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THE EFFECT OF " EL BUEN FIN " IN MEXICAN HOTEL OCCUPANCY

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article was to analyze the effect of 'El Buen Fin', Mexico's sale weekend, in Mexican hotels occupancy. Indices of such were analyzed by national tourists in central Mexican cities on weekly bases during 2003 thru 2014. A multiple regression model was used with three predictive variables namely: the passing of time, holidays and El Buen Fin, where the response variable was the number of weekly occupied hotel rooms by Mexican tourists. Implementation of El Buen Fin had an impact in the occupancy of five of the six cities subject of study: Colima, Guanajuato, Pachuca, Guadalajara and Toluca. Regarding to the beach towns of Acapulco, Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo, Puerto Vallarta and Nuevo Vallarta, El Buen Fin showed no statistical significant effect in any of them.

JEL: Z3

KEYWORDS: Hotel Occupancy, Mexico, el *Buen Fin*, Economy, Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Most tourist destinations face a high degree of uncertainty in lodging demand because of uncontrollable external causes (De Rus and León, 1997), one of such is the "Mexican Black Friday", better known as *El Buen Fin.* In its begging *El Buen Fin* had an opposite reaction from the hotel industry. The president of the "Confederación Nacional Turística" (Mexico's National Tourism Confederation) and the Secretary of "Asociación Mexicana de Hoteles" (Hotel Association of Mexico) labeled as negative for the hotel industry doing *El Buen Fin* in one of the three extended weekends. Their belief had its support in the argument that customer would assigned their expenses to buy electronic instead of spending their money traveling. (Visor on line, 2011). This article focuses on analyzing the effect of *El Buen Fin* on the hotel room's occupancy by Mexican tourists. It is make up as follows: the literature review section mentioned researches that have studied the effect of some events in hotel occupancy, the origin and concept of *El Buen Fin* it is also mentioned in this same section. The second section describes the methodology used and introduces the model that served as a basis for data analysis. The third section refers to the obtained results. Finally the fourth and last section presents the concluding comments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizations involve in lodging face variants in their occupancy rate that depend on weather (Chen and Lin, 2014), sports events (Pita, 2,013), currency exchange rate (Corgel, Lane and Walls, 2013), terrorism (Domínguez, Burguete and Bernard, 2003; Cabrer and Pérez, 2007; Corgel et al. 2013), financial crisis (Bijouy, 2014; Alonso and Bremser, 2013; Sztruten, Dridea and Murgoci, 2011; Song, Shanshan, Witt and Zhang, 2011; Laksmi and Ramachandran, 2015) diseases (Speakman and Sharpley, 2012;

Speakman, 2014) and the current school calendar (Instituto de Análisis Económico y Empresarial de Andalucía, 2010). "Secretaría de Turismo de México" (Mexico's Secretariat of Tourism, SECTUR, 2015) defines the number of occupied rooms in Mexican hotels as the total registry of hotel rooms or units occupied by national and foreign tourists in a reference period in the country. The arrival of foreign tourists and hotel occupancy are indicators often used in academic literature to perform analysis on the effects that certain variables can have over the organizations dedicated to accommodation (Bijouy, 2014; Alonso and Bremser, 2013; Sztruten, Dridea and Murgoci, 2011; Domínguez, Burguete and Bernard, 2003). However, the effect that certain events or commercial programs have had over hotel occupancy in Mexico hasn't been explored yet.

In Mexico, one of the incentives for hotel owners are the "extended weekends" caused by the succesion of nonworking days (some nonworking days that fall in weekdays are moved to the previous Friday or the next Monday). In 2006, an amendment to Article 74 of Mexico's Federal Labor Act was made (Presidencia de la República, 2006) settling three compulsory days off. So, the first Monday of February, the third one of march and the third of November were permanently set as dates to commemorate the enactment of Mexico's Constitution (February 5th), the birthdate of Benito Juaréz, a former Mexican president and national hero (March 21st) and the beginning of Mexican Revolution War (November 20th), respectively. These days were established as compulsory holidays to promote family quality time and activate domestic tourism.

In 2011, Mexican federal government launched *El Buen Fin* nationwide as a way to reactivate the economy after going through the 2009 recession; since then, *El Buen Fin* is carried out every year, mimicking the *Black Friday* in the U.S; it is carried out the weekend of the Mexican Revolution anniversary commemoration and lasts four days In the U.S., *Black Friday* is considered a consumer spending ritual that even must be meticulously planned the day before (even if the shopping is online) (Boyd & Peters, 2011). There's still no evidence in Mexico that this encouragement to buy bargains in specific day has changed in way that *El Buen Fin* can be considered *a ritual*. Nevertheless, *El Buen Fin* has had results on online shopping. In 2012, statistics about *El Buen Fin* showed a high spending rate on material commodities, such as television screens, and plane tickets or midterm vacation packages (pay today, travel tomorrow), augmenting online shopping in a 65% (Asociación Mexicana de Internet, 2012). Some authors (Keen et al. ,2004 ; Goldsmith and Flynn , 2005) coincide saying that online shopping does not replace direct shopping in stores despite the great increase that online shopping has had in the last few years because of the convenience the customers have to select among different items or services without leaving their homes or offices (Asociación Mexicana de Internet , 2012; Kim and Kim, 2006) It has been proven that shopping is popular between tourists. A significant number of Mexican citizens that live near the U.S. border travel to American cities to go shopping (Bojanic, 2011), but Mexico also has its own 600 shopping malls (FORBES, 2015). In considering the largest number of inhabitants are in the central part of this country (INEGI, 2015) it is only logical to think the people who lives there shop in domestic stores of Mexico. To corroborate that people do transit during *El Buen Fin* to benefit from the bargains, the next research question was made: What is the effect of The *El Buen Fin* program in hotel occupancy in the center of Mexico? To answer such question, the following methodology was used.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Since more than 80% of tourists that visit Mexico are national tourists (INEGI, 2014), this study focuses on analyzing the effect of *El Buen Fin* on hotel occupancy, ignoring hotel category or classification, by national tourist (Mexican tourists) in cities of the center of Mexico in a 12-year period. To define the states that are located in central Mexico, the classification of Mexico's Secretariat of Tourism was chose, thus 16 states were the original sample. Of those, the ones whose information was incomplete for the study span were excluded, narrowing the sample to only eight states: Colima, Guanajuato, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Estado de México, Querétaro, Guerrero and Nayarit. From those eight states, six capital inland

cities were randomly selected (Colima, Guanajuato, Pachuca, Guadalajara, Toluca and Querétaro) and four beach towns (Acapulco, Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo, Puerto Vallarta and Nuevo Vallarta).

Demographic data was retrieved (e.g. the size and the category of the hotels located in each of the cities in the sample) to explore the general features of the establishments that offer accommodation. The data were distributed in two tables: Table 1 shows the total number of hotels located in each city, as well as the matching category regarding their size according to the rate of *Sistema de Información Empresarial Mexicano* (SIEM, Mexico's entrepreneurial information system, 1999), Table 2 shows hotel groups in each city according to category and star rating they hold.

Table1: Types of Establishments Grouped by Number of Employees

		Establishment According to Number of Employees				
		≤ 20	**21 to 50**	**51 to 100**	**> 100**	
		Micro	**Small**	**Medium**	**Large**	**Total**
Beach City	Colima	34	4	3	0	41
	Guanajuato	83	11	3	3	100
	Pachuca	29	0	0	0	29
	Guadalajara	220	38	13	12	283
	Toluca	53	5	0	0	58
	Querétaro	59	14	5	0	78
Inner Town	Acapulco	362	20	10	21	413
	Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo	209	8	4	10	231
	Puerto Vallarta	118	19	0	0	137
	Nuevo Vallarta	108	3	0	15	126
	Total	1275	122	38	61	1,496

Table 1 shows hotel segmentation in each destination according to the number of employees, as states the "Sistema de Información Empresarial Mexicano" (SIEM,1999) ranking. Source: Prepared by authors from the definitive findings of "Censo Económico 2009", recovered from INEGI (Mexico's National Institute for Statistics and Geography) *(2010).*

As it is shown in Table 1, 93% of the sample are micro, small and only 7% are medium and large hotels; it's surprising the fact that Pachuca, Toluca and Puerto Vallarta only have micro and small hotels. As for beach towns, it can be seen that the total number of hotels goes from 126 to 413, while the inland destinations go from 29 to 283. It is clear the highest average of hotels are in beach destinations.

It's easy to note that uncategorized hotels are the most in the study; In general, it is also noticed that three-star hotels are the most common among those who are categorized. Meanwhile, the four and five-star hotels exceeds one and two-star hotels in number. It is noteworthy the number of hotels in table 2 differs from the total number in table 1, because of correspondence for available sources in different years. Once the demographic features of the hotels were explored, its occupancy was analyzed. Data were collected between December 2015 and March 2016. Occupied hotel rooms records (without distinction of category) by national tourists in the aforementioned cities during the time period from December 30th, 2002 to December 28th, 2014 were obtained from the Datatur website. This period included 626 weeks for each of the ten studied cities. A multiple regression model was used with three predictive variables. The response variable was the number of hotel rooms weekly occupied by national tourists, there were three predictive variables: the first one of a temporal kind and the remaining two variables were of the Dummy (fictional) kind. The model is described below.

Multiple regression model: $y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3$ (1)

Where:

$y = number\ of occupied\ hotel\ rooms\ per\ week\ by\ national\ tourists$
$x_1 = number\ of\ consecutive\ weeks$ (Time variable)
$x_2 = \{x_2 / x_2 = 1\ if\ it\ is\ an\ extended\ weekend, x_2 = 0\ if\ it\ is\ not\}$ (First Dummy variable)
$x_3 = \{x_3 / x_3 = 1\ if\ it\ \ is\ El\ Buen\ Fin, x_3 = 0\ if\ it\ \ is\ not\}$ (Second Dummy variable)

Table 2: Hotel Classification by Ranking

		Hotel Classification by Star Ranking						
		5 *	**4 ***	**3 ***	**2 ***	**1 ***	**Uncategorized**	**Total**
Beach City	Colima	3	7	5	3	11	8	37
	Guanajuato	21	17	32	24	10	29	133
	Pachuca	4	4	17	5	0	3	33
	Guadalajara	23	43	43	12	37	60	218
	Toluca	3	14	3	0	4	31	55
	Querétaro	38	33	19	10	9	24	133
Inland Town	Acapulco	28	45	87	81	34	NA	275
	Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo	26	24	46	32	21	71	220
	Puerto Vallarta	26	34	28	12	13	171	284
	Nuevo Vallarta	32	6	18	10	5	130	201
		204	227	298	189	144	527	1589

Table 2 shows the hotel segmentation by destination according to its ranking. Source: Source: Prepared by authors from data in Datatur (2014).

The variable $x_1$was represented with a series of consecutive values from 1 to 626 matching to each one of the weeks. The variable x_2 took the value of 1 in those weeks that a holiday came to happen and 0 when that wasn't the case. The variable x_3 took the value of 1 in those weeks that *El Buen Fin* came to happen and 0 when that wasn't the case. In order to assign the respective values to the dummy variable x_2 , the Secretaría de Educación Pública's (Mexico's Public Education Secretariat) calendars were thoroughly reviewed from 2002 to 2015, to find that in this period there were 37 holidays. For the second dummy variable x_3 the *El Buen Fin* official website showed the happening of this event in four times over the reference period. With those variables, a first regression was made to identify the statistical significance of the same, taking as response variable the room occupancy by national tourists in the cities of Colima, Guanajuato, Acapulco, Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo, Pachuca, Guadalajara, Puerto Vallarta, Toluca, Nuevo Vallarta and Querétaro. The significance for the variables was set at $\alpha = 0.05$. Once the significant variables were set, a second regression was made for each city. The second regression held as predictable variables only those who came out statistically significant in the first regression. Both, the results from the first and the second regression, are shown in the results section.

RESULTS

A regression with hotel rooms occupancy by national tourists between 2003 and 2014 was made, holding as a predictive variable the following week (temporal variable), the extended weekends (first dummy variable) and *EL Buen Fin* (second dummy variable). To make the analysis easier, cities were grouped in inland cities and beach towns, and the results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Multiple Lineal Regression

	A = 0.05	P-Global	R^2 Ajust	P-Constant	P-Week	P-Extended Weekend	P-Buen Fin
Beach City	Colima	0.0000	5%	0.0000	0.0830	0.4030	0.0000**
	Guanajuato	0.0000	21.6%	0.0000	0.0000**	0.5640	0.0000**
	Pachuca	0.0000	65.2%	0.0000	0.0000**	0.6760	0.0000**
	Guadalajara	0.0000	43.1%	0.0000	0.0000**	0.0000**	0.0030**
	Toluca	0.0000	37.9%	0.0000	0.0000**	0.6790	0.0000**
	Querétaro	0.0000	66.9%	0.0000	0.0000**	0.8600	0.2090
Inland Town	Acapulco	0.0000	2.5%	0.0000	0.0000**	0.9000	0.0940
	Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo	0.0000	2.8%	0.0000	0.0000**	0.0110**	0.0570
	Puerto Vallarta	0.0000	13.7%	0.0000	0.0000**	0.0030**	0.0590
	Nuevo Vallarta	0.0000	38.4%	0.0000	0.0000**	0.0000**	0.6920

*Table 3 shows the results of the multiple lineal regression for occupancy in hotel rooms by national tourists between 2003 and 2014. * *Significant at 5% Source: Prepared by authors.*

Table 3, shows p-values of the regression that express a significant value lesser than $\alpha = 0.05$. The temporal variable (P-week) is remarkable as being significant in every case except for Colima, meaning the passing of time explains in an important way a part of the hotel occupancy in every city except Colima. The effect of extended weekends (P-extended weekend) came out significant in 3 of 4 beach towns: Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo, Puerto Vallarta and Nuevo Vallarta, and only one inland city: Guadalajara. For its part, the effect of *El Buen Fin (P-Buen Fin)* turned out significant in every inland city except Querétaro, and insignificant in every beach town. Regressions were made once again but variables that were insignificant for a certain city were omitted in order to obtain more accurate data about the model and the influence in it of the variables that turned out statistically significant. P-values and the values of the respective parameters are shown on table 4; omitted variables are shown on the table as NA.

Table 4: Multiple Lineal Regression with Significant Variables

				Constant		Week		Extended Weekend		Buen Fin	
	α = 0.05	P-Global	R^2 Ajust	P	**β0**	P	**β1**	P	**β2**	P	**β3**
Beach City	Colima	0.0000	4.8%	0.0000	2,881	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.0000**	1,427
	Guanajuato	0.0000	21.7%	0.0000	4,270	0.0000**	5.773	NA	NA	0.0000**	3,874
	Pachuca	0.0000	65.2%	0.0000	2,406.8	0.0000**	6.423	NA	NA	0.0000**	1,689.5
	Guadalajara	0.0000	43.1%	0.0000	33,983.8	0.0000**	34.003	0.0000**	5937	0.0030**	11,151
	Toluca	0.0000	38.0%	0.0000	4,478.5	0.0000**	6.381	NA	NA	0.0000**	-3,511.2
	Querétaro	0.0000	66.9%	0.0000	10,493	0.0000**	18.237	NA	NA	NA	NA
Beach Town	Acapulco	0.0000	2.4%	0.0000	41,044	0.0000**	13.844	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo	0.0000	2.4%	0.0000	12,081	0.0010**	3.875	0.0130**	-2,160.1	NA	NA
	Puerto Vallarta	0.0000	13.4%	0.0000	17,604.9	0.0000**	19.093	0.0030**	-4,568	NA	NA
	Nuevo Vallarta	0.0000	38.4%	0.0000	5,388.6	0.0000**	21.788	0.0000**	-3,377.8	NA	NA

*Table 4 shows the results of the multiple lineal regression for hotel rooms occupancy by national tourists between 2003 and 2014 taking only significant variables as predictive. ** Significant at 5%. Source: Prepared by authors.*

Table 4 shows the parameter β_3, that explains the *El Buen Fin* variable, has an increase regarding the expected occupancy average in Colima, Guanajuato, Pachuca and Guadalajara but not so for Toluca, where a decrease in 3,511 hotel rooms is shown. In the same table, with regard to the expected average of occupied rooms, Parameter β_2 (the one that explains the extended weekend variable), shows an increase in Guadalajara; but in beach towns such as Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo, Puerto Vallarta and Nuevo Vallarta, shows a decrease. Parameter β_1 shows the expected increase in occupancy corresponding to the weekly course, being statistically significant in all cities of the sample except Colima. Finally, the parameter β_0 stands out

for Querétaro, Guadalajara, Acapulco and Puerto Vallarta and explains for a high occupancy rate expected in a normal week, that is without an extended weekend, *El Buen Fin* or considering the passing of time.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Under the assumption that Mexicans living in the center of their country travel to that same area to shop in days meant for it (*e.g.El Buen Fin*), the objective of this article was to analyze the effect that *El Buen Fin* had in the hotel rooms occupancy by national tourists. To achieve that, records were obtained from the number of occupied hotel rooms by national tourist for 626 weeks in 10 cities in the central Mexico, this data was used as a response variable in a multiple lineal regression model that had three predictive variables: the passing of time, extended weekends and *El Buen Fin*. From the six inland cities that were analyzed, Colima, Guanajuato, Pachuca, Guadalajara, Toluca and Querétaro, only for the latter, *El Buen Fin* had no statistical significant effect. In Colima, Guanajuato, Pachuca and Guadalajara an increase was noticed on the expected hotel occupancy rooms; for Toluca, there was a decrease. As for beach towns, Acapulco, Ixtapa-Zihuatanjeo, Puerto Vallarta and Nuevo Vallarta, *El Buen Fin* showed no significant effect. The results of the model can be interpreted as described below.

For Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo, Puerto Vallarta and Nuevo Vallarta, extended weekends were significant. They showed a decrease with regard to the expected average value of this occupancy. This decrease should not be taken as negative, it simply suggests there are other higher occupancy dates than this one for instance, summer vacations or Easter. On one side Pachuca shows a R^2 of 65.2% and on the other side the expected average value of the occupancy increase for 1,700 hotel rooms in *El Buen Fin*. It would be good to think in tourism strategies that allow the city seize this occupancy increase with complementary activities that activate local economy. The model has limitations, as it is noted in the results. The study of certain cities as Colima, Toluca, Querétaro, Acapulco and Guanajuato need to be considered with other analysis models or include other variables in the current model. For Colima it is required further research to explain why hotel occupancy doesn't consider the time variable, it is recommended to explore with new variables that explain this unconventional behavior. For Toluca was noticed a decrease in average occupancy because of *El Buen Fin*; however, it is yet to find out if it is a relative decrease or if *El Buen Fin* inhibits hotel occupancy. Even though Querétaro has one of the largest shopping malls in the country, the *El Buen Fin* variable wasn't significant to this city; nevertheless, the expected increase on the passing of time explains in nearly 70% the occupancy behavior, perhaps this is caused by the industrial growth and business tourism. Just like Querétaro, Acapulco showed no change with regard to the extended weekends nor *El Buen Fin* and the time variable only explains 2.4% of the occupancy behavior.

Guanajuato, although it doesn't have large shopping malls, showed responsiveness to *El Buen Fin* and the temporal increase; however, the model can only explain occupancy in 22%. One the biggest events in this city and wasn't considered in the study is the "Festival Internacional Cervantino" which weights in hotel occupancy in the city; it is recommended to consider this for futures studies as a predictive variable. For its part, hotel occupancy in Guadalajara, whose shopping malls are emblematic nationwide, was the only regression in which all variables were statistical significant: occupied rooms growth through time, extended holidays and *El Buen Fin*; however, these variables only explain occupancy in 43%, which may give clues on a diversified demand. As it was proven, the effect of *El Buen Fin* in hotel occupancy proved profitable for some cities that are somehow related with important shopping malls in the country. This should encourage promotion of destinations such as Guanajuato, Colima, Guadalajara and Pachuca during the *El Buen Fin* weekend. Finally, we encourage to continue this research in two ways: the first, to study the motivation for the traveling and expense for those tourists that occupy hotel rooms during *El Buen Fin* and second to study hotel occupancy in other towns, such as the so-called "*Pueblos Mágicos*" or cities declared as World Heritage Site, including other explanatory variable such as: consumer price index

(CPI), inflation, currency exchange rate and remittances, regional celebrations or festivals and the consumer report of department stores during *El Buen Fin.*

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