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Research Article

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Abstract: Due to their dynamic nature and importance in the service process definition, customers' expectations have gained attention from researchers and practitioners, and have been essentially focused in developed countries from the Northern Hemisphere. Still, countries, regardless of the hemisphere, have different levels of socioeconomic development and cultural patterns that can have different influence on customers' expectations about a service. In this sense, the main purpose of this research is to understand if culture equally influences customers' expectations about a service in countries with different cultural patterns and human development levels. The multigroup analysis using structural equation modelling was used to calculate the regression weights for all the path combinations in the analysis for each proposed group of countries. About 1262 customers from 10 Latin countries were enrolled in this study to determine their expectations about the hotel service and cultural dimensions. Findings show that cultural dimensions influence customers' expectations about the hotel service differently in groups of countries with different cultural patterns and levels of human development. Results also indicate that hotel managers should adapt the service to the level of human development of each group of countries when it comes to internationalisation.

Keywords: Customer's expectations; Hotel; Service dimensions; Cultural dimensions; Latin countries; Human development

1 Introduction

The focus on services has increased, with a transition from a physical product value-added logic to a service-dominant logic (Lusch & Vargo, 2006). So far, service characteristics such as intangibility, consumer participation or involvement, relationship and interpersonal interaction between consumer and employee, inseparability between production and consumption, and the difficulty of service standardisation have made it challenging to plan and manage a marketing strategy for a service (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011; Rushton & Carson, 1985). It is clear that service efficiency and effectiveness is highly dependent on the profound understanding of customers (Bartel, Snow & Cullen, 1996) and their satisfaction is the ultimate aspiration of every supplier. Customers will only be satisfied if the service performance matches up to their expectations (Midor & Kučera, 2018; Wu, Huang & Chou, 2014). Therefore, knowing and managing customers' expectations is critical to service conception and management because companies communicate what consumers expect of service performance (Kurtz & Clow, 1992). Nevertheless, customers' expectations vary according to their cultural dimensions (Donthu & Yoo, 1998). Consequently, organisations have to adapt themselves to the national-level values of the culture in order to succeed and function properly, providing insight on organisational procedures, norms and practices (Sagiv, Schwartz & Arieli, 2010). Culture is a key factor when customers are building their expectations about a service (Assouad & Overby, 2016; Donthu & Yoo, 1998). So, customers from the same culture most likely have the same expectations about a service

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because their cultural identity, attitudes and behaviour patterns are similar (Hsu, Woodside & Marshall, 2013). Moreover, there is also an impact of the national culture on the human development of a country, namely indicators such as income, education, health and governance (Gamlath, 2017). In fact, it is stated by Konrad (2012) that some national cultural practices and values are related to the level of development of countries that is measured by the Human Development Index (HDI). Hereupon, the main objective of this research is to understand if culture produces the same effect on customer expectations about a service in countries with different cultural patterns and human development levels.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Cultural influence in services

The worldwide growth in the services sector has made it possible for customers to have some extended service offers in the borderless world (Cateora, Gilly & Graham, 2011). So, customers can now easily search and choose a service, regardless of the country where the company is based. Therefore, customers have a higher bargaining power as well as a great influence over service providers (Javalgi & White, 2002). Actually, service providers consider the development process of a service more important than its output on a service-dominant logic (Lusch & Vargo, 2006). Involving customers in the service process and understanding their choices and thoughts will help service providers create value to customers and achieve service quality. Knowing what customers want and desire when achieving a service means knowing their expectations about a service (Kurtz & Clow, 1992). The big challenge for service firms is to anticipate customer expectations, which are always changing, and then making it possible to reply with a service offer that will make and keep them satisfied. Even more challenging is having the ability to understand which aspects influence customer expectations' construction, and this is where culture can take a major role in their definition (Assouad & Overby, 2016; Donthu & Yoo, 1998). So, it is important to understand what is culture and how is it expressed. Culture is like the personality of a person; but in this case, it is the character of a group of people and how they express emotions, thoughts, move and plan (Hall, 1976; Schein, 2010). Culture is mostly intangible and invisible; it is not only shared by a group as it endures over time and influences all the group activities, making boundaries between different groups (Hall, 1976; Schein, 2010), but also influences the way the group solves its problems and the way that individuals interpret the surrounding world (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997). Some authors dedicated (Hall, 1959, 1966, 1976; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Schein, 2010; Schwartz, 1994, 2006; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997) their research to understanding the cultural differences among people from different countries and to defining cultural dimensions that can be used to define people or countries or even to group countries into clusters. The aforementioned authors have developed cultural frameworks (Table 1) that try to uncover cultural differences and to cluster countries according to these differences or similarities, and have enriched management research.

The cultural dimensions that were considered in this research (Table 1) are the ones that have been already tested in the consumer behaviour field (see Engelen & Brettel, 2011; Hsu et al., 2013; Jahandideh et al., 2014), in e-commerce adoption and use (see Rosillo-Díaz, Blanco-Encomienda Francisco & Crespo-Almendros, 2019), in the international management field (see Ding, Jeanjean & Stolowy, 2005; Drogendijk & Slangen, 2006; Sagiv & Schwartz, 2007), in the international services field (see Hsu et al., 2013; Ng, Lee & Soutar, 2007) and in the services field (see Mattila, 1999; Stauss & Mang, 1999; Winsted, 1999). The studies of House et al. (2004), Hofstede (1980) and Hofstede, Minkov and Hofstede (2010) were not considered as they have an organisational logic and this research is based on consumption relations. So, these cultural dimensions do not have an impact on the service dimensions (consumer centred).

Taking into consideration the presented models in Table 1, some cultural dimensions from different authors are found to be very similar and can be grouped. Table 2 presents a proposition to group cultural dimensions from Hall (1959, 1966, 1976), Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), Schein (2010), Schwartz (1994, 2006) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997), which, in fact, are similar when the definitions of each dimension given by each author are taken into consideration.

The first three groups of dimensions are clearly based on Hall's cultural theory. Time-related dimensions (Hall, 1959; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Schein, 2010; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997) constitute the first group, concerning topics of cycles, rhythms, sequence and synchronisation. Some authors (Maleki & de Jong, 2014) have already stated that the polychronic vs. monochronic dimension from Hall (1966) is similar to sequential vs. synchronic dimension from Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997). Space-related dimensions (Hall,

Table 1: Cultural dimensions

Author	Cultural dimensions						
Hall (1959, 1966, 1976)	Time	Space	Context				
Schwartz (1994, 2006)	Embeddedness	Affective autonomy	Intellectual autonomy	Mastery	Harmony	Hierarchy	Egalitarianism
Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961)	Human nature orientation	Man–nature orientation	Time orientation	Activity orientation	Relational orientation		
Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997)	Universalism vs. particularism	Individualism vs. communitarianism	Neutral vs. emotional	Specific vs. diffuse	Achievement vs. ascription	Sequential vs. synchronic	Internal direction vs. external direction
Schein (2010)	Nature of reality and truth	Nature of time	Nature of space	Human nature	Human activity	Nature of human relationships	

1959, 1966; Schein, 2010) focus on the use and perception of a territory from a social and personal perspective, also regarding body movements and senses to organise the living space and the distance between people to define the level of interaction. The nature of reality and context dimensions (Hall, 1976; Schein, 2010; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997) are related to language (verbal and non-verbal) and communication systems (messages and meanings), and regarding the information interpretation individuals take action, which can range from low context (clear meaning) to high context (meaning varies according to the context). Even Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997) have stated that their dimensions specific vs. diffuse is analogous to Hall's (1976) context dimension (Yahyagil, 2015).

The nature orientation dimensions (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Schwartz, 1994, 2006; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997) concern the individual's attitudes and thoughts about nature, if there is a mastery or a harmonious relation with nature, a combination also confirmed by Maleki and de Jong (2014). Another group of dimensions is also related to nature, more specifically to the human nature. It is composed of dimensions from Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) and Schein (2010), which are related to the basic nature of people, their basic instincts, needs and beliefs about others. Human activity dimensions are related to the individual's mode of expression by actions (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Schein, 2010), by being spontaneous and respecting natural circumstances, by planning activities focused on long-term objectives or by controlling the environment to develop the self-aspects.

The group that congregates the highest number of dimensions is the human relationships (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Schein, 2010; Schwartz, 1994, 2006; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997), exploring the way individuals relate to each other. Also, other authors (Maleki & de Jong, 2014; Yahyagil, 2015) have related these dimensions. It can be in a hierarchical way where power is not equally distributed among individuals, in an individualistic way where the individual autonomously pursues (affective or intellectual) his own achievements or in a collectivist/egalitarian way, where the individual's welfare is extended to the group by accepting the group's norms also. Similar dimensions from Schein (2010) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997) regarding the relationship orientation have also been specified, such as emotional vs. neutral, universalism vs. particularism, individualism vs. communitarianism and achievement vs. ascription.

The cultural dimensions offered by the previous authors were used to group and classify countries into clusters. Following this clustering exercise, it should be expected that customers from those culturally similar countries should also have similar expectations for each service. If this is verified, the service could be designed for the whole cluster.

2.2 Customer expectations about services

In a basic understanding, customer expectations concern what a service should offer (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988), that is, an anticipation of a service experi-

Table 2: Proposition of cultural dimensions grouping

New proposition	Brief definition	Cultural dimensions
Time	Temporal focus of human life linked to the creation and use of time	Time (Hall, 1959); time orientation (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961); sequential vs. synchronic (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997); assumptions about the nature of time (Schein, 2010)
Space	Man's perception and use of territoriality and distances from a social and personal perspective in the elaboration of culture	Space (Hall, 1959, 1966); assumptions about space (Schein, 2010)
Nature of reality and context	System composed by structure, components and messages	Context (Hall, 1976); specific vs. diffuse (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997); assumptions about the nature of reality and truth (Schein, 2010)
Nature orientation	Individual's attitudes and thoughts about nature	Mastery vs. harmony (Schwartz, 1994, 2006); man–nature orientation (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961); internal vs. external direction (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997)
Human activity	Orientation of individuals' actions in their environment	Activity orientation (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961); assumptions about appropriate human activity (Schein, 2010)
Human nature	Individuals' assumptions about basic nature and beliefs about other people	Human nature orientation (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961); assumptions about human nature (Schein, 2010)
Human relationships	The level of intimacy of individual's relations and problem-solving capacity	Relational orientation (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961); universalism vs. particularism; achievement vs. ascription; individualism vs. communitarianism; neutral vs. emotional (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997); assumptions about the nature of human relationships (Schein, 2010); egalitarianism vs. hierarchy; embeddedness vs. autonomy (Schwartz, 1994, 2006)

ence (Wu et al., 2014). In the customer satisfaction literature, expectations are viewed as predictions made and evaluated only by consumers when the service exchange happens; they are relative (with a subjective character) and influenced by customer perceptions, attitudes and affects (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Torres, 2014). Satisfaction is accomplished through the balance between customer expectations and the real experiences or perceptions (Wu et al., 2014). As this difference is smaller, between customer expectations and perceptions, the customer has a higher satisfaction level and the company will benefit from it, as the customer will probably return to the company and eventually build a positive feedback about the company to other potential customers.

Concerning service evaluation, by comparing expectations with perceptions of performance, Parasuraman et al. (1988) developed a multi-item scale called SERVQUAL used to measure service quality, which conceptualises service quality as a gap between customer expectations and the perception of service provider's performance (service quality = performance – expectations). SERVQUAL is one of the most used service quality measures (Cronin & Taylor, 1992, 1994; Devlin, Gwynne & Ennew, 2002; Midor & Kučera, 2018). This service quality assessment is a determinant of customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a service. So, the customer is satisfied with a service when the service quality is decoded as superior standards that create a sense of value that matches or exceeds the customer's ideal expectations (Torres, 2014; Yuen & Thai, 2017). Therefore, managing customer expectations is critical to service conception and management (Kurtz & Clow, 1992).

Although authors have agreed that customers' expectations are important, they, nevertheless, did not reach a consensus about the sources and key factors that influence expectations. Customers' expectations are dynamic and are based on several factors (Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml, 1991; Pizam & Ellis, 1999) influenced by the customer's view of the provider, of the provider's image, traditional marketing activities (e.g., advertising), tradi-

tions, ideology or word of mouth (Grönroos, 1984). Also, before the initial service encounter, every customer has its cultural identity, related to physiognomy, language and demeanour, as a background that influences all the service encounter processes (Hopkins, Hopkins & Hoffman, 2005). So, customer expectations, and their main sources, are firstly influenced by cultural dimensions. Customers from different countries or cultures have different levels of service quality expectations because they differ in attitudes and behaviour patterns (Assouad & Overby, 2016; Donthu & Yoo, 1998; Hsu et al., 2013). Additionally, Cunningham et al. (2006) admit that culture can be a strong determinant in the service evaluation by customers. Customers from different cultures or countries have different levels of service quality expectations because they differ in attitudes and behaviour patterns, a conclusion drawn from a cross-cultural study in Canada, Great Britain, India and the United States conducted by Donthu and Yoo (1998). Hence, culture influences substantially on consumer behaviour and further studies of the influence of culture on consumer behaviour are required (Hsu et al., 2013).

2.3 Services dimensions

In sum, each country has its own culture, and as culture influences the way that the customer expects the service, there is a need to adapt the service according to the culture of each country. The cultural dimensions *time*, *space*, *nature of reality and context*, *nature orientation*, *human nature*, *human activity* and *human relationships* are used to characterise the culture of each country. In fact, several sources of information are part of customer expectations formation about a service (Parasuraman et al., 1991; Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1993); however, other authors (Cunningham, Young & Lee, 2005; Cunningham et al., 2004, 2006; Donthu & Yoo, 1998; Hsu et al., 2013) state that culture has a major influence on customer expectations about a service. Nevertheless, it is important to understand whether culture influences not only the expectations about service quality, but also other dimensions of the service. Thus, providers should design the service offer in line with those dimensions. So, it is fundamental do understand several service dimensions (e.g., Bowen, 1990; Chase, 1981; Cunningham et al., 2006; Liu, Wang & Lee, 2008; Lovelock, 1980; Salegna & Fazel, 2013; Van der Valk & Axelsson, 2015). Thus, a new classification for service dimensions is proposed.

- *Degree of Customer Involvement (DCI):* It is the level of connection and interaction between the service provider and the customers during the service process or system. This is very important for the service provider to manage the service process, to assure service quality and to determine the level of customers' involvement and co-production in the service or if customers only consume the service after the service production.
- *Convenience Level (CL):* Before and during the service process, customers evaluate the availability of the service and the efforts to achieve it (money, time and energy spent in the service process), the ultimate goal being that the service provider will satisfy their needs in the expected time and appropriate space. In this evaluation, customers consider the amount of risk, the physical safety, the financial security and the level of confidentiality.
- *Contact Personnel Performance (CPP):* The contact personnel are a very important player in the service performance, especially when the frontline employees represent differentiation of the service because they know how to fulfil customers' needs. The contact personnel judge and evaluate customers' needs based on the level of resources that they have at their disposal.
- *Complexity Degree (CD):* The service provider has the power to define and design service encounter steps and their number, according to the customer's degree of repeatability of service steps and the degree of freedom that customers have in defining them. It is also important for the service provider to define the complexity level of those steps.
- *Information and Communication Power (ICP):* The information exchange between the service provider and customers is fundamental to bond, perform a task, clarify doubts and promote and sell the service. The power of information can be controlled by customers or by the service provider, and whoever controls information has more power in the service process.
- *Environment and Social Responsibility (ESR):* The provider can offer a service that has an environmental orientation, with ecological processes and materials. It can also play an educational role, raising customer awareness for environmental protection and social responsibility.

The identification of the service dimensions that the customer uses to evaluate the service is fundamental to develop segmentation, targeting and positioning strategies by the service providers. The customer builds expectations for each one of those service dimensions, but

there are internal and external sources that influence this building process. The major factor is culture, which, in research, is presented as cultural dimensions that influence the customer's expectations about a set of service dimensions. So, customers from countries with different cultural patterns should have different expectations about service dimensions, and customers with similar cultural patterns should have similar expectations about service dimensions. Additionally, the level of human development of a country can influence the way customers expect a service, that is, customers from countries with different human development levels should have different expectations for the same service dimensions. Hence, the following hypothesis is posited:

Hypothesis 1: The cultural dimensions influence customers' expectations about a service differently in groups of countries with different cultural patterns and levels of human development.

3 Methodology

3.1 Hospitality services and Latin countries

The hypothesis proposition was tested in Latin countries and in the hotel service. A cross-cultural study is very pertinent for the reason that, when services are commercialised in foreign countries, the cultural influence plays a major role between customers and the service provider (Cateora et al., 2011). As culture affects the way people consume (Donthu & Yoo, 1998; Hsu et al., 2013), a successful internationalisation strategy should anticipate cultural influences in customers' expectations about a service, in each country. In fact, managers select countries that are culturally closer to internationalise their company (Martin & Drogendijk, 2014). Also, the Latin countries are such an example, as the Latin companies internationalise to Latin countries based on an alleged proximity and on the presumed cultural similarity. Indeed, several authors (e.g., Hofstede et al., 2002; House et al., 2004; Jesuino, 2002; Stankov, 2011) have performed cross-cultural research to cluster the countries that are culturally similar. Several clusters emerged worldwide from these clustering exercises, but two clusters emerged without a consensus on its constitution: Latin countries, subdivided into Latin Europe and Latin America. So, if this Latin cluster really exists, the customers who live in these countries should have similar expectations about the service dimensions of a hotel.

The service dimensions were analysed in the hotel sector, as it belongs to one of the most important and fastest economic sectors of the world, the tourism-related services (OECD, 2018). Also, the hotel sector has unique characteristics that improved the quality of this study as, for example, customers have a high level of involvement in the service (Dortyol, Varinli & Kitapci, 2014). Indeed, the hotel sector has gained attention from researchers in the last 10 years; however, relatively little attention has been paid when it comes to study the cultural influence on customers' expectations about hotel service dimensions (Nath, Devlin & Reid, 2016).

The previous cross-cultural studies have placed strong emphasis on the developed countries in the Northern Hemisphere, and fewer studies considered South American countries, some in great economic development, such as Mexico, Brazil and Chile (Engelen & Brettel, 2011). Cardon (2008) advises that cross-cultural research should include a minimum of 10 to 15 cultures. This research aims to take a step further and make a transcontinental cross-cultural study and, due to these gaps, considers 10 different countries with a "presumed cultural similarity paradox" (Vromans, van Engen & Mol, 2013). These countries have different levels of social and economic development that can be measured by the HDI,[1] and therefore can differ in the way that culture influences customers' expectations about services in groups of countries with different levels of human development. So, France, Italy, Spain, Chile, Portugal and Romania are Very High HDI Latin countries; Uruguay, Mexico and Brazil are High HDI Latin countries; and Bolivia is a Medium HDI Latin country.

3.2 Data collection and analysis

The population was composed of university students (attending post-graduate, masters and PhD programmes) from the selected Latin countries. The objective was to collect participants to study their consumer habits, and those who were customers of the hotel service, with resources to spend on that service. In fact, Schwartz (2006) stated that "countries are meaningful cultural units" and that students are an ideal sample to conduct cross-cultural research, as they match on critical characteristics. Data were collected through an online questionnaire between April 10 and June 4 2018, and, to increase the response rate and data validity, all questions were made mandatory. The questionnaire was sent to the selected universities from the chosen Latin European and

1 Retrieved on June 9, 2018 from http://hdr.undp.org/en/2016-report

Latin American countries by email, with an introductory text, the link to the webpage with the online questionnaire and with a brief explanation of the doctoral thesis. The universities were asked to disclose the questionnaire through their students, preferentially by the students attending post-graduate courses, masters and doctoral programmes. Also, the respondents were encouraged to resend the email to their university colleagues, so it is not possible to calculate the response rate.

The questionnaire was drafted in English and then translated to the native languages of the Latin countries (Portuguese, Spanish, Italian and Romanian) by a local native speaker, which was followed by a back translation to assure that the words have the same meanings in both languages. The questionnaire measured the customers' expectations about each service dimension using a 7-point Likert scale (see Asad & Tim, 2010; Rachau et al., 2015; Riadh, 2012), the cultural dimensions being based on previous authors' measurements and the sociodemographic characteristics.

The questionnaire was divided into three main sections. The first section regarded the measurement of customers' expectations about each new service dimension. The second section measured the cultural dimensions previously identified in the literature review as relevant for this study. These were the independent variables that can influence customers' expectations about service dimensions. The third section contained questions about demographic information and some moderator elements. The questionnaire construction was an evolutionary process. First, it was identified in the literature constructs, questions and scales that could fit into the new service dimensions and the cultural dimensions. Then it was outlined a first sketch with questions categorised into each subdimension of the new service dimensions and of the cultural dimensions. This was followed by several exercises of identification of repetitions and questions with a dubious understanding; these questions were eliminated, but some subdimensions had no questions already measured by previous authors. So, based on the literature review, new questions were outlined. After this process, a test was conducted in Portugal with distribution of the questionnaire through people engaged in the tourism and hotel research field. The respondents were asked to not only answer the questionnaire, but also to identify the questions that were not clear or that were repeated. The objective of this test was to clear any conceptual doubts. In Table 3 are the variables included in the questionnaire, as well as the references that support the inclusion.

The analysis compared the influence of cultural dimensions in customer expectations about a service in groups of countries with different levels of human development. The influence of cultural dimensions in service dimensions can be estimated across multiple groups, namely in the groups Low HDI Latin countries, Medium HDI Latin countries and High HDI Latin countries. In the first stage, the strengths of the relations between the cultural dimensions and the service dimensions across all groups were tested, giving the unconstrained regression weights for each relation. Then, in the second stage and for each group, the analysis focused on whether group differences were statistically significant by performing the Z-test. With the Z-test it is possible to test which coefficients differ significantly between the stated groups. The null hypothesis for two groups 1 and 2 is: $H_{0:}\, B_{YX(1)} = B_{YX(2)}$. The Z score cannot be obtained directly and must be calculated through an equation (see Eq. (1)) (Marôco, 2010, p. 292):

$$Z = \frac{\hat{B}_{YX(1)} - \hat{B}_{YX(2)}}{\sqrt{\sigma\hat{}^2\hat{B}_{YX(1)} - \sigma\hat{}^2\hat{B}_{YX(2)}}} \quad (1)$$

where:
$\hat{B}_{YX(1)}$: path of *X* and *Y* of sample 1
$\hat{B}_{YX(2)}$: path of *X* and *Y* of sample 2
$\sigma\hat{}\hat{B}_{YX(1)} - \sigma\hat{}\hat{B}_{YX(2)}$: standard error of the set

The null hypothesis is rejected for $\alpha = 0.05$ if $|Z| > z_{0.975} = 1.96$, proving that the relation differs significantly in the two groups in the analysis.

4 Results

The sample of this research is adequate with 1262 observations: Portugal (15%), Spain (9%), France (9%), Italy (6%), Romania (9%), Brazil (12%), Mexico (13%), Uruguay (8%), Bolivia (10%) and Chile (7%). Table 4 presents the sociodemographic profile of the sample.

4.1 Reliability, consistency analysis and outlier detection

The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and the Cronbach's alpha determination were conducted on the general sample (N = 1262) and the results thereof are presented in Table 5.

The KMO test indicates the service dimensions DCI (KMO = 0.879) and ICP (KMO = 0.840) have a good homogeneity, as the values are between 0.8 and 0.9 (Marôco,

Table 3: Variables included in the questionnaire

Main dimensions (variables)	Authors
Degree of customer involvement (DCI)	Adapted from Ariffin and Maghzi (2012), Kalamas, Laroche and Cézard (2002) and own elaboration
Convenience level (CL)	Adapted from Ariffin and Maghzi (2012), Ayeh and Chen (2013), Dortyol et al. (2014), Lee et al. (2016), Manhas and Tukamushaba (2015), Rachau et al. (2015), Riadh (2012) and own elaboration
Contact personnel performance (CPP)	Adapted from Ariffin and Maghzi (2012), Asad and Tim (2010), Blešić et al. (2014), Lee et al. (2016)
Complexity degree (CD)	Adapted from Asad and Tim (2010), Dortyol et al. (2014) and own elaboration
Information and communication power (ICP)	Adapted from Ayeh and Chen (2013), Chen (2014);, Riadh (2012) and own elaboration
Environment and social responsibility (ESR)	Adapted from Bastič and Gojčič (2012) and own elaboration
Time (TIM)	Adapted from Rees-Caldwell and Pinnington (2013)
Space (SPA)	Own elaboration
Nature of reality and context (CTX)	Adapted from Lee et al. (2007)
Nature orientation (NOR)	Adapted from Maznevski et al. (2002)
Human activity (HAC)	Adapted from Maznevski et al. (2002)
Human nature (HUN)	Adapted from Maznevski et al. (2002)
Human relationships (HRL): individualism (IND)	Adapted from Maznevski et al. (2002)
Human relationships (HRL): hierarchy (HIE)	Adapted from Maznevski et al. (2002)
Human relationships (HRL): embeddedness vs. autonomy (EvA)	Adapted from Jahandideh et al. (2014), Ng, Russell-Bennett and Dagger (2007)
Human relationships (HRL): achievement vs. ascription (AvA)	Adapted from Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997)
Human relationships (HRL): universalism vs. particularism (UvP)	Adapted from Nawojczyk (2006)
Human relationships (HRL): neutral vs. emotional (NvE)	Own elaboration

2011), and that the service dimensions CL (KMO = 0.955), CPP (KMO = 0.902), CD (KMO = 0.910) and ESR (KMO = 0.917) have an excellent homogeneity, as the values are above 0.9 (Marôco, 2011); so, the execution of the EFA is recommended. All service dimensions indicate a good internal consistency, as the Cronbach's alpha (score reliability) is above 0.8 (George & Mallery, 2003). All service dimensions present good values of reliability, as the CR values are all above 0.7 (Hair et al., 1998). Also, all service dimensions have a convergent validity of the construct, as the AVE values are above 0.5 (Hair et al., 1998), with the exception of the DCI dimension, which has an AVE near 0.5 (AVE = 0.480). Using the method proposed by Hoaglin and Iglewicz (1987), the "outlier labelling rule", the outliers were identified and then eliminated. From the sample, 227 observations were eliminated in service dimensions in all the countries of residence.

4.2 Multigroup analysis – structural equation modelling

The multigroup analysis using SEM was used to calculate the regression weights for all the path combinations in the analysis for each proposed group. The software SPSS AMOS (v.24) was used to assess the critical ratios (Z statistics).

The group analysis compared the influence of cultural dimensions in customer expectations about a service in groups of countries with different levels of human development. Three multigroup analyses were performed between Very High HDI Latin countries vs. High HDI Latin countries (see Table 6), High HDI Latin countries vs. Medium HDI Latin countries (see Table 7) and Very High HDI Latin countries vs. Medium HDI Latin countries (see Table 8).

Table 4: Sociodemographic profile by the country of residence

	PT	ES	FR	IT	RO	BR	MX	UY	BO	CL	NLE	NEL	NENL	Total
Age	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
18–25	59	14	27	12	32	16	25	22	48	17	25	0	0	29
26–40	31	32	36	40	46	41	31	32	33	37	63	29	50	36
41–60	11	50	30	44	22	38	39	44	15	35	13	42	50	31
Above 60	0	4	7	4	0	4	6	2	4	11	0	29	0	4
Sex	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Female	26	36	29	22	50	42	33	47	43	30	63	46	17	43
Male	74	64	71	78	50	58	67	53	57	70	38	54	83	57
Annual household income (in relation to country's average) (in %)														
Far below	3	3	4	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Below	17	10	9	1	3	3	2	2	12	0	0	0	0	7
Average	42	38	27	55	25	21	26	29	38	19	50	29	33	32
Above	36	42	48	42	48	45	57	62	39	53	38	46	33	46
Well above	3	7	12	1	23	30	15	7	11	28	13	25	33	14

Notes: PT, Portugal; ES, Spain; FR, France; IT, Italy; RO, Romania; BR, Brazil, MX, Mexico; UY, Uruguay; BO, Bolivia; CL, Chile; NLE, non-Latin Europe; NEL, non-European Latin; NENL, non-European non-Latin.

Table 5: Consistency and reliability analysis of service dimensions

Service dimension	KMO Test	Cronbach's alpha (score reliability)	AVE	CR
Degree of customer involvement (DCI)	0.879	0.819	0.480	0.820
Convenience level (CL)	0.955	0.947	0.669	0.948
Contact personnel performance (CPP)	0.902	0.941	0.733	0.943
Complexity degree (CD)	0.910	0.895	0.532	0.900
Information and communication power (ICP)	0.840	0.855	0.563	0.865
Environment and social responsibility (ESR)	0.917	0.929	0.611	0.926

Before the multigroup analysis, it is important to identify the paths in each group that are not accepted at a statistical level of p superior than 0.05 (see Tables 6–8).

For the Very High HDI Latin countries, the paths that are not correlated are:

- *Human activity → Degree of customer involvement* ($B_{DCI.HAC} = -0.022$; $p = 0.101$);
- *Human nature → Convenience level* ($B_{CL.HUN} = 0.014$; $p = 0.090$);
- *Hierarchy → Contact personnel performance* ($B_{CPP.HIE} = 0.015$; $p = 0.173$);
- *Embeddedness vs. autonomy → Degree of customer involvement* ($B_{DCI.EvA} = 0.021$; $p = 0.193$);
- *Space → Degree of customer involvement* ($B_{DCI.SPA} = 0.024$; $p = 0.083$);
- *Neutral vs. emotional → Information and communication power* ($B_{ICP.NvE} = 0.024$; $p = 0.113$).

- For the High HDI Latin countries, the paths that were not correlated are:
- *Space → Contact personnel performance* ($B_{CPP.SPA} = 0.011$; $p = 0.365$);
- *Nature of reality and context → Degree of customer involvement* ($B_{DCI.CTX} = 0.013$; $p = 0.402$);
- *Human activity → Environment and social responsibility* ($B_{ESR.HAC} = 0.023$; $p = 0.099$);
- *Hierarchy → Complexity degree* ($B_{CD.HIE} = 0{,}006$; $p = 0{,}733$);
- *Universalism vs. particularism → Complexity degree* ($B_{CD.UvP} = -0.025$; $p = 0.094$);

- *Universalism vs. particularism → Environment and social responsibility* ($B_{ESR.UvP}$ = 0.008; p = 0.572);
- *Space → Degree of customer involvement* ($B_{DCI.SPA}$ = 0.011; p = 0.445);
- *Neutral vs. emotional → Information and communication power* ($B_{ICO.NvE}$ = 0.034; p = 0.060).

For the Medium HDI Latin countries, the paths that were not correlated are:

- *Nature orientation → Degree of customer involvement* ($B_{DCI.NOR}$ = −0.041; p = 0.239);
- *Nature orientation → Environment and social responsibility* ($B_{ESR.NOR}$ = 0.026; p = 0.349);
- *Human activity → Degree of customer involvement* ($B_{DCI.HAC}$ = 0.062; p = 0.064);
- *Individualism → Degree of customer involvement* ($B_{DCI.IND}$ = 0.036; p = 0.247);
- *Embeddedness vs. autonomy → Degree of customer involvement* ($B_{DCI.EvA}$ = −0.071; p = 0.029);
- *Universalism vs. particularism → Complexity degree* ($B_{CD.UvP}$ = −0.036; p = 0.064);
- *Neutral vs. emotional → Complexity degree* ($B_{CD.NvE}$ = 0.033; p = 0.118);
- *Neutral vs. emotional → Information and communication power* ($B_{ICP.NvE}$ = 0.049; p = 0.094).

Table 6 also presents the Z-test to analyse the equality of the structural coefficients. The Z-test for α = 0.05 revealed that the following paths are significantly different between the two groups, the Very High HDI Latin countries and the High HDI Latin countries.

- *Long-term orientation → Convenience level* (Z = 2.047; p < 0.05);
- *Nature orientation → Convenience level* (Z = 2.500; p < 0.05);
- *Nature orientation → Contact personnel performance* (Z = 2.429; p < 0.05);
- *Nature orientation → Complexity degree* (Z = 2.883; p < 0.05);
- *Embeddedness vs. autonomy → Degree of customer involvement* (Z = 3.319; p < 0.05);
- *Universalism vs. particularism → Degree of customer involvement* (Z = 4.481; p < 0.05).

Table 7 presents the Z-test to analyse the equality of the structural coefficients. The Z-test for α = 0.05 revealed that the following paths are significantly different between the two groups, the High HDI Latin countries and the Medium HDI Latin countries.

- *Long-term orientation → Convenience level* (Z = 3.923; p < 0.05);
- *Long-term orientation → Environment and social responsibility* (Z = 3.034; p < 0.05);
- *Space → Complexity degree* (Z = 3.586; p < 0.05);
- *Nature of reality and context → Contact personnel performance* (Z = 5.407; p < 0.05);
- *Nature of reality and context → Information and communication power* (Z = 3.835; p < 0.05);
- *Nature of reality and context → Environment and social responsibility* (Z = 3.755; p < 0.05);
- *Embeddedness vs. autonomy → Contact personnel performance* (Z = 3.183; p < 0.05);
- *Embeddedness vs. autonomy → Complexity degree* (Z = 3.913; p < 0.05);
- *Achievement vs. ascription → Degree of customer involvement* (Z = 2.209; p < 0.05);
- *Universalism vs. particularism → Degree of customer involvement* (Z = 3.961; p < 0.05).

Table 8 presents the Z-test to analyse the equality of the structural coefficients. The Z-test for α = 0.05 revealed that the following paths are significantly different between the two groups, the Very High HDI Latin countries and the Medium HDI Latin countries.

- *Long-term orientation → Convenience level* (Z = 5.367; p < 0.05);
- *Long-term orientation → Environment and social responsibility* (Z = 3.451; p < 0.05);
- *Space → Contact personnel performance* (Z = 3.473; p < 0.05);
- *Space → Complexity degree* (Z = 3.514; p < 0.05);
- *Nature of reality and context → Degree of customer involvement* (Z = 2.033; p < 0.05);
- *Nature of reality and context → Contact personnel performance* (Z = 5.517; p < 0.05);
- *Nature of reality and context → Information and communication power* (Z = 3.559; p < 0.05);
- *Nature of reality and context → Environment and social responsibility* (Z = 3.730; p < 0.05);
- *Nature orientation → Convenience level* (Z = 2.539; p < 0.05);
- *Nature orientation → Contact personnel performance* (Z = 2.768; p < 0.05);
- *Human activity → Environment and social responsibility* (Z = 2.340; p < 0.05);
- *Human nature → Contact personnel performance* (Z = 2.115; p < 0.05);
- *Hierarchy → Complexity degree* (Z = 2.948; p < 0.05);
- *Embeddedness vs. autonomy → Contact personnel performance* (Z = 3.19; p < 0.05);
- *Embeddedness vs. autonomy → Complexity degree* (Z = 4.335; p < 0.05);

Table 6: Multigroup analysis: Very High HDI Latin countries vs. High HDI Latin countries

Paths			Very High HDI			High HDI			|Z|
			B	**SE**	***p*-value**	**B**	**SE**	***p*-value**	
@50.LTO	--->	CL	0.131	0.020	<0.001	0.210	0.033	<0.001	2.047
@50.LTO	--->	ESR	0.179	0.032	<0.001	0.182	0.049	<0.001	0.051
@51.POLY	--->	DCI	0.164	0.028	<0.001	0.147	0.034	<0.001	0.386
@51.POLY	--->	CL	0.150	0.022	<0.001	0.124	0.021	<0.001	0.855
@51.POLY	--->	CPP	0.163	0.019	<0.001	0.156	0.024	<0.001	0.229
@51.POLY	--->	CD	0.212	0.029	<0.001	0.186	0.034	<0.001	0.582
@54.SPA	--->	DCI	0.024	0.014	0.083	0.011	0.014	0.445	
@54.SPA	--->	CPP	0.024	0.010	0.014	0.011	0.013	0.365	
@54.SPA	--->	CD	0.065	0.014	<0.001	0.058	0.017	<0.001	0.318
@67.CTX	--->	DCI	0.100	0.021	<0.001	0.013	0.016	0.402	
@67.CTX	--->	CPP	0.063	0.012	<0.001	0.061	0.016	<0.001	0.100
@67.CTX	--->	ICP	0.111	0.026	<0.001	0.088	0.029	0.002	0.591
@67.CTX	--->	ESR	0.073	0.017	<0.001	0.063	0.022	0.004	0.360
@69.NOR	--->	DCI	0.101	0.021	<0.001	0.077	0.022	<0.001	0.789
@69.NOR	--->	CL	0.146	0.022	<0.001	0.078	0.016	<0.001	2.500
@69.NOR	--->	CPP	0.178	0.020	<0.001	0.111	0.019	<0.001	2.429
@69.NOR	--->	ICP	0.196	0.036	<0.001	0.175	0.044	<0.001	0.369
@69.NOR	--->	ESR	0.109	0.022	<0.001	0.112	0.032	<0.001	0.077
@73.HAC	--->	DCI	−0.022	0.014	0.101	−0.030	0.015	0.038	0.390
@69.NOR	--->	CD	0.157	0.023	<0.001	0.071	0.019	<0.001	2.883
@73.HAC	--->	ESR	0.123	0.023	<0.001	0.023	0.014	0.099	
@76.HUN	--->	CL	0.014	0.008	0.090	0.028	0.011	0.007	1.029
@76.HUN	--->	CPP	0.032	0.010	0.002	0.048	0.014	<0.001	0.930
@78.IND	--->	DCI	0.088	0.021	<0.001	0.093	0.025	<0.001	0.153
@78.IND	--->	CD	0.099	0.018	<0.001	0.171	0.033	<0.001	1.915
@80.HIE	--->	CPP	0.015	0.011	0.173	0.050	0.016	0.002	1.803
@80.HIE	--->	CD	0.035	0.013	0.010	0.006	0.016	0.733	
@81.EvA	--->	DCI	0.021	0.016	0.193	−0.072	0.023	0.002	3.319
@81.EvA	--->	CPP	−0.043	0.012	<0.001	−0.059	0.017	<0.001	0.769
@81.EvA	--->	CD	−0.031	0.013	0.020	−0.040	0.018	0.030	0.405
@84.AvA	--->	DCI	0.047	0.016	0.004	0.049	0.018	0.007	0.083
@85.UvP	--->	DCI	−0.058	0.015	<0.001	0.047	0.018	0.008	4.481
@85.UvP	--->	CD	−0.027	0.011	0.011	−0.025	0.015	0.094	
@85.UvP	--->	ESR	−0.057	0.014	<0.001	0.008	0.015	0.572	
@86.NvE	--->	CD	0.024	0.010	0.013	0.028	0.012	0.025	0.256
@86.NvE	--->	ICP	0.024	0.015	0.113	0.034	0.018	0.060	

Notes: B, path coefficients (estimate); SE, standard error; Z, critical ratio;
LTO, long-term orientation; POLY, polychronism; SPA, space; CTX, context; NOR, nature orientation; HAC, human activity; HUN, human nature; IND, individualism; HIE, hierarchy; EvA, embeddedness vs. autonomy; UvP, universalism vs. particularism; AvA, achievement vs. ascription; NvE, neutral vs. emotional; DCI, degree of customer involvement; CL, convenience level; CD, complexity degree; CPP, contact personnel performance; ICP, information and communication power; ESR, environment and social responsibility.

Table 7: Multigroup analysis: High HDI Latin countries vs. Medium HDI Latin countries

Paths			High HDI			Medium HDI			|Z|
			B	SE	*p*-value	B	SE	*p*-value	
@50.LTO	--->	CL	0.210	0.033	<0.001	0.496	0.065	<0.001	3.923
@50.LTO	--->	ESR	0.182	0.049	<0.001	0.429	0.065	<0.001	3.034
@51.POLY	--->	DCI	0.147	0.034	<0.001	0.182	0.046	<0.001	0.612
@51.POLY	--->	CL	0.124	0.021	<0.001	0.105	0.022	<0.001	0.625
@51.POLY	--->	CPP	0.156	0.024	<0.001	0.225	0.033	<0.001	1.691
@51.POLY	--->	CD	0.186	0.034	<0.001	0.217	0.039	<0.001	0.599
@54.SPA	--->	DCI	0.011	0.014	0.445	0.111	0.037	0.003	
@54.SPA	--->	CPP	0.011	0.013	0.365	0.124	0.027	<0.001	
@54.SPA	--->	CD	0.058	0.017	<0.001	0.204	0.037	<0.001	3.586
@67.CTX	--->	DCI	0.013	0.016	0.402	0.214	0.052	<0.001	
@67.CTX	--->	CPP	0.061	0.016	<0.001	0.304	0.042	<0.001	5.407
@67.CTX	--->	ICP	0.088	0.029	0.002	0.347	0.061	<0.001	3.835
@67.CTX	--->	ESR	0.063	0.022	0.004	0.242	0.042	<0.001	3.775
@69.NOR	--->	DCI	0.077	0.022	<0.001	−0.041	0.035	0.239	
@69.NOR	--->	CL	0.078	0.016	<0.001	0.067	0.022	0.002	0.404
@69.NOR	--->	CPP	0.111	0.019	<0.001	0.085	0.027	0.002	0.788
@69.NOR	--->	ICP	0.175	0.044	<0.001	0.227	0.048	<0.001	0.799
@69.NOR	--->	ESR	0.112	0.032	<0.001	0.026	0.027	0.349	
@73.HAC	--->	DCI	−0.030	0.015	0.038	0.062	0.033	0.064	
@69.NOR	--->	CD	0.071	0.019	<0.001	0.128	0.031	<0.001	1.568
@73.HAC	--->	ESR	0.023	0.014	0.099	0.233	0.041	<0.001	
@76.HUN	--->	CL	0.028	0.011	0.007	0.057	0.019	0.003	1.321
@76.HUN	--->	CPP	0.048	0.014	<0.001	0.087	0.024	<0.001	1.404
@78.IND	--->	DCI	0.093	0.025	<0.001	0.036	0.031	0.247	
@78.IND	--->	CD	0.171	0.033	<0.001	0.105	0.027	<0.001	1.548
@80.HIE	--->	CPP	0.050	0.016	0.002	0.059	0.022	0.008	0.331
@80.HIE	--->	CD	0.006	0.016	0.733	0.126	0.028	<0.001	
@81.EvA	--->	DCI	−0.072	0.023	0.002	−0.071	0.032	0.029	
@81.EvA	--->	CPP	−0.059	0.017	<0.001	−0.166	0.029	<0.001	3.183
@81.EvA	--->	CD	−0.040	0.018	0.030	−0.201	0.037	<0.001	3.913
@84.AvA	--->	DCI	0.049	0.018	0.007	0.154	0.044	<0.001	2.209
@85.UvP	--->	DCI	0.047	0.018	0.008	−0.095	0.031	0.002	3.961
@85.UvP	--->	CD	−0.025	0.015	0.094	−0.036	0.020	0.064	
@85.UvP	--->	ESR	0.008	0.015	0.572	−0.070	0.023	0.002	
@86.NvE	--->	CD	0.028	0.012	0.025	0.033	0.021	0.118	
@86.NvE	--->	ICP	0.034	0.018	0.060	0.049	0.029	0.094	

Notes: B, path coefficients (estimate); SE, standard error; Z, critical ratio;
LTO, long-term orientation; POLY, polychronism; SPA, space; CTX, context; NOR, nature orientation; HAC, human activity; HUN, human nature; IND, individualism; HIE, hierarchy; EvA, embeddedness vs. autonomy; UvP, universalism vs. particularism; AvA, achievement vs. ascription; NvE, neutral vs. emotional; DCI, degree of customer involvement; CL, convenience level; CD, complexity degree; CPP, contact personnel performance; ICP, information and communication power; ESR, environment and social responsibility.

Table 8: Multigroup analysis: Very High HDI Latin countries vs. Medium HDI Latin countries

Paths			Very High HDI			Medium HDI			|Z|
			B	SE	*p*-value	B	SE	*p*-value	
@50.LTO	--->	CL	0.131	0.020	<0.001	0.496	0.065	<0.001	5.367
@50.LTO	--->	ESR	0.179	0.032	<0.001	0.429	0.065	<0.001	3.451
@51.POLY	--->	DCI	0.164	0.028	<0.001	0.182	0.046	<0.001	0.334
@51.POLY	--->	CL	0.150	0.022	<0.001	0.105	0.022	<0.001	1.446
@51.POLY	--->	CPP	0.163	0.019	<0.001	0.225	0.033	<0.001	1.628
@51.POLY	--->	CD	0.212	0.029	<0.001	0.217	0.039	<0.001	0.103
@54.SPA	--->	DCI	0.024	0.014	0.083	0.111	0.037	0.003	
@54.SPA	--->	CPP	0.024	0.010	0.014	0.124	0.027	<0.001	3.473
@54.SPA	--->	CD	0.065	0.014	<0.001	0.204	0.037	<0.001	3.514
@67.CTX	--->	DCI	0.100	0.021	<0.001	0.214	0.052	<0.001	2.033
@67.CTX	--->	CPP	0.063	0.012	<0.001	0.304	0.042	<0.001	5.517
@67.CTX	--->	ICP	0.111	0.026	<0.001	0.347	0.061	<0.001	3.559
@67.CTX	--->	ESR	0.073	0.017	<0.001	0.242	0.042	<0.001	3.730
@69.NOR	--->	DCI	0.101	0.021	<0.001	-0.041	0.035	0.239	
@69.NOR	--->	CL	0.146	0.022	<0.001	0.067	0.022	0.002	2.539
@69.NOR	--->	CPP	0.178	0.020	<0.001	0.085	0.027	0.002	2.768
@69.NOR	--->	ICP	0.196	0.036	<0.001	0.227	0.048	<0.001	0.517
@69.NOR	--->	ESR	0.109	0.022	<0.001	0.026	0.027	0.349	
@73.HAC	--->	DCI	-0.022	0.014	0.101	0.062	0.033	0.064	
@69.NOR	--->	CD	0.157	0.023	<0.001	0.128	0.031	<0.001	0.751
@73.HAC	--->	ESR	0.123	0.023	<0.001	0.233	0.041	<0.001	2.340
@76.HUN	--->	CL	0.014	0.008	0.090	0.057	0.019	0.003	
@76.HUN	--->	CPP	0.032	0.010	0.002	0.087	0.024	<0.001	2.115
@78.IND	--->	DCI	0.088	0.021	<0.001	0.036	0.031	0.247	
@78.IND	--->	CD	0.099	0.018	<0.001	0.105	0.027	<0.001	0.185
@80.HIE	--->	CPP	0.015	0.011	0.173	0.059	0.022	0.008	
@80.HIE	--->	CD	0.035	0.013	0.010	0.126	0.028	<0.001	2.948
@81.EvA	--->	DCI	0.021	0.016	0.193	−0.071	0.032	0.029	
@81.EvA	--->	CPP	−0.043	0.012	<0.001	−0.166	0.029	<0.001	3.919
@81.EvA	--->	CD	−0.031	0.013	0.020	−0.201	0.037	<0.001	4.335
@84.AvA	--->	DCI	0.047	0.016	0.004	0.154	0.044	<0.001	2.285
@85.UvP	--->	DCI	−0.058	0.015	<0.001	−0.095	0.031	0.002	1.074
@85.UvP	--->	CD	−0.027	0.011	0.011	−0.036	0.020	0.064	
@85.UvP	--->	ESR	−0.057	0.014	<0.001	−0.070	0.023	0.002	0.483
@86.NvE	--->	CD	0.024	0.010	0.013	0.033	0.021	0.118	
@86.NvE	--->	ICP	0.024	0.015	0.113	0.049	0.029	0.094	

Notes: B, path coefficients (estimate); SE, standard error; Z, critical ratio;
LTO, long-term orientation; POLY, polychronism; SPA, space; CTX, context; NOR, nature orientation; HAC, human activity; HUN, human nature; IND, individualism; HIE, hierarchy; EvA, embeddedness vs. autonomy; UvP, universalism vs. particularism; AvA, achievement vs. ascription; NvE, neutral vs. emotional; DCI, degree of customer involvement; CL, convenience level; CD, complexity degree; CPP, contact personnel performance; ICP, information and communication power; ESR, environment and social responsibility.

– *Achievement vs. ascription* → *Degree of customer involvement* ($Z = 2.285$; $p < 0.05$).

Consequently, Hypothesis 1 is not rejected, as cultural dimensions' influence in customers' expectations about service is not equal in groups of countries with different levels of human development, in this case, the Very High HDI Latin countries, the High HDI Latin Countries and the Medium HDI Latin countries.

5 Discussion

As culture affects the way people consume, a successful internationalisation strategy should anticipate cultural influences in customers' expectations about a service, in each country. To ease the internationalisation process, service providers choose to internationalise to countries based on cultural similarity (Martin & Drogendijk, 2014). In fact, countries can be clustered based on cultural similarity and on specific characteristics of the region, such as language, religion, history and cultural aspects, giving significance to societies and cultures (House et al., 2004). Several authors have referred to and studied Latin European and Latin American countries as a cluster. The Latin countries are bounded by language (Rodríguez, 2005; Stoiculescu et al., 2014), historical factors and religion beliefs associated with certain values and norms (Hofstede, 1976; Ronen & Shenkar, 1985; Schneider & Demeyer, 1991). Culturally speaking, these countries are often considered very similar (cf. Brodbeck et al., 2000; Haire, Ghiselli & Porter, 1966; Hofstede, 1980; House et al., 2004; Jesuino, 2002; Ronen & Shenkar, 1985; Stankov, 2011). Previous cross-cultural studies in the services sector were mainly carried out in developed countries from the Northern Hemisphere (e.g., Bartel et al., 1996; Cunningham et al., 2006; Donthu & Yoo, 1998; Laroche et al., 2004; Lin, Tu & Tu, 2007) and fewer studies were carried out in developing countries that have different levels of social and economic development. So, customers from countries with different levels of human development can differ in the way that culture influences customers' expectations about services.

Results also showed that cultural dimensions influence customer expectations about a service differently in groups of Latin countries with different levels of human development. Therefore, Very High HDI Latin countries (France, Italy, Spain, Chile, Portugal and Romania), High HDI Latin countries (Uruguay, Mexico and Brazil) and Medium HDI Latin countries (Bolivia) differ in the way that culture influences customers' expectations about services in groups of countries with different levels of human development. This indicates that Very High, High and Medium HDI Latin countries are not similar, the same service can be expected differently by these different groups of customers and there is a need to adapt the service according to the level of human development of each group of countries.

6 Conclusions

The influence of culture on customer expectations is different when it comes to group the countries with allegedly similar cultures according to their different levels of human development. In fact, it is possible to confirm that cultural dimensions influence customer expectations about a service differently in groups of Latin countries with different levels of human development. This indicates that customers from very high HDI countries (France, Italy, Spain, Chile, Portugal and Romania), high HDI countries (Uruguay, Mexico and Brazil) and medium HDI countries (Bolivia) differ in the way that culture influences their expectations about the service dimensions of a hotel service; so, once again, there is a need to adapt the service to the level of human development of each group of countries.

This transnational cross-cultural research overtakes two of the biggest gaps in this area: the predominance of developed countries from the Northern Hemisphere and the strong dominance of two-country studies (Engelen & Brettel, 2011; Richardson & Smith, 2007). It also contributes to a multi-country analysis of 10 different countries, the minimum threshold set by Cardon (2008), further enhancing the hotel service field with the study of the relation between cultural dimensions and customer expectations. These insights can be used to build or redefine marketing strategies when internationalisation processes take place. As such, the same service should not be designed and commercialised equally for the Latin customers, and managers should adapt the service to each country. By clearing this cognitive dissonance, managers can now reduce risks in internationalisation processes to the Latin countries with different levels of human development.

In terms of limitations, this research was only applied in one context, on the hotel service and considering a specific group of countries, the Latin countries. Future research should test the hypothesis in other services and in other groups of countries with alleged cultural similarity or even extend to other Latin countries. Other limitation

regards the dynamic nature of customers' expectations (Parasuraman et al., 1991; Pizam & Ellis, 1999), where customers can develop new insights about service evaluation and it can be necessary to create new service dimensions. So, future researchers should search for new aspects that customers consider and encounter in the service process and should suggest and test new service dimensions.

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