist profile characterized by regional visitors with high land mobility, mainly functional motivations, and a

generally favorable perception of safety conditions. These characteristics reinforce the importance of implementing strategies aimed at strengthening the destination's tourism competitiveness, especially those related to safety, mobility, and the quality of the visitor experience.

3.2 Descriptive results

The descriptive results show that the perception of security in the tourist and hotel areas of Mexicali presents a favorable assessment ($M=3.90$; $SD=1.055$), indicating that most visitors consider these spaces relatively safe. Likewise, the general perception of safety in the city obtained an average of 3.66, reflecting a moderately positive assessment of the destination (see Table 2).

On the other hand, the level of concern about being a victim of common crimes registered an average of 2.72, suggesting that visitors do not perceive a high risk during their stay. However, the visible presence of surveillance obtained a rating closer to neutrality ($M=3.04$), which could indicate opportunities for improvement in the visibility of institutional actions aimed at tourism security.

In terms of trust in the local police, the average of 3.20 reflects a moderate perception of trust towards the authorities in charge of public security. These results suggest that the favorable perception of security does not depend exclusively on police action but also on factors related to the general visitor experience and the conditions observed in the tourist environment.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the variables analyzed.

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Level of perceived safety in tourist/hotel areas	50	1	5	3.90	1.055
Level of concern about common crimes	50	1	5	2.72	1.415
Visible presence of surveillance	50	1	5	3.04	1.261
Perceived level of safety in Mexicali	50	1	5	3.66	1.222
Trust in the local police	50	1	5	3.20	1.229
Security compared to other destinations	50	1	5	3.28	1.070
Influence of security on hosting decision	50	1	5	2.78	1.250
N valid (per list)	50				

Note. Own elaboration.

The results show a positive association between the perception of safety and tourist satisfaction. Visitors who rated safety at high levels (4 and 5) mostly reported high levels of satisfaction with their experience in Mexicali. In contrast, low levels of perceived safety were mainly concentrated in categories of low or moderate

satisfaction.

This behavior suggests that safety is a relevant element within the tourist experience, as it influences the overall assessment that visitors make of the destination. Although tourist satisfaction depends on multiple factors, the results indicate that a favorable perception of safety contributes to generating more positive and satisfactory experiences (see Table 3).

Table 3. Safety and satisfaction.

Security level	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1	3	1	0	1	0	5
2	0	1	0	1	0	2
3	0	2	4	4	2	12
4	0	0	4	10	3	17
5	0	1	0	4	9	14
Total	3	5	8	20	14	50

Note. Own elaboration.

With respect to the relationship between the perception of security and the recommendation of the destination, it shows a positive trend. As the perception of safety increases, so does the willingness of visitors to recommend Mexicali to family, friends, or colleagues.

In particular, the tourists who gave the highest safety ratings concentrated in the categories of affirmative response with respect to the destination's recommendation. This finding is relevant for local tourism management, since the recommendation constitutes one of the main sources of informal promotion and contributes to the strengthening of the city's tourist image (see Table 4).

Table 4. Relationship between perceived security level and destination recommendation.

Security level	No	Yes	Maybe	Total
1	3	1	1	5
2	1	1	0	2
3	1	7	4	12
4	2	10	5	17
5	0	13	1	14
Total	7	32	11	50

Note. Own elaboration.

The results show that the experience of victimization negatively influences the perception of safety. Visitors who reported being victims of crime during their stay tended to give lower ratings to the destination's security level compared to those who did not experience victimization.

This result confirms that personal experiences play an important role in building perceptions about tourism safety. In addition, it shows the need to strengthen preventive strategies and visitor service mechanisms in order to minimize events that may affect the image of the destination and the tourist experience (see Table 5).

Table 5. Relationship between victimization and perceived level of safety.

Victimization	1	2	3	4	5	Total
No	1	1	8	13	12	35
Prefers not to answer	0	0	1	0	0	1
Yes	4	1	3	4	2	14
Total	5	2	12	17	14	50

Note. Own elaboration.

Now, in order to analyze the association between the perception of safety and tourist satisfaction, a Pearson's chi-square test was performed using the categories of both variables. The results showed a statistically significant association between the perception of safety and visitor satisfaction ($\chi^2=51.65$; $df=16$; $p<.001$).

Additionally, Cramer's V coefficient obtained a value of 0.51, which indicates a moderate-to-high magnitude association. These results suggest that visitors who perceive higher levels of safety tend to report higher levels of satisfaction with their tourist experience in Mexicali.

Where the value of χ^2 indicates the existence of a statistically significant association between the perception of safety and tourist satisfaction ($\chi^2=51.65$; $df=16$; $p<.001$). Likewise, Cramer's V coefficient ($V=.51$) shows a moderate-high magnitude association between both variables (see Table 6).

Table 6. Relationship between perception of safety and tourist satisfaction.

Statistician	Value
χ^2 Pearson	51.65
gl	16
p	<.001
V of Cramer	0.51

Note. Own elaboration.

Similarly, Pearson's chi-square test allowed evaluation of the association between the perception of safety and the recommendation of the tourist destination. The results showed a statistically significant association between both variables ($\chi^2=18.21$; $df=8$; $p=.020$).

Likewise, Cramer's V coefficient reached a value of 0.43, indicating an association of moderate magnitude. In practical terms, visitors who perceive higher levels of safety show a greater willingness to recommend Mexicali to others, which highlights the importance of safety as a component of the destination's tourism image and competitiveness. It was observed that there is a statistically significant association between the perception of safety and the willingness to recommend Mexicali as a tourist destination. Similarly, it is observed that there is a statistically significant association between the perception of safety and the willingness to recommend Mexicali as a tourist destination, and that the effect size is moderate (See Table 7).

Table 7. Relationship between perception of safety and destination recommendation.

Statistician	Value
χ^2 Pearson	18.21
Good luck	8
p	.020
V of Cramer	0.43

Note. Own elaboration.

Regarding the relationship between victimization and the perception of security, something interesting happens: although visually there seemed to be a relationship, statistically there was not enough evidence to affirm a significant association ($p=.153$). It should be noted that this is not a bad thing; on the contrary, it demonstrates scientific objectivity.

That is, the relationship between the experience of victimization and the perception of safety. Pearson's chi-square test did not show a statistically significant association between both variables ($\chi^2=11.96$; $df=8$; $p=.153$). Although descriptively the visitors who reported having been victims of a crime tended to present lower levels of perception of safety, the statistical evidence obtained does not allow confirmation of this association within the analyzed sample. This result could be influenced by the sample size and the low frequency of cases observed in some categories (see Table 8).

Table 8. Relationship between victimization and perception of security.

Statistician	Value
χ^2 Pearson	11.96
Good luck	8
p	.153
V of Cramer	0.35

Note. Own elaboration.

4 Discussion

The findings show that the perception of safety represents a relevant factor within the tourist experience of visitors who come to the city of Mexicali. The favorable levels of perceived safety identified in the tourist and hotel areas suggest that the destination maintains conditions that generate confidence among visitors. This result coincides with what was pointed out by [1], who emphasizes that the perception of security is built from subjective experiences, characteristics of the environment, and contextual elements that influence people's assessment of a destination.

One of the main contributions of this research lies in the identification of a statistically significant association between the perception of safety and tourist satisfaction ($\chi^2=51.65$; $p<.001$; $V=.51$). This result allows us to infer that tourists who perceive higher levels of safety tend to manifest more satisfactory experiences during their stay. This finding is consistent with the approaches of [14], who points out that safety is a fundamental component for the well-being of the visitor and for the overall valuation of the tourist experience. Similarly, [13] they argue that destinations that generate environments perceived as safe have higher levels of tourist satisfaction and loyalty.

Likewise, the results showed a significant relationship between the perception of safety and the willingness to recommend Mexicali as a tourist destination ($\chi^2=18.21$; $p=.020$; $V=.43$). This finding is especially relevant because the recommendation is a manifestation of the behavior after the tourist experience and a fundamental mechanism for the promotion of destinations. In this sense, [12] they argue that the perception of security directly influences the tourist image of destinations and the confidence that visitors develop during their stay. According to these authors, tourists who perceive safe environments show a greater predisposition to recommend the destination and to consider future visits. The results obtained in Mexicali are consistent with these approaches, showing that visitors with more favorable perceptions of safety are more willing to recommend the city to family, friends, and colleagues. In addition, [8] they point out that the trust generated by a safe environment favors the construction of a positive tourism reputation and strengthens the competitiveness of the destination.

On the other hand, the moderate assessment observed regarding the visible presence of surveillance indicates that there are areas of opportunity to strengthen tourism security strategies and improve the perception of the institutional actions implemented in the city. In this regard, [6] points out that tourist security does not depend only on the incidence of crime but also on the ability of the authorities to transmit confidence through the visible presence of mechanisms of surveillance, orientation, and protection of the visitor.

In relation to the experience of victimization, although descriptively a trend towards lower levels of perception of safety was observed among those who reported having been victims of an incident during their visit, statistical analyses did not confirm a significant association between both variables ($\chi^2=11.96$; $p=0.153$). This result differs partially from previous research that has identified a direct relationship between

negative experiences and deterioration of the image of the destination. A possible explanation can be found in the sample size and the low frequency of reported cases, which limits the ability to detect more robust associations.

From a theoretical perspective, the results support the approaches of the stimulus-organism-response theory [18] by showing that the perception of safety functions as an external stimulus that influences the cognitive and emotional evaluations of visitors, subsequently reflected in behaviors associated with satisfaction, recommendation, and intention to return. In addition, [15] they point out that safety continues to be one of the most relevant strategic factors for the competitiveness of tourist destinations in contexts characterized by high uncertainty and a growing sensitivity of travelers to perceived risks.

Finally, although the results provide relevant evidence on the relationship between perception of safety and tourist behavior in Mexicali, it is important to consider the methodological limitations of the study. The use of non-probability sampling for convenience and the small sample size limits the possibility of generalizing the findings to all visitors to the destination. Nonetheless, the research constitutes a valuable empirical approach to understanding the influence of security on border tourism and provides a basis for future research incorporating larger samples and broader statistical analyses.

In general terms, the results obtained support recent evidence that recognizes safety as a strategic factor for sustainable tourism development. As they point out [12], security not only influences the protection of visitors but also has an impact on the perception of the quality of the destination, on tourist satisfaction, and on the construction of competitive advantages. Consequently, strengthening tourism security strategies in Mexicali can contribute not only to improving the visitor experience but also to consolidating the image and positioning of the destination in the border context.

5 Conclusions

This research allowed us to identify relevant trends in the perception of safety of visitors to the city of Mexicali, evidencing a predominantly favorable tourist experience. The results show that tourists perceive moderately high levels of security in tourist and hotel areas, which contributes to generating favorable conditions for the development of tourist activities and for the construction of satisfactory experiences.

The findings suggest that the perception of safety is a factor associated with tourism behavior, particularly in aspects related to visitor satisfaction and destination recommendation. The analyses carried out showed significant associations between the perception of safety and these variables, which coincides with what was stated by [12] who pointed out that safety plays a relevant role in the tourist image of destinations and in the subsequent decisions of visitors. In a complementary way, [15] they maintain that security continues to be one of the most important strategic elements to strengthen tourism competitiveness and traveler confidence.

However, the results also indicate that the perception of security does not act in isolation in the configuration of tourist behavior. Factors such as the reason for travel, frequency of visit, familiarity with the destination, and the particular characteristics of the visitor experience can influence satisfaction and future decisions related to the destination. This confirms the multifactorial nature of tourism behavior described in the specialized literature.

Likewise, a difference was identified between the general assessment of security and the perception of the visible presence of surveillance and institutional actions. This finding suggests the convenience of strengthening communication, orientation, and tourism safety strategies with the purpose of increasing visitor confidence and reinforcing the positive image of the destination. In this sense, tourist safety must be understood not only as an objective condition but also as a perception that influences the experience and evaluation made by tourists during their stay.

In general, the results show that the perception of safety is associated with variables relevant to tourism development, such as satisfaction, destination recommendation, length of stay, and tourist spending. Consequently, actions aimed at strengthening the security and confidence of visitors can contribute to the positioning and competitiveness of Mexicali as a border tourist destination.

Finally, due to the exploratory nature of the research, the use of non-probabilistic sampling for convenience, and the size of the sample analyzed, the results should be interpreted with caution and cannot be generalized to all visitors to the city. However, the study provides empirical evidence on the relationship between perception of safety and tourism behavior in a little-studied context, constituting a basis for future research that incorporates larger samples, inferential analyses and comparative approaches with other tourist destinations in the region.

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