

VALUATION AND MOTIVATION OF THE MEETING INDUSTRY: A CASE STUDY FROM GUAYAQUIL, ECUADOR

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Citation: Carvache-Franco, O., Carvache-Franco, M., Carvache-Franco, W., Borja-Morán, J.L., Saltos-Layana, A., & Vilema-Herrera, K. (2019). VALUATION AND MOTIVATION OF THE MEETING INDUSTRY: A CASE STUDY GUAYAQUIL, ECUADOR. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 25(2), 429–445. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.25213-371>

Abstract: Conferences and events should be a proposal to develop cities that have facilities for this type of demand. The objective of this empirical study was to analyze the motivations and valuation of participants in an International Congress in Guayaquil City (Ecuador). A survey was applied, for which univariate and bivariate statistical techniques were used. The results show that the participants arrived mainly accompanied, and is a tourist with high spending on their stay. The main motivations were: Learning about the content of the workshops, getting to know the participants, the desire to know new places and contributing knowledge in the workshops. Regarding satisfaction, the most valued variables were: accessibility to the work rooms, the care and cleanliness of the premises, the brightness of the premises and the means of transport for their movements. The

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variables that have a greater influence on tourist satisfaction were: learning about the content of the workshops, getting to know the participants, disconnecting from everyday routine and contributing knowledge to the workshops. Regarding the assessment of the city for the meeting industry, the most valued variables were: the attention and quality of the accommodations, the beauty of the city, the hospitality of the residents and the conservation of the monumental heritage.

Key words: Events, congresses, festivals, conventions, Ecuador

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INTRODUCTION

International tourist arrivals grew by 6% in the first four months of 2018, compared to the same period last year, not only continuing the strong trend of 2017, but exceeding the forecasts of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2018). Business tourism has gained increasing importance in the last decades worldwide (Iacuone & Zarrilli, 2018). This article focuses on one of the fastest growing segments in tourism, called MICE (meeting tourism, incentives, conferences and exhibitions), which worldwide has increased simultaneously with economic growth and globalization trends, there are many reasons, among the most mentioned are the economic benefits for the destination and community (Horváth, 2011; Martín et al., 2017; Xie & Sinwald, 2016), because it generates on average a higher level of expenditure, reduces seasonality, contributes to the regeneration of destinations, disseminates knowledge and improves innovation and creativity (OMT, 2014), this type of tourism was valued at \$ 752 billion in 2016 (Allied Market Research, 2016). United Nations World Tourism Organization UNWTO, in a publication about tourism terms, classifies the industry of meetings (for commercial or professional purposes) in "attendance at meetings, conferences or congresses, trade fairs and exhibitions" and "other commercial and professional purposes" (UNWTO, 2014, 6). In addition, a meeting is defined as a number of people in one place, to confer or carry out a particular activity as a whole. Broadly, the number of participants helps to classify meetings with less than 50 participants (local), 100 participants (national) and 300 participants (international). Regarding to the International Association of Congresses and Conventions (ICCA), which requires at least 300 participants for an international meeting and that at least 40% of the participants must be from other countries or a minimum of five nationalities (Morrison, 2013, p.523).

The understanding of the differences in MICE guides the strategies for the cities use to achieve the image of the desired city and they differ from each other (Gelders & Van Zuilen, 2013). For example, a congress is a regular meeting of several people who discuss a particular topic for many days and have simultaneous sessions (ICCA, 2017). While a conference is smaller in scale, it is a participatory meeting and not frequent and with respect to the participants, it is selective. Between shows for consumers and the commercial emphasis on trade fairs and exhibitions (Getz & Stephen, 2016), participants can combine experiences and ideas during the discussions (Schneider et al., 2018).

The main characteristics of the trip, the motivations of the visitors and the value of the destination are areas of interest for the researchers in the meeting industry; however, no scientific studies have been carried out on this subject and particularly in the city of Guayaquil (Ecuador). This research is one of the first studies in the motivational field and the factors of value that influence the attendance of visitors to the events of this important city. This article contributes to the literature about

conferences that have not been studied in this city yet, filling a gap that currently exists in this area of research. There are many studies conducted in a regional context, for example: in the United Kingdom (Getz & Stephen, 2016), Malaysia (Jalilah & Normala, 2016) or Asia and Latin America (ICCA, 2013); But there are few studies that analyze motivations and satisfaction directly in an International Congress.

Regarding the best cities in the meetings industry, Guayaquil is following the model to be a destination for meetings such as Barcelona, Vienna, Paris, Madrid, Berlin, Singapore, London, Lisbon, Amsterdam and Prague (ICCA, 2017). Trying to achieve the advantages in (1) demographic and social changes, (2) technology, (3) investments in facilities, infrastructure and equipment, (4) institutional and legal framework, (5) environmental issues, (6) and security (Giaoutzi, 2017). In terms of economic development, in the last 40 years, tourism has become an important activity in this growing sector in many countries, through which destinations develop tourist activities. The purpose of this document is to evaluate the main characteristics of the trip, the motivation, satisfaction and assessment of the destination by the visitors in the FOLAC 2019 International Congress, in order to contribute with policies to benefit the destination. To achieve this goal, the document is structured in the following parts: introduction, the literature review, description of the study area, methodology, results and discussion. The article ends with the conclusions of the research and the references used.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Meeting industry

The first studies on tourism events and festivals appeared in the 80s and 90s. On the other hand, Getz has studied widely event tourism in recent years because when tourism and events come together, it is more attractive for people (Chibir & Shirko, 2015). In addition, he describes it as a "type of trip with special interest that, in its context, one travels to attend an event or attend an event while traveling" (Getz, 2008). According to Laing (2017) events are a social phenomenon that can attract different audiences and be useful for a variety of purposes. The meetings industry allows continuous social exchange in a given space. For this reason, it would be better to be a link between the guest and the host culture, so that the success of the events can be influenced by accommodation tourism (Canavan, 2016). Particularly, Gets (2008) includes the meetings industry in its general perspective categorization (purposes) consisting of: (1) Meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) as an industry, (2) Sports events such as the Olympic Games and the world competitions, and (3) Cultural celebrations and celebrations. Although, Panfiluk (2015) proposed that events can be classified for a better study, in five basic trends: (1) motivations and objectives, (2) participation of residents and non-residents, (3) the economic impact, (4) methods used in the economic impact, and (5) sociodemographic and cultural factors. Social interaction is part of the characteristics of the event (Laing, 2017), and psychology is part of the behavior of visitors. In other words, different research sciences generate several classifications of events.

Cities focus their resources to build their image, combining strategies to use it so they can be different, compared to other cities in the region (Gelders & Van Zuilen, 2013). For this reason, it is necessary to be specific about the terms: congress, conference and fairs. ICCA in 2017 mentioned that a congress is a meeting with people who discuss specific issues during sessions and simultaneous days. In contrast, a conference has a smaller and more selective number of participants who are part of the discussion during the days without regular meetings. In fairs and exhibitions, there is an emphasis on shows for consumers and business opportunities (Getz & Stephen,

2016); also participants can combine knowledge, skills and ideas during discussions (Schneider et al., 2018). Cities are spaces for interaction and lively experiences (Antchak, 2018) and market research is very important before an event, so the locations satisfy the needs (Terzi et al., 2013). Today, destinations adopt leveraging strategies in their marketing mix for events of all scales (Kelly, 2018) because MICE improves culture and economics, including offering outdoor entertainment, more interesting places and cultural attractions, acceptable frequency of airline arrivals, good pricing policies and taxes and quality of service (Caber et al., 2017). As a result, MICE is one of the fastest growing and fastest growing sectors (Opperman, 1996), not only because of its financial income, but also because of the development of destinations (Terzi et al., 2013).

Value of the meeting industry

The level of satisfaction experienced by the attendees is a critical element in determining loyalty to events, intentions to return and some recommendations to other people (Lu & Cai, 2011; Lee & Min, 2016), a better understanding of the attendees and an evaluation of their experience during an event is necessary to develop a stronger competition between destinations. In the context of conventions or conferences, academics in most of the researches have focused especially on the economic impacts of event tourism, as a type of business trip. The tourism of conventions (MICE) is highly desirable compared to leisure travelers; these tourists have a high expenditure and stay more time at the destination (Spiller, 2002). Therefore, market segmentation can help to implement quality service programs, specific marketing and promotion campaigns by analyzing the relevance of demographic characteristics such as gender, nationality or age (Venter et al., 2015). It is important to emphasize that the image and profile of a destination can be improved (Lawson, 2000), which means that events are the tool for the city brand (Gelders et al., 2013). Consequently, countries are doing everything that is possible to establish the city image through the MICE industry (Pearlman, 2016).

Since potential visitors take into consideration several factors before attending an event, in an extensive literature review, the following have been found: program, cost, networking, external activities and location (Severt et al., 2009; Zhang et al., 2007; Mair & Thompson, 2009; Yoo & Zhao, 2010; Borghans et al., 2010). The factors of the program include: interesting subject, reputation, program and quality of the exhibitors. The cost factors include: transportation cost, accommodation cost and registration price. Network factors include: renewing business contacts, generating new business, networking opportunities. The factors of external activities include: visiting friends and family, visiting nearby areas, seeking employment, required by my company, attending with a friend / family. Location factors include: accessible location, attractiveness of the location, hotel facilities, climate and image of destination (Tanford et al., 2012), emphasizing that accessibility was an important element in the decisions of the conference venue.

Another dimension of motivation that has been widely confirmed is the accessibility in terms of location and transportation, accommodation, technological assistance in the hotel and destination of the event, expenses of the participants, good quality services by the staff (Talebpour et al., 2017). In addition, facilities and services actively promote cultural and natural attractions for foreign tourists to extend their stay before or after a convention (Kim et al., 2016). On the other hand, the value perceptions during an event are given by the attendees. In fact, the quality of the event and its perceived value have a significant effect on behavioral intentions (Jin et al., 2013). In addition, the destination image determines the visitors' perceptions of value. In their findings, Wu et al. (2016) suggested that the quality of the exhibition service consists of interaction, the physical environment, the result and the quality of access that positively

influence the perceived value, which in turn leads to greater satisfaction and behavioral intention. In addition, it is important to evaluate the satisfaction of the convention attendees to understand what should be presented, continued or suspended in a meeting. The satisfaction of the attendees is linked to a variety of factors that include sociodemographic and psychological characteristics (Mair, 2010). For example, Getz and Stephen (2016), based on research from The Business Tourism Partnership in the United Kingdom, indicates that people who attend corporate events generally travel accompanied and even return to their destination with family and friends. Also highlight that the expenditure of each visitor of business tourism represents three times the spending of an average visitor (Jalilah & Normala, 2016). All these are important facts, therefore, organizations and researchers must pay attention to the answers of the assistants when evaluating the quality of their conventions, in particular the intention to return and recommend the convention to others (Lee & Min, 2016).

Motivation in the meeting industry

Motivation is a set of biological and spiritual needs and desires that motivate someone to perform specific activities (Crompton & McKay, 1997). Based on this, visitors choose a destination related to their needs and desires or are motivated to visit a destination due to their characteristics, attractions and attributes (Sunı & Komppula, 2012). Therefore, it can be said that tourist motivation is often complex and multidimensional (Crompton, 1979; Uysal et al., 1993) since it depends on situational parameters such as opportunity, time and money (Gnoth, 1997). For many years, motivation was considered as the only one that intervenes between the stimulus and the response to consumer behavior, the literature on tourist motivation has been enriched, based on the approach of psychology and sociology (Sédek, 1974) and it has been studied for a long time. Some of the first studies are (Plog, 1974; Iso-Ahola, 1982).

There are motivating and determining factors that influence the tourist in the purchase of any product. For example, "the motivating factors motivate tourists to want to buy, and the determining factors refer to whether the tourist can buy the desired product" (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007, p16). Other authors consider the motivation of tourists in two categories: the motivation that leads a person to choose to travel and the motivation that leads a person to choose a particular holiday, a specific destination and a specific time (Mahika, 2011). Another classification is more complex and is accepted and used by many specialists. According to this, the motivations are psychological, emotional, personal, personal development, status, culture (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). The tourism experience is greater in the levels of motivation, particularly for the dimensions of personal search and personal escape (Snepenger et al., 2006). In addition, there are two limitations, such as the quantity and quality of available resources (Giaoutzi, 2017).

The available theories present the push-pull approach that often complements the Iso-Ahola model (Crompton, 1979). In 1997, Crompton and McKay indicated that impulse factors (internal motives) such as escape motives and traction factors (external stimuli) as search motives. In summary, motivation and expectation can improve the understanding of perceptions, experience and evaluations (Gnoth, 1997). The motives differ from the motivations in direction and objective, while the motivations are an interaction between motives and situations (Gnoth, 1997). In simpler words, the motivation is "some kind of internal impulse, which pushes someone to do things to achieve something" (Harmer, 2001, p.51). However, the objectives that a tourist wants to achieve have a direct concern with the life cycle of a destination that is divided into discovery, growing popularity, fashion and saturation, decreasing fashion, and decrease (Giaoutzi, 2017). In comparison with any type of tourism and focusing on the decision process, the motivating factors for

attending events are: educational purposes, educational information in exhibitions, reasonable travel time to the place and commercial activities (Severt et al., 2009).

In this sense, Kitchen (2017) affirms that the creation of networks is a key motivation for attending events, but few studies have explored this topic and the extent to which people benefit and maintain their connections. The motivation is characterized by dynamic sociodemographic variables of tourism demand (age, marital status, education, income, etc.) and has a direct influence on: balance of payments, regional development, economic diversification, income levels, state income and employment opportunities (Pearce, 1981). On this basis, local governments find in event tourism an opportunity to increase the motivation to visit the city, apart from its local attractions. In summary, tourism began as a massive industry, while motivation began to differ with respect to events. Later, the motivations changed widely because the visitors held more specialized and organized meetings for more specific purposes.

STUDY AREA

This study is limited to "Santiago de Guayaquil", known as Guayaquil, the largest city in Ecuador, located in the northwest of South America with a warm and humid climate. It is easily accessible, thanks to the Guayas River that surrounds the city on the east and the "Estuario del Salado" surrounding it on the west. It is not only the commercial heart of Ecuador, but also a vibrant and expanding city, increasingly safe with more than 2,350,915 inhabitants (National Institute of Statistics and Census, 2010).

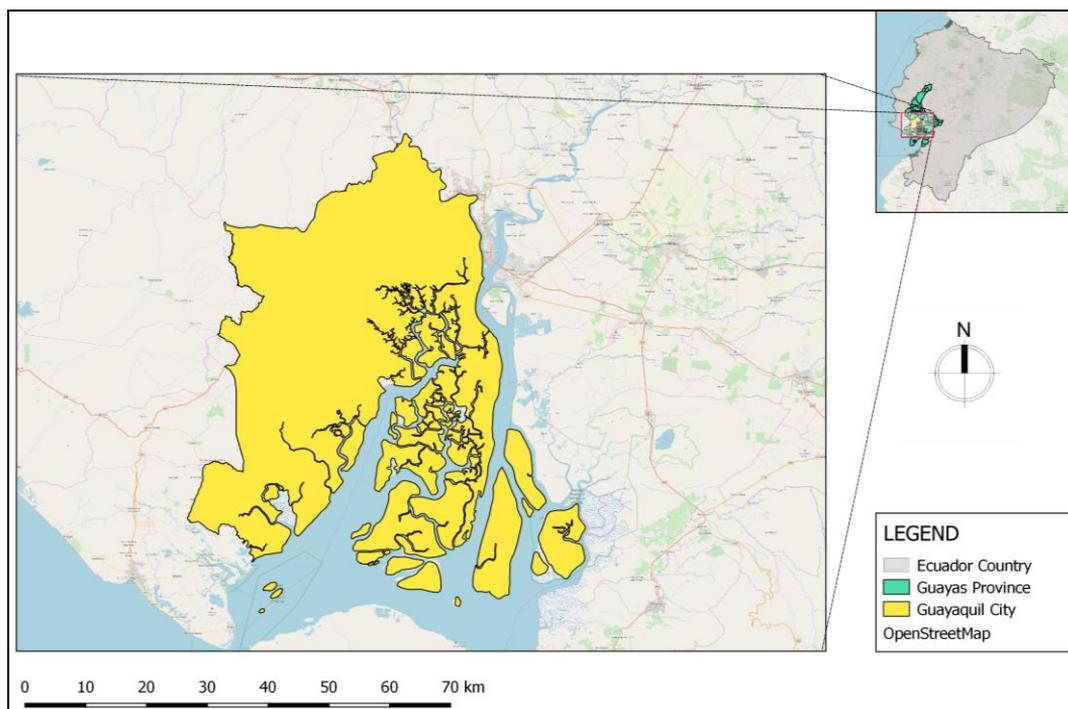


Figure 1. Geographical Location of the city of Guayaquil (Ecuador)

The city is also the focus of Ecuador's international trade and commerce. Economically, it is the most important city in Ecuador, because its seaport handles more

or less 90% of the country's imports and 50% of its exports with products such as: bananas, coffee and cocoa. At the same time, the economy of the city is given by government and private participation, with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), international commercial companies and also by the performance of agricultural and aquaculture activities, wholesale and retail sales retail represent 57.4% of the companies in the city (Municipality of Guayaquil, 2017) (Figure 1).

The city of Guayaquil as a meeting destination

Guayaquil has been strengthened as a destination for tourism meetings due to its characteristics, such as the "José Joaquín de Olmedo" international airport, which is open 365 days a year, the capacity of the city to accommodate more than 3,500 people. In fact, it is one of the first digital cities in South America, due to the 4,000 internet points installed. The city has enabled certain spaces for meetings and events, such as the Plaza Rodolfo Baquerizo Moreno Exhibition Center with a meeting room of more than 600 people and the Crystal Palace Exhibition and Convention Center (Municipality of Guayaquil, 2017). In this context, Rusko et al. (2009) show that municipalities have an essential role in the development of destinations, such as decisions at the strategic level of zoning and land use policies, and that investments in infrastructure create opportunities for companies to develop their businesses. For this reason, Panfiluk (2015) explains that the efficiency of event management needs a continuous monitoring system related to the needs of visitors. To be successful, it is important to continue with research on the motivation of visitors and the community, to encourage the active participation of key actors in all disciplines to understand the social phenomenon of the meetings industry (Laing, 2017). Based on this idea, it is important to highlight that one of the strategic objectives of the Municipality of Guayaquil (Tourism, Civic Promotion and International Relations) is to make Guayaquil a national and international destination for fairs, congresses, conventions, events and visitors. This shows the interest of the mayor to promote this type of tourism (Municipality of Guayaquil, 2018). As an example, Guayaquil has hosted important events, such as: The World Banana Summit, the World Cocoa Summit, the World Orchid Congress, Comic On, Roots Fair, Travel Mart Latin America, the Congress of Latin American Tourist Cities, there are also several factors that are currently being worked on in favor of Guayaquil as a meeting destination, such as the facilities to access places (transfer from one place to another), with good infrastructure, tourism and with a wide gastronomic offer. This city, known as the "Pearl of the Pacific", has won two consecutive 2016 and 2017 Travel Awards that qualified it as the main South American destination for business trips (World Travel Awards, 2016, 2017).

METHODOLOGY

The present empirical research is based on fieldwork that consist of some conducted surveys to a simple random sample of visitors attending the Lions International Forum FOLAC from 18 to 22 January 2017 (Edition: XLVI), this event took place in Guayaquil city and welcomed 1000 members from 23 participating countries approximately. So far, three editions have been held in Ecuador in two different cities: Quito (1978) (2006) and Guayaquil (1993). In the edition XLVI, visitors filled out surveys independently and some pollsters were very close to them if there was any question. The authors of this article trained students from ESPOL University before they conducted the surveys in this fieldwork. The survey was prepared based on previous studies about Meeting Industry (Zhang et al., 2007; Severt et al., 2009; Mair & Thompson 2009; Yoo & Zhao, 2010; Borghans et al., 2010; Tanford et al., 2012; Talebpour et al., 2017) Moreover, 5 unstructured interviews were conducted with specialists in the area, in order to contrast

the formulated questions. To confirm its effectiveness, a pilot test with 20 surveys was conducted to guests in Hilton Colon Hotel or tourists at “Crystal Palace”, who attended the event in January 2017, but carried out various social activities after the event.

The survey consisted of 17 questions that were divided into 3 sections: the first focused on obtaining socio-demographic information from visitors, the second related to the characteristics of the trip, and the third dealt with the motivation and valuation of Guayaquil as a destination for the meeting industry development.

The survey was conducted to national and foreign tourists over 18 years’ old who attended the international event; they were the target population of this study. For this study, closed questions, multiple choice and Likert scale were used, designed to obtain reliable results to achieve the objective of the study. There were 280 surveys applied, 251 were valid, this was the sample size. For the estimation of the sample, the finite population was selected, with the universe of 1,000 attending the international event. With the valid surveys obtained, the study was conducted with a margin of error of +/- 5.36%, obtaining a confidence level of 95% and a variance of 50% (Table 1). For the present study, the gathered data was organized, tabulated and analyzed using SPSS software version 22. The treatment of the data was done using univariate and bivariate.

Table 1. Sample design

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Population | National and foreign visitors |
| Geographic area | Guayaquil city |
| Date of realization | January 2017 |
| Process | Simple random sampling |
| Confidence level | 95% |
| Error range | +/- 5.36% |
| Valid surveys | 251 |

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sociodemographic variables

The results from the sociodemographic variables as place of origin, gender, age, level of education, professional activity and income are found on Table 2. According to the results from Table 2, 84.9% of the visitors were foreigners and 15.1% were Ecuadorian. The people were mainly from countries as Brazil (17.9%), Peru (15.5%), Ecuador (15.1%) and Chile (13.1%). Referring to the gender, 57.8% were male and 39.8% were female. From the total of the sample, 35.1% are older than 69 years old, 33.1% were an average age from 60 to 69 years old. 45.6% of the surveyed had a university education level, 34% have reached a master degree or a Ph.D. and 18.8% had only a secondary education level.

On the other hand, about their occupational category, most of the surveyed were retired (27.6%), 26.8% were entrepreneurs, and 26% were self-employed. About their household income, most of the people, 32.3%, had a household income higher than 3500 dollars, 17.1% had a household income among the 2500 and 3500 dollars, and a 16.3% had an income from 1500 to 2500 dollars. The meetings industry is a social interaction that involves different consumers, with all kinds of motivations, which generates a cultural enrichment due to the diversity of sociodemographic factors, similar to the results found by (Canavan, 2016; Laing, 2017). These important results are useful for a market segmentation, also to implement marketing and promotion campaigns (Venter et al., 2015). In addition, it is important to highlight that this congress is an international meeting, since it had more than 300 attendees and more than 40% of the attendees were from other countries, fulfilling the requirements of ICCA (Morrison, 2013, p. 523).

Table 2. Sociodemographic variables

| Demographics | Categories | n | Percentage |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Nationality | Ecuadorian | 38 | 15.10% |
| | Foreigner | 213 | 84.90% |
| Country | Brazil | 45 | 17.90% |
| | Chile | 33 | 13.10% |
| | Ecuador | 38 | 15.10% |
| | Peru | 39 | 15.50% |
| | Uruguay | 17 | 6.80% |
| | USA | 15 | 6% |
| | Other countries | 64 | 25.60% |
| Gender | Male | 145 | 57.80% |
| | Female | 100 | 39.80% |
| Age | < 20 years old | 3 | 1.20% |
| | 21– 29 years old | 2 | 0.80% |
| | 30-39 years old | 4 | 1.60% |
| | 40-49 years old | 16 | 6.40% |
| | 50-59 years old | 55 | 21.90% |
| | 60-69 years old | 83 | 33.10% |
| | > 69 years old | 88 | 35.10% |
| Level of education | Primary | 3 | 1.20% |
| | Secondary | 47 | 18.80% |
| | University | 114 | 45.60% |
| | Postgraduate/ master´s degree/ Ph.D. | 86 | 34.40% |
| Occupational category | Self employed | 65 | 26% |
| | Entrepreneur | 67 | 26.80% |
| | Civil servant | 14 | 5.60% |
| | Full-time employee | 20 | 8% |
| | Part-time employee | 3 | 1.20% |
| | Student | 0 | 0% |
| | Freelance | 9 | 3.60% |
| | Unemployed | 1 | 0.40% |
| | Pensioner | 69 | 27.60% |
| Housewife | 2 | 0.80% | |
| Household income | < 700 dollars | 6 | 2.40% |
| | 700 - 1000 dollars | 10 | 4% |
| | 1000 - 1500 dollars | 22 | 8.80% |
| | 1500 - 2500 dollars | 41 | 16.30% |
| | 2500 - 3500 dollars | 43 | 17.10% |
| | > 3500 dollars | 81 | 32.30% |

Table 3. Who are you travelling with?

| Who are you travelling with? | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Alone | 28 | 11.2% |
| Friends or workmates | 77 | 30.7% |
| Couple | 120 | 47.8% |
| Couple and children | 2 | 0.8% |
| Family | 12 | 4.8% |
| Others | 12 | 4.8% |
| Total | 251 | 100% |

TRAVEL CHARACTERISTICS

Travel Company

According to Table 3, 47.8% of the people, traveled with their couple, 30.7% travel accompanied by friends or workmates and 11.2% traveled alone. The results are similar to those found by Getz and Stephen (2016), based on the Business Tourism Partnership research in 2004, which indicates that people who attend corporate events generally travel accompanied and even return to their destination with their families and friends.

Table 4. Relationship of gender with other variables

| Variables | | Gender | | Total | Coefficient | Sig. |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------------------|-------|
| | | Male | Female | | | |
| Age | Younger/equal than 20 | 1.3% | 1.0% | 1.2% | 24.275 ^a | 0.000 |
| | Among 21- 29 | | 2.0% | 0.8% | | |
| | Among 30-39 | | 4.0% | 1.6% | | |
| | Among 40-49 | 4.7% | 8.9% | 6.4% | | |
| | Among 50-59 | 15.3% | 31.7% | 21.9% | | |
| | Among 60-69 | 37.3% | 26.7% | 33.1% | | |
| | Older than 69 years | 41.3% | 25.7% | 35.1% | | |
| Total | | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | | |
| Occupational category | Self-employed | 28.9% | 21.8% | 26.0% | 21.575 ^a | 0.006 |
| | Entrepreneur | 29.5% | 22.8% | 26.8% | | |
| | Civil servant | 5.4% | 5.9% | 5.6% | | |
| | Full-time employee | 3.4% | 14.9% | 8.0% | | |
| | Part-time employee | | 3.0% | 1.2% | | |
| | Freelance | 3.4% | 4.0% | 3.6% | | |
| | Unemployed | | 1.0% | 0.4% | | |
| | Retired | 29.5% | 24.8% | 27.6% | | |
| | Housewife | | 2.0% | 0.8% | | |
| Total | | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | | |
| Who are you travelling with? | Alone | 13.3% | 7.9% | 11.2% | 15.896 ^a | 0.007 |
| | Friends or workmates | 25.3% | 38.6% | 30.7% | | |
| | Couple | 54.0% | 38.6% | 47.8% | | |
| | Couple and children | 1.3% | | 0.8% | | |
| | Family | 4.0% | 5.9% | 4.8% | | |
| | Others | 2.0% | 8.9% | 4.8% | | |
| Total | | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | | |

Relationship of gender with other variables

The relationship of gender with other variables, through the Pearson square chi test is shown on Table 4. As shown on Table 4, an association between gender and age has been detected, and it is that men were older than women. On the other hand, a relationship between gender and professional activity has also been detected, with men being self-employed or entrepreneurs more than women, while women were full-time employees more than men. Also a connection between gender and who are they travelling with has been detected, finding that men usually traveled with their couples, while women traveled with their couple or friends. Previous studies on festivals show that the gender variable is of great influence in the attendance of a festival (Yolal et al., 2009; Carvache-Franco et al., 2018).

Daily budget

Table 5, shows that most of the surveyed, 32.3% had a budget higher than 180 dollars per day, followed by other groups with budgets from 151 to 180 dollars (17.9%), 121 to 150 dollars (17.1%) and from 91 to 120 dollars (16.3%). These findings agree with

those mentioned by Spiller (2002) and Jalilah and Normala (2016), who says convention tourism is highly desirable, in comparison to leisure travelers, these tourists tend to be high-spending and stay longer in the destination, that is why countries are doing their best all over the world by looking forward to enliven national economic development through the MICE industry (Pearlman, 2016).

Table 5. Budget per person / day

| Budget | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Less than 30 dollars | 6 | 2.4% |
| From 31 to 60 dollars | 10 | 4.0% |
| From 61 to 90 dollars | 22 | 8.8% |
| From 91 to 120 dollars | 41 | 16.3% |
| From 121 to 150 dollars | 43 | 17.1% |
| From 151 to 180 dollars | 45 | 17.9% |
| More than 180 dollars | 81 | 32.3 |
| Total | 251 | 100% |

Types of facilities for the accommodation

About the type of accommodation that the people stay in, it is shown on Table 6, visitors stay mostly in 4 and 5 star hotels (79.9%), followed by those who stayed in 2 and 3 star hotels (11.2%). Staying in 4 and 5 star hotels confirms what (Pearlman, 2016) indicates.

Table 6. Types of facilities for accommodation

| Types of facilities for accommodation | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| 4 and 5 star hotels | 200 | 79.70% |
| 2 and 3 star hotels | 28 | 11.20% |
| 1 star hotel/guesthouse/hostel | 3 | 1.20% |
| Relatives or friends house | 19 | 7.60% |
| Tourist apartment | 0 | 0% |
| Others | 1 | 0.40% |
| Total | 251 | 100% |

MOTIVATIONS AND SATISFACTION

Main reasons to attend the Congress

For this investigation, the surveyed rated the motivational variables through a 5 points Likert scale (Meaning 1, very low and 5, very high). Cronbach Alpha Index was 0.873, which means it is a meritorious index among the elements of the scale. According to Table 7, the principal motivations of the surveyed to attend the Congress were: Learning about congress workshops and main topics (4.03), meet other participants (3.76), the desire to know new sites (3.33) and to contribute with their knowledge and experiences to congress workshops and main topics. (3.27). These findings agree with what was found by (Severt et al., 2009; Zhang et al., 2007; Mair & Thompson 2009; Yoo & Zhao, 2010; Borghans et al., 2010) where the main motivations for events attendance are educational purposes.

Level of satisfaction with services and infrastructures

The surveyed rated their satisfaction level about services and infrastructures through 5 points Likert scale (Meaning 1, no satisfied and 5, very satisfied). Cronbach Alpha Index was 0.913, which means it is a meritorious index among the elements of the scale. According to Table 8, the mostly valued variables were: accessibility to places and/or work rooms (4.41), care and treatment of the organization (4.29), luminosity and light of places and/or work rooms (4.29) and transportation for journeys (4.25). On the

other hand, the less valued variables were Quality and diversity of lunches, dinners and / or coffee breaks (3.57), supplementary services: bar, vending machines, and others (3.66), information points and signals for participants (3.83). The highest level of satisfaction was accessibility; the results are similar to Tanford et al. (2012) who concluded that accessibility was an important element in the decisions of the conference venue because if they take place in more accessible areas they will attract more people.

Table 7. Main reasons to attend the Congress

| Motivations | Media | Ranking |
|---|--------------|----------------|
| Learning about congress workshops and main topics | 4.03 | 1 |
| Meet other participants | 3.76 | 2 |
| The desire to know new sites | 3.33 | 3 |
| To contribute with my knowledge and experiences to congress workshops and main topics | 3.27 | 4 |
| Disconnect from everyday activities | 2.92 | 5 |
| Spend time with friends and/or relatives | 2.79 | 6 |
| The complementary offer of social and cultural leisure related to the congress | 2.68 | 7 |
| Is an affordable travel option for my pocket | 2.65 | 8 |
| The fame and tourist reputation of the city | 2.64 | 9 |
| Gastronomic offer of the city | 2.50 | 10 |
| The proximity to my place of residence | 2.18 | 11 |

Table 8. Level of satisfaction with services and infrastructures

| Services e infrastructure | Media | Ranking |
|---|--------------|----------------|
| Accessibility to places and / or work rooms | 4.41 | 1 |
| Care and cleaning of places and / or work rooms | 4.36 | 2 |
| Luminosity and lights of places and / or workrooms | 4.29 | 3 |
| Transportation for journeys | 4.25 | 4 |
| Acoustics of places and / or workrooms | 4.2 | 5 |
| Comfort of rooms and / or workrooms - seat comfort, adequate air conditioning temperature, and others | 4.19 | 6 |
| Care and treatment of the organization | 4.14 | 7 |
| Audio-visual resources of places and / or workrooms | 4.04 | 8 |
| Information points and signals for participants | 3.83 | 9 |
| Supplementary services: bar, vending machines, and others | 3.66 | 10 |
| Quality and diversity of lunches, dinners and / or coffee breaks | 3.57 | 11 |

Satisfaction with different motivational variables

In relation with the tourist, satisfaction with the different motivational variables, analyzed through a Spearman correlation, is shown on Table 9.

As shown on Table 9, all motivations present a positive correlation with the level of importance of the tourist satisfaction. About this, the variables that present the major influence over the satisfaction of the tourist are: learning about congress workshops and main topics (correlation coefficient= 0.310), meet other participants (correlation coefficient = 0.283), disconnect from everyday activities (correlation coefficient= 0.234) and to contribute with my knowledge and experiences to congress workshops and main topics (correlation coefficient= 0.184), which means that the activities related to the participation of the assistants in the workshops should be improved, so that in this way the level of motivation and satisfaction of the attendants increase.

Table 9. Satisfaction with different motivational variables

| Motivational variables | Coefficient |
|---|-------------|
| Learning about congress workshops and main topics | 0.310** |
| Meet other participants | 0.283** |
| Disconnect from everyday activities | 0.234** |
| To contribute with my knowledge and experiences to congress workshops and main topics | 0.184** |
| The fame and tourist reputation of the city | 0.180** |
| The desire to know new sites | 0.157* |
| The complementary offer of social and cultural leisure related to the congress | 0.144* |
| Gastronomic offer of the city | 0.136* |
| Is an affordable travel option for my pocket | 0.128* |
| Spend time with friends and/or relatives | 0.122 |
| The proximity to my place of residence | 0.105 |

* Significant correlation to 5%

** Significant correlation to 1%

These findings agree with what was found by (Severt et al., 2009; Zhang et al., 2007; Mair & Thompson 2009; Yoo & Zhao, 2010; Borghans et al., 2010) where the main motivating for events attendance are educational purposes, also networking, external activities (visiting friends and family, visiting surrounding area, seeking employment, required by my company, attending with a friend/family), and location.

VALUATION OF THE VISIT

Satisfaction level of tourist visit to Guayaquil

The surveyed valued their visit to Guayaquil city through a 5 points Likert scale (Meaning 1, very low and 5, very high). Cronbach Alpha Index was 0.891, which means it is a meritorious index among the elements of the scale.

Table 10. Valuation of the visit

| Aspects | Media | Ranking |
|--|-------|---------|
| Attention and quality of tourist accommodation | 4.32 | 1 |
| The beauty of the city | 4.2 | 2 |
| Hospitality of residents | 4.2 | 3 |
| Conservation of monuments and artistic heritage | 4.07 | 4 |
| Care and cleaning of the city | 3.91 | 5 |
| The wealth of monuments and artistic heritage | 3.88 | 6 |
| Attention and quality of tour guides | 3.78 | 7 |
| Attention and quality of restaurants and bars | 3.74 | 8 |
| Accessibility to emblematic buildings and monuments | 3.67 | 9 |
| Tourist information | 3.66 | 10 |
| Diversity and quality of local gastronomy | 3.64 | 11 |
| Citizen Security | 3.5 | 12 |
| Opportunity to make purchases of handicrafts and traditional cuisine | 3.39 | 13 |
| Public transport services | 3.25 | 14 |
| Relation of quality / money of the city | 3.23 | 15 |
| Supplementary leisure offer | 3.09 | 16 |

Table 10, shows that the most valued variables in the visit to Guayaquil were: Attention and quality of tourist accommodation (4.32). Results similar (Talebpour et al., 2017) that indicates that the attention and the quality of the accommodations is an

important factor of valuation of a tourist visit to an event. Then it follows, the beauty of the city (4.20), the hospitality of residents (4.20), and conservation of monuments and artistic heritage (4.07), care and cleaning of the city (3.91) and the wealth of monuments and artistic heritage (3.88). These findings make evident that Guayaquil city has cultural heritage in order to become a destination for business, similar results (Kim et al., 2016) who supports that facilities and services actively promote cultural and natural attractions to foreign tourists to extend their stay before or after a convention.

On the other hand, the less valued variables were the supplementary leisure offer (3.09), relation of quality / money of the city (3.23), public transport services (3.25) and the opportunity to make purchases of handicrafts and traditional cuisine (3.39).

Experience Rating

The surveyed valued the experience of their visit in Guayaquil city through a 5 points Likert scale. In Table 11, it is shown that the most valued variables were: After my experience, I think I will return to the next conference (4.38) and I would recommend attending conference if someone asked me for advice (4.37) which shows that Guayaquil city has the potential in order to become an important destination in the meeting industry in Latin America. About the less valued variables: I will encourage my relatives and / or friends to come to conference in future events (4.20) and my level of satisfaction with conference has been important (4.24). Results of the two variables with the highest percentage related to (Lu & Cai, 2011; Lee & Min, 2016) whose results identify that the evaluation of the experience is an important element to determine if the person have the intention to return to the destination and to recommend it (or not) to other people. The results are similar to those found by Getz and Stephen (2016) that event attendees even return to their destination with their families and friends.

Table 11. Experience Rating

| Experience Rating | Media | Ranking |
|---|--------------|----------------|
| After my experience, I think I will return to the next conference | 4.38 | 1 |
| I would recommend attending conference if someone asked me for advice | 4.37 | 2 |
| My choice to attend conference has been successful | 4.36 | 3 |
| My level of satisfaction with conference has been important | 4.24 | 4 |
| I will encourage my relatives and / or friends to come to conference in future events | 4.20 | 5 |

CONCLUSIONS

The results show that the city of Guayaquil has the facilities to develop tourism for meetings and international congresses, complies with what Morrison indicated (2013, p. 523). Congress attendees usually travel accompanied by their partner and friends or colleagues. The findings show that there is an association between gender and other variables, men are older than women, men are self-employed or entrepreneurs more than women, while women are more employed full-time than men. There has also been an association between the gender and who they travel with, finding that men travel with their partners, while women travel with their partners and friends or coworkers. The expense was mainly greater than 180 dollars and the attendees stayed in 4 and 5 star hotels, which shows that the business tourist spends more on his stay than in other types of tourism (Spiller, 2001; Pearlman, 2016; Jalilah & Normala, 2016).

The main motivations of the people who attended the Congress are: learning about the content of the workshops, getting to know the participants, the desire to know new places, and contributing to the workshops and main themes, which shows that the participants are motivated by Education issues (Severt et al., 2009; Zhang et al., 2007; Mair & Thompson 2009; Yoo & Zhao, 2010; Borghans et al., 2010).

Regarding the level of satisfaction of the service and infrastructure of the event, the most valued variables are: accessibility to the work rooms, care and cleaning of the premises, brightness of the premises and means of transport for their movements. The findings show that all motivations have a positive correlation with the level of importance of tourist satisfaction, the variables that have a greater influence on tourist satisfaction are learning about the content of the workshops, getting to know the participants, disconnecting from the daily activities and contribute with my knowledge and experiences to the workshops of the congress, so that it would be important to improve the activities related to the participation of the assistants in the workshops, so that in this way the level of motivation and satisfaction of the assistants. Regarding the assessment of the city of Guayaquil for the meetings industry, the most valued variables are: Attention and quality of tourist accommodation, The beauty of the city, hospitality of residents, and conservation of monuments and artistic heritage.

Once the experience of the visit is over, most of the attendees will return to the event and recommend attending the congress. This demonstrates the potential of the city of Guayaquil to become an important destination for the meetings industry in Latin America. The study not only contributes with theoretical implications, but also points out practical recommendations for the destination, it is recommended to implement tour packages for those who travel in groups to congresses and events, to improve the accessibility in the facilities that carry out this type of events, increase the offer of congresses for educational purposes and train the employees of hotels and tour operators to receive this type of profitable customer. Finally, the study concludes that the main limitation was the temporality of it and as a future line of research, it would be interesting to analyze the relationship that exists between the motivations and the economic impact of an event.

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Submitted:
14.02.2018

Revised:
06.05.2019

Accepted and published online
28.05.2019