

TOURIST DEMAND FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PREFERENCES, MOTIVATION AND SATISFACTION AROUND GASTRONOMY: THE CASE OF SANTO DOMINGO, ECUADOR

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Abstract

Gastronomy is key in the strategies for destination development and is a determining factor in tourist success. It is important to recognize the preferences, motivations towards gastronomy to understand the level of satisfaction, in order to propose food products according to the preferences of the tourists who visit it, even understand the behavior of the local inhabitant that allows to better adapt the offer of the destination that influence the intention to return and recommend the place. The empirical study was carried out in Santo Domingo, which is the fourth most populous city in Ecuador; its gastronomy is very varied thanks to the diversity of national and foreign cultures that were established since the 70s; managing to identify the kitchen as one of the most exquisite in the country. The majority of its raw material is generated in its territory, the field; where quality products are grown for national and international consumption. The predominant economic activities are commerce, cattle raising, agriculture and tourism.

To develop the methodology, a questionnaire was used that was analyzed using univariate and bivariate statistical tools, questions were used on a 5-point Likert scale, closed and multiple choice. The findings demonstrate the high degree of satisfaction in terms of local cuisine, in addition to the services and hospitality of its inhabitants, which align to the strategic location of this city. The bestselling typical dishes are roasted beef, encebollado, ceviches, roast chicken, dried and the flag. Surveyed said they would visit Santo Domingo again and even recommend family and friends to visit. What confirms that gastronomy is an important attraction in this destination, which means that visitors could become frequent customers towards this destination; which demonstrates the growth of gastronomic tourism in Santo Domingo. As a practical implication, the present study will serve as a guide for the elaboration of management plans of public institutions and to be considered by the owners of food and beverage establishments, which will generate greater profitability and competitiveness. While the theoretical implications are the motivations, preferences and satisfaction of gastronomy and the purpose of recommending a gastronomic tourist destination.

Keywords Gastronomic demand, tourist destinations, preferences, attitudes, motivations, satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector generates employment and activates economies worldwide, tourist resources and attractions must be complemented with activities according to tourism demand. This is how destinations are betting on local gastronomy as a differentiating factor, in order to attract a greater influx of tourists (Robinson and Getz 2014). In this sense, food and beverage establishments create varied sustainable offerings. Indeed,

Oliveira (2007) argues that gastronomy can be considered a main attraction and in many localities that do not have tourist attractions, they can develop it as a product capable of attracting visitor flows.

In Santo Domingo diverse cultures coexist with different inheritances in traditions and gastronomy, they are factors that have contributed to the cultural and gastronomic enrichment of this tourist destination, being this a factor of vital interest to develop activities and strategies that contribute to the gastronomic tourism of the sector. Among the main types of tourism are: adventure tourism, business tourism, shopping tourism, gastronomic tourism, cultural tourism and ecotourism.

It is important to carry out research related to the motivations, preferences and satisfaction around the gastronomy within the tourist destinations, in order to determine the offer according to the preferences of the customers, that allows to understand the demand. Nowadays there are no studies related to this subject in the city of Santo Domingo, in this virtue this article is presented where results of a field study that covers this relevant aspect within this tourist destination of Ecuador are disseminated. To achieve approximate results, the present study is structured as follows: it begins with the introduction, followed by the literary review, as a third section the methodology applied is shown as well as the results of the present empirical research and finally the conclusions and references used.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Gastronomic tourism is defined as “a type of tourist activity characterized by the fact that the traveler experiences activities and products related to local gastronomy during his trip (UNWTO 2019). In this sense, gastronomy undoubtedly forms part of the cultural identification of a territory, due to its historical and cultural character, for which reason, Oliveira and Rocha (2011) mention that traditional cuisine not only increases the value of a destination but also its own, since between the territory and the food it enhances identity local (Barrera and Bringas 2008). Local gastronomy can form a very important part of the identity of a tourist destination, highlighting those foods that themselves become a tourist resource for regional development by emphasizing its values of authenticity, positioning and differentiation (Henderson 2009). In this way, the offer of culinary spaces has transformed the act of eating into something different, unique, which allows us to return to memories of traditions Ceretta (2012).

Gastronomic tourism is based on a concept of knowing and learning, eating, tasting and enjoying the gastronomic culture identified with a territory. You can not speak of gastronomic tourism without talking about the culinary identity (UNWTO 2019), the fact of promoting certain raw materials and unique dishes make the tourist visit a delight to the palate and configure products that not only meet the nutritional factor, but that become a tourist product capable of promoting the gastronomic tourism segment (Millán et al. 2014). This is how Millán and Agudo (2010) consider gastronomic tourism as that carried out by those who visit a place attracted by its gastronomy or its agri-food products.

Gastronomy is part of the daily practice of tourists during their trips (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen 2013); For this purpose, Cabrera (2013) points out the importance of turning the moment of consumption in the gastronomic field into a memorable memory. In this regard, Hall et al. (2003) refer that gastronomic tourism is energized with visits to food producers, gastronomic festivals, restaurants and special places related to some special foods along with tasting a special dish. Within this framework, Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen (2016) mention that the gastronomic dimension, the social dimension, the destination where this experience is carried out or the time of the trip are characteristics that stand out when choosing a destination.

On the bases of the ideas presented Lee and Arcodia 2011; Kim, et al. (2015), agree that tourism and local gastronomy of the destination, appear as a perfect symbiosis so that visitors can appreciate a different product, promoting the economic development of the regions with a different culinary product. For Rojas and Millán (2018) one of the attractive factors for the so-called gastronomic tourism is the unique and traditional dishes made in certain areas that are the object of visit. Among the motivations of tourists are: the interest in living and experiencing cultural diversity, the search for authenticity and uniqueness; along with the experience of stories to tell, etc. (Araújo et al. 2017), all these motivations can be linked to gastronomy. Analyzing the satisfaction of the visitors about the typical gastronomy and the characteristics of the demand is useful for the restaurants to improve the gastronomic offer according to the demand, and thus impact positively on the experience of the visitors when the visit is made. (Carvache-Franco et al. 2017).

Tourists are interested in learning about local traditions and culture of the destinations, which generates an interaction between residents and tourists. In this context, Henderson (2009) argues that local gastronomy can form a very important part of the identity of a tourist destination, highlighting those foods that themselves become a tourist resource for regional development by emphasizing their values of authenticity, positioning and differentiation. In addition, gastronomy is related to relaxation, interaction with other people, learning new skills and hospitality (Çela et al. 2007), which reinforces its importance in recent years.

2. STUDY AREA: THE CITY OF SANTO DOMINGO

Santo Domingo is the fourth most populous city in Ecuador and is part of the Costa Region. It limits to the South with the province of Los Ríos, to the North with the provinces of Pichincha and Esmeraldas, to the West with the province of Manabí and to the East with the province of Cotopaxi. Its territory is in a humid tropic zone and is one of the most rainy areas in the country, the high biodiversity is determined by the presence of a variety of habitats and micro habitats, the high index of endemic species makes this area considered as a laboratory for global genetic research, as in fact is developed in the La Perla Protective Forest, which constitutes a "regional moon" and national pride. The city of Santo Domingo also has a cultural diversity that has earned it its recognition as a national and international tourist destination. The Tsáchilas communities maintain a traditional culture that characterizes them and differentiates them from other communities in Ecuador because of the color of their costumes, stories, legends, ritual

dances and shamanistic activity, however, the cultural promotion has been carried out traditionally, through books, magazines, brochures, among others. The main economic activities that are carried out in the province are agricultural and livestock, it also has natural and cultural tourism resources according to the mountain sector, giving added value to adventure and fun as part of the tourist experience.

Among the main types of tourism are: adventure tourism, business tourism, shopping tourism, gastronomic tourism, cultural tourism and ecotourism. The cuisine is varied thanks to the diversity of cultures that are established and are close to the province, as is the case of Esmeraldas, Quito and Manabí, and even nowadays Colombian and Venezuelan colonies are established. Among the most characteristic products of the region are the breaded, the ayampaco, the banana bullet, the sancocho, the chontaduro, game meats such as the guanta, guatusa, deer, and mountain turkeys, as well as fermented beverages based on corn and cassava (Decentralized Autonomous Government of Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas 2015). Although it is true, the city has a great biological and cultural diversity, having countless products, customs and traditions have given way to a wide gastronomic culture that has been transmitted for generations and contributes significantly to the cultural and tourist enrichment of the region.

3. METHODOLOGY

In order to reach the proposed objectives, an on-site fieldwork was carried out based on a survey that contained 20 questions grouped into two blocks: (sociodemographic information and the preferences, motivation and satisfaction of the visitors) whose target population were older visitors of 18 years. Closed and multiple-choice questions on a 5-points Likert scale were used to obtain reliable results. The data collected were organized, tabulated and analyzed through the SPSS Version 22 program, univariate and bivariate statistical instruments were also used.

Visitors were surveyed in the different touristic places of Santo Domingo city during weekends between January and February 2020. The surveys were conducted by students of the bachelor's degree in gastronomy at the University of Guayaquil, who were previously trained by the authors of this article. To avoid any difficulty and error, pilot tests were carried out with 30 surveys to validate the questionnaire or otherwise make improvements.

The cronbach alpha index reached the value of 0.83, which indicates good internal consistency between the elements of the scale. As a statistical technique, the spearman correlation coefficient was used to know the significant relationships between the different variables. The sample size was 385 and the infinite population was used considering that the study population is over 10,000 according to the number of tourists who visited Santo Domingo in 2018 received 573.546 tourists; Ministry of Tourism (2018). A margin of error of +/- 5%, a confidence level of 95% and a variance of 50% is proposed (Table 1).

Table 1: Research File

Population	National and foreign visitors
Geographic area	City of Santo Domingo
Period of realization	January, February 2020
Process	Simple random sampling
Confidence level	95%
Margin error	+/- 5%
Valid questionnaires	385

Several previous research papers were reviewed in order to elaborate the questionnaire of questions (Carvache-Franco et al. 2017; González et al. 2018; Sierra et al. 2006; Carvache-Franco et al. 2018; López-Guzmán and Sánchez-Cañizares 2012; Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen 2016), where you can see relevant research on motivation, preferences and satisfaction of tourist demand around gastronomy.

4. RESULTS

The sociodemographic aspects and characteristics of the trip such as nationality, age, gender, professional activity, are shown in the Table 2.

Table 2: Socioeconomic Variable

Category		N	%
Nationality	Ecuadorian	364	95%
	Foreign	21	5%
Gender	Man	194	50%
	Women	191	50%
Age	Under de 20 years	33	9%
	20-29 years	141	37%
	30-39 years	96	25%
	40-49 years	58	15%
	50-59 years	37	10%
	60 years or more	20	5%
Level of education	Primary	85	22%
	Secondary	173	45%
	University	121	31%
	Postgraduate / Master's / PhD.	6	2%
Professional activity	Student	69	18%
	Independent professional	52	14%
	Private Entrepreneur	12	3%
	Private employee	79	21%
	Public employee	74	19%
	Housework	60	16%
	Unemployed	10	3%
	Retired	6	2%
Others	23	6%	

	Category	N	%
Frequency of visit	Once a year	50	13%
	4 times a year	74	19%
	Rarely	68	18%
	More than 12 times a year	118	31%
	6 times a year	38	10%
Who you visit with	12 times a year	37	10%
	With the family	165	43%
	With friends or coworkers	55	14%
	With partner	45	12%
	Alone	166	43%
Average daily food expenditure	Others	2	1%
	Under \$ 20	264	69%
	21-40	67	17%
	41-60	27	7%
	141-160	6	2%
	61-80	6	2%
	81-100	12	3%
101-120	2	0,5%	

According to the results from Table 2, 49,61% are women and 50,39% of the visitors are men, what shows that visitors from both genders arrive the destination, from which, 37% have an average age of 20 to 29 years old and 25% have an average age of 30 to 39 years old. Concerning the level of education, a 31% have a university education and 45% have a secondary education, being 21% private employees as the majority group, followed by public employees with a 19% of the total amount of respondents.

The tourists surveyed mostly traveled with their families (43%) and those visiting alone (28.2%). The frequency the visitors arrive to the destination is: More than 12 times a year (31%) and 4 times a year (19%). The average daily food expenditure per person is less than \$20 (60%) and from \$21 to \$40 (17%).

4.1. Motivations

Tourists' motivations are shown in Table 3. It is based on a 5-points Likert scale. being 1 – the less and 5 – the most.

Table 3: **Motivations**

Valuation	Mean	Ranking
For enjoying typical gastronomy	3,51	1
To visit family and friends	3,43	2
For its tourist attractions	3,17	3
For its commercial activity	3,12	4
To rest	3,11	5

As shown in Table 5, the principal motivations of tourists in visiting the destination are for enjoying its typical cuisine (3.51), for visiting family and friends (3.43) and for its tourist attractions (3.17). These results show that Santo Domingo has great gastronomy and tourist potential.

4.2. Preferences

Table 4 shows the preferences of traditional dishes. Surveyed could choose between 11 more dishes offered in the destination, the question was multiple choice which represents a sum of the result greater than 100%.

Table 4: **Preferences**

Valuation	Percentage	Ranking
Beef and pork roasts	19,0%	1
Encebollado	14,7%	2
Ceviche	11,6%	3
Breaded	10,9%	4
Dried	10,00%	5
Flag	9,00%	6
Breaded	6,90%	7
Pork baked	5,90%	8
Fried fish	5,60%	9
Maito	3,70%	10
Ayampaco	2,6%	11

As indicated in Table 4, when choosing a dish to taste, they prefer roast beef and pork (19.0%), Encebollado (14.7%), Ceviche (11.6%), Breaded (10, 9%) and Dried (10.00%). These results establish that the gastronomy of this place is very varied in relation to other destinations in the country. It also demonstrates that Ecuadorian cuisine is a great enhancer and driver for tourism activities.

4.3. Satisfaction

The level of satisfaction of the service by attributes when tasting gastronomy are shown in Table 5. Five aspects were used to assess gastronomic satisfaction, these variables allow us to analyze the satisfaction of restaurant service. The results show that the service variables have a degree of satisfaction upper medium. The most valued aspects were the variety of the dishes (4.25), the taste and quality of the food (4.21), service and courtesy of the employees (3.99). This demonstrates the high level of service of the gastronomy of Santo Domingo. The theoretical model applied (Franco et al. 2017) would be approximated to establish the satisfaction of the gastronomy of a destination.

Table 5: **Satisfaction by attributes**

Variables	Mean	Ranking
The variety of the dishes	4, 25	1
The taste and quality of food	4,21	2
Service and courtesy of employees	3,99	3
Speed of attention	3,87	4
The price level	3,83	5

Tourist' general satisfaction about gastronomy in the destination is shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Overall Satisfaction

Very unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Not satisfied Not unsatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Mean of Satisfaction
1	2	3	4	5	
0,5%	1,0%	8,6%	40,8%	49,8%	4,29

According to Table 6, 49,8% % of the tourists are very satisfied, with the destination, while a 40.8% are satisfied; this shows a great percentage of the visitors have a good appreciation about gastronomy in the destination. On the other hand, the overall satisfaction mean of the tourists is 4.29 which indicates a high satisfaction which confirms that gastronomy is an important attraction in this destination.

4.4. Relationship of general satisfaction with motivational variables

The Table 7 shows the valuation of the experience after visiting Santo Domingo.

Table 7: Experience valuation

Valuation	Mean	Ranking
After my experience, I think I will return to the Santo Domingo city next time.	4,32	1
I would recommend a visit to the Santo Domingo city if someone asked me for advice	4,29	2
I will encourage my family and / or friends to visit Santo Domingo	4,24	3
My choice to visit Santo Domingo has been right	4,23	4
My satisfaction level of Santo Domingo city has been important	4,16	5

The general valuation of the different questions by the tourists shows a media major to 4.3, which indicates tourists would like to return Santo Domingo eventually (4.32), they would also recommend visiting Santo Domingo (4.29), they would encourage their related to travel to the destination (4.24), they are agree on choosing Santo Domingo as a touristic destination (4.23) finally their satisfaction level has been important (4.16).

4.5. General satisfaction with different motives to eat in a restaurant

The relationship of general satisfaction variable about the place and the motives that the visitors at the time of eating in a restaurant are presented in Table 8. They have been analyzed through a Spearman correlation.

Table 8: General satisfaction with different motives to eat in a restaurant

Motives to eat in a restaurant of Santo Domingo.	Coefficient
Because I organized my trip to eat at this destination	.513**
Because they have recommended the food of this place	.373**
For consuming a typical dish	.266**

According to table 8, the variables show a positive correlation with respect to general satisfaction. Furthermore, it was found that the motivational variables that have the greatest influence on general service satisfaction are “Because I organized my trip to eat at this destination” (, 513) and “Because they have recommended the food of this place” (, 373) in general these results show the high degree that visitors get when visiting this place and enjoy the food of this place.

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The opportunities offered by Santo Domingo to do tourism are varied, Among the main types of tourism are: adventure tourism, business tourism, shopping tourism, gastronomic tourism, cultural tourism and ecotourism. In a destination with a high gastronomic potential, it is necessary to measure the aspects of the service that influence the overall satisfaction of the visitors to plan efficient strategies that can increase their return to the destination, generate employment and improve the image of the destination. The study of tourist demand brings important information to develop products according to their preferences, motivations and satisfaction of its travelers around gastronomy.

They contribute to preserving food heritage and developing gastronomic tourism. The theoretical contribution of this study contributes to expanding the scientific literature on gastronomy related to the variables of preferences, motivations and satisfaction of tourists. The findings show that the majority of visitors are between the ages of 20 and 39 (Carvache-Franco et al. 2018; Orden et al. 2017; López-Guzmán et al. 2017); about your professional activity private employees as the majority group, followed by public employees; the average daily food expenditure per person is less than \$20, indicating that the gastronomy of Santo Domingo is economic.

Among the traditional dishes, beef and pork roasts, encebollado and Ceviche are preferred by visitors. The findings show that the main motivation of tourists is enjoying typical gastronomy. The most valued attributes of the visit were the variety of the dishes, the taste and quality of food and service and courtesy of employees. The satisfaction of the destination is high (López-Guzmán and Sánchez-Cañizares 2012; Martínez 2012; Mazón et al. 2012; Carvache et al. 2017) which shows the gastronomic potential of this destination. This indicates that your visitors could become loyal customers towards this destination (Kivela and Crofts 2006). Different attitude of tourists towards the trip in relation to gastronomy is evident (Bjork and Kauppinen-Räsänen 2016).

The motivational variables that are related to the overall satisfaction of the visitor when going to a restaurant are “because I organized my trip to eat at this destination” and “because they have recommended to me the food of this place”. The variables that are recommended to improve are “speed of attention” and “the price level” for having a high correlation with overall satisfaction and for being the variables with the lowest level of average satisfaction. Based on the exposed results, the restaurants will be able to adapt the products according to the demand, to improve their services and the quality of the gastronomy.

The findings show that tourists are willing to return and recommend this destination. In addition, the intentions of returning to the destination are influenced by satisfaction (Zabkar et al. 2009; Chen and Chen 2010). Among the practical implications we have that restaurants should plan strategies to improve the level of satisfaction in the different aspects of the service taking into account these empirical results. In this way they should be able to improve the level of general satisfaction of tourists, increase future visits and improve the recommendation of the destination, contributing to the sustainable development of the destination and the community

As a final conclusion it can be established that the main limitation of the study is the temporality of the information gathering, because the demand may vary and a new line of research is opened about the relationship that exists between satisfaction and the sustainable economic impact in a tourist destination. Further promotion and diffusion of local cuisine is recommended to take advantage of its potential and increase gastronomic tourism in Santo Domingo.

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