



Motivations, satisfactions and the socio-demographic aspect of visitors in typical restaurants

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Abstract

Gastronomic tourism is an activity that promotes local culture and products, increases the attractiveness of a destination and is a means of improving indicators that are economic, social and environmental in nature. The significant role of gastronomy as a tourist's main motivator depends on the authenticity of the destination. This research focuses on the importance of local cuisine with respect to consumer satisfaction, and also analyzes the characteristics of visitors and the reasons that influence visiting the typical restaurants called “*las huecas*”. From the statistical results, it was detected that tourists with a higher level of study are older and have a better attitude towards the “taste and quality” of culinary preparations.

Keywords: Gastronomic Tourism, *las huecas*, Motivations, Satisfactions, Local cuisine.

Introduction

In May 2019, the World Tourism Organization organized the 5th World Forum of Gastronomic Tourism, and one of its conclusions was to generate value for all the agents involved in developing gastronomic tourism in territories, and especially in local communities. Also, gastronomy may be used as a tool to strengthen and advance the sustainability of a destination, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Within this framework, gastronomic tourism can stimulate the development of products and experiences associated with the destination's inherent potential, and it is a way of understanding the intangible heritage underlying the food transformation process. Thus, gastronomy is recognized as part of cultural heritage, ethnic identity, festivals, religious and spiritual practices (Timothy, 2015). It is an important way to explain the destination's culture, customs and culinary identity. The interest in tasting local food is a characteristic of contemporary travelers (Miroso & Lawson, 2012) who, through food, try to live unique experiences linked to the territory and the local culture. This cultural melting pot that food represents, is evident in the typical restaurants in Guayaquil-Ecuador called “*las huecas*” (Orden-Mejía et al., 2017), which are known for offering unique, diverse, varied, complementary dishes, and not substitutes. Their culinary expressions mirror the area's gastronomic authenticity, which is both an iconic representation and a source of pride for the local inhabitants. Therefore, “*las huecas*” have become a product of gastronomic tourism, and are being exploited through festivals (Raíces); gastronomic routes (Ruta



del Sabor) and academic studies (Carvache-Franco, et al., 2019 a; Orden-Mejía et al., 2017).

These manuscripts contribute to literature on issues of motivation towards local food and tourist satisfaction during experiences with food. In Hong Kong, it is the second most relevant aspect during people's stay (Enright & Newton, 2004), and in other destinations such as France, Australia, Canada, interest in food prevails over other tourist attractions (Santich, 2004; Mitchell & Hall; 2003).

Similarly, it is essential to study the level of traveler satisfaction with a culinary experience, because destinations are betting on local cuisine as a differentiating factor vis-à-vis their competitors, and are thereby attracting a greater influx of tourists, especially the so-called foodie-tourist (Robinson & Getz, 2014). In this sense, a satisfied tourist positively values all the elements of a culinary tradition (Jiménez et al., 2016) and even when these exceed expectations, it could generate viral marketing (Yang, 2017). Although, there are multiple, accumulated results on restaurant satisfaction, these results need to be updated based on each establishment's attributes (Lockyer, 2005), and also the changes witnessed in generations and cultures (Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2012). Likewise, it is important to mention that there is ample literature on motivation that generally relates tourism to gastronomy. However, there are still no investigations that go further into specific aspects and activities (Agyeiwaah et al., 2019).

Literature Review

Satisfaction

Satisfaction is an "attitude as a judgment after an act of purchase [...]" Carlson and O'Cass (2010), and it arises from comparing the product or service with previous expectations, and this trial or assessment can cover cognitive and/or affective aspects (Bigné et al., 2005; Oliver, 1997). Thus, customer decisions and purchasing behavior depend largely on the satisfactory evaluation of their general affective experiences with the product/service, as well as the performance of the attributes (Oliver, 1980). In the catering sector, Weiss (2003) argues that customer satisfaction in terms of restaurant attributes influences the intention to return, while Ranaweera & Prabhu (2003) emphasize that both customer satisfaction and trust have a strong positive correlation with customer retention. Nicolaidis (2008; 2012) asserts that where customers were satisfied with service quality provision, there has been higher service quality which resulted in higher satisfaction levels. In the field of gastronomic tourism, researchers have identified that experience with food at the destination can represent an important source of satisfaction for tourists (Ignatov & Smith, 2006).

Catering is a fundamental element in the tourism value chain, but the most prone to substantial changes in consumption patterns. However, maintaining the essence of the culinary traditions, practices and techniques that have been passed on for generations, is a particularity that characterizes the typical restaurants in Guayaquil, "*las huecas*". Along these lines, Kivela & Crofts (2009) mentioned that food can add value to the tourist experience, especially to the segment of travelers who are looking for unique experiences that produce a high level of satisfaction. In catering, food-related attributes have been the most influential in satisfaction, regardless of the types of establishment (Rhee et al., 2016), for example, quality and taste, are formidable contributors to consumer satisfaction during a meal (Lee & Whaley, 2018). Nicolaidis (2012) has found that a critical strategy to retain customers is to improve service recovery quality after poor quality and taste, and by having a quick response to service failure. Consequently, restaurant managers must immediately begin to focus attention on ensuring that future



service delivery levels are high and pursue a policy to enhance the strength of customer relationships.

According to Ron and Timothy (2013), local cuisine helps to reinforce the authenticity of the tourist destination, as it is linked to the mixture of tangible (ingredients) and intangible (tastes, smells) elements. Along these lines, various studies in ethnic and theme restaurants have connected the perception of authenticity and satisfaction with the intentions of returning to a destination (Mkono, 2012; Jang et al., 2011; Tsai & Lu, 2012; Ebster & Guist, 2005). The last two factors in the study by DiPietro & Levitt, (2017) were positively influenced by perceptions of the authenticity of the restaurant. Nicolaides (2014) states that: "Tourists generally seek an authentic experience in which they can go beyond what Maslow termed 'self-actualization' and in fact discover a true sense of Being. Recognizing the great importance of authenticity is an opportunity for Africa's tourism industry and the desire of tourists to 'find themselves' by linking with authentic heritage, cultures and traditions presents huge opportunities for especially local communities. Tourists are not impressed by inauthentic pseudo sites and objects and tourism offerings and such like, and will travel to destinations that offer authenticity".

Motivation

Nowadays, foodie-tourists are motivated to discover the culinary essence of their destination (Ron & Timothy, 2013) where the local cuisine uses stoves and firewood to express every immaterial detail, to introduce people to the flavors and information of each culture. Thus, the curiosity to perceive new scents, discover new products, observe the preparation of exotic dishes and taste the local (Au & Law, 2002) and/or rural (Synott, 1993) specialties in each destination, is at the discretion of (Loewenstein, 1994) a behavior associated with the need to acquire new knowledge and cultural experiences, and even contributes to expanding intellectual enrichment (Crompton & McKay, 1997). Although, McIntosh et al., 1995 argues that the cultural motivator is not only related to participating in cultural expressions, such as lifestyle, food, music and dance, but also to the extent of learning about other countries in terms of their cultural activities.

Thus, McCabe (2000) argues that tourist motivation are broadly grouped into cognitive and behavioral constructs, i.e. it's a dual process that combination of both dimensions; behavioral (the decision to act, or go out) and cognitive (object-specific preferences, the place, or activity-type decision) in the tourism context. While Gnoth (1997) made a theoretical distinction between tourist motives and motivation and affirmed that the value of research in this field serves as a means to understanding experiential behavior, e.g. the findings by Agyeiwaah et al., (2019), state that the motivation of culinary tourists to receive cookery classes influences both experience and satisfaction, i.e. the tourists most motivated to participate in cookery classes at the destination, will have greater experience and subsequent satisfaction.

In this context, according to the academic literature on motivations *vis-à-vis* food and beverage, there are four motivational factors that tourists have when choosing a restaurant: physical, cultural, interpersonal and status (Fields, 2003). As for drinking, Park et al., (2008), during their investigation at South Beach Wine and Food Festival, detected seven factors influencing wine tourists: taste, enjoyment, social status, change, meeting people, meeting experts.

Mak, Lumbers, Eves and Chang (2012) determined five motivational factors in their research into the factors that influence the consumption of gastronomic tourism; tourist motivation, symbolism, obligation, contrast, extension, pleasure. Kim and Eves (2012) constructed and validated a scale to measure tourist motivation to consume local food and detected six motivational factors: cultural experience, excitement, interpersonal

relationship, sensory appeal, health concern and future intention. Andersson, Mossberg and Therkelsen (2017) classified the motivations into different experiences: sensory, cultural, and social. Almeida & Garrod, (2017) during research into the tourist experience with local food in a mature tourist destination, identified six factors related to food: cultural experience, excitement, sensory experience, social experience, relaxation/escape and health. Nicolaidis (2012) in a study in South Africa, identified service quality provision as the key factor in food offering. Daries Ramón, Fransi, Ferrer-Rosell, & Roig (2018) found the motivational factors that circumscribe the behavior of culinary tourists in top-level restaurants, were as follows: status, experience at destination, gastronomic experience and loyalty. Finally, Carvache-Franco et al., (2019 a), identified the factors influencing visitors in typical restaurants to be: social, physical & scape, and also culture & tradition.

Study Area

Guayaquil is the leading city for tourism in Ecuador, and it attracted more than half a million national and foreign visits in 2018, according to the Ministry of Tourism (MINTUR, 2019). It is located in the Northwest of South America, at Latitude $2^{\circ}11'27.40''$ South and Longitude $79^{\circ}53'20,64''$ West. This city earned the international distinction from South America's Leading City Tourist Board 2019 and South America's Leading Festival & Event Destination 2019 at The World Travel Awards (Municipality of Guayaquil, 2019). The city has natural attractions such as the Samanes National Recreation Area and the Santay Island National Recreation Area, as well as historic interests: Las Peñas neighborhood, Historic Park, Churches, Monuments and the renowned Seminario Park and Malecon 2000.

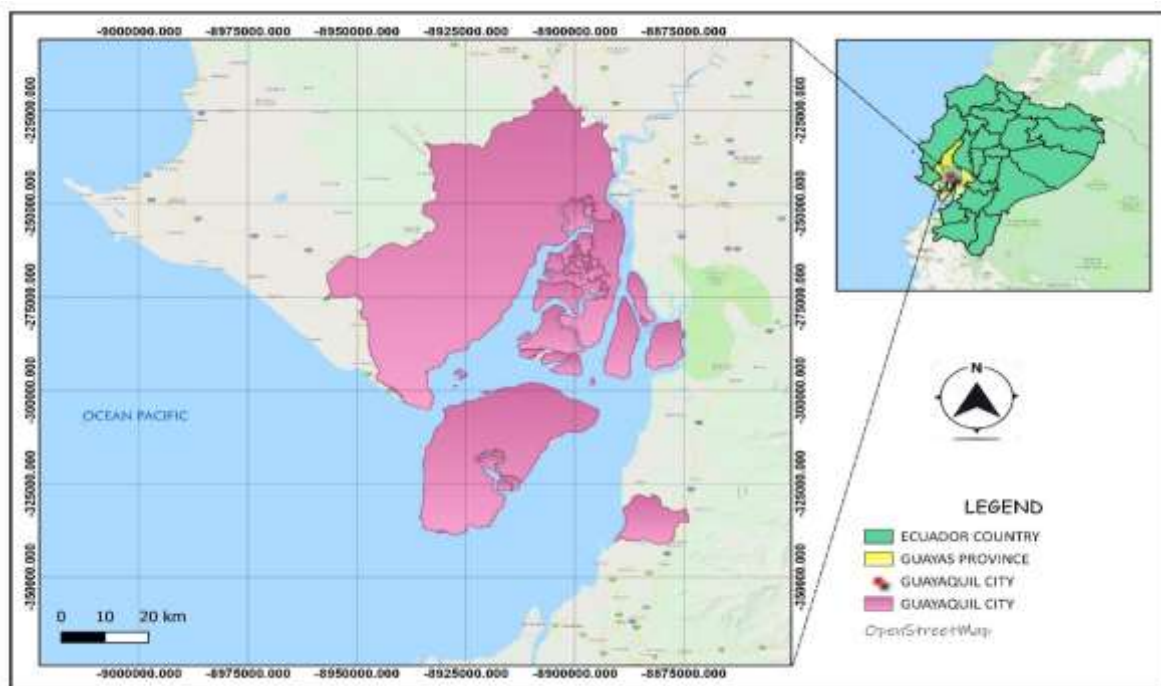


Figure 1. Guayaquil City. Source: The authors

Methodology

Survey design

A questionnaire based on various previous studies was used (Nicoletti et al., 2019; Carvache-Franco et al., 2019 b; Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016; López-Guzmán & Sánchez-Cañizares, 2012; Sierra, Ruiz & Falcedo, 2006) that addresses issues of



satisfaction, motivation and the assessment of the local gastronomy. The structure was composed of two blocks: the first one was intended to obtain socio-demographic information on the visitors, taking into account that they are over 18 years old, and the second block focused on the satisfaction and motivation of the visitors with respect to the typical restaurants “*las huecas*”. Finally, it included an evaluation of the general attributes related to the dishes tasted and the service received. The questionnaire used questions where a 5-point Likert-type scale was used (1 = little, 5 = a lot) and multiple choice.

Data collection and analysis

A total of 437 questionnaires were collected from visitors. Data collection was conducted between September and October 2016 in different culinary establishments in Guayaquil City. Surveys were performed on different days and times during the week, with the aim of collecting the greatest possible diversity of people and situations. The target of this study included national citizens and foreigners visiting the city of Guayaquil. A random, non-probabilistic technique was applied, which is used widely in this kind of research, where visitors are intercepted after eating in specific restaurants and at a specific time (Finn et al., 2000). The rejection rate was low and not significant. The sampling error for a confidence level of 95% would have been ± 4.9%. The information collected was sorted, analyzed and tabulated using the Statistical Package program for Social Sciences (SPSS Inc., an IBM Company ©, 1989; 2016), version 25, making use of various tests on the reliability and validity of questionnaires (Cronbach’s alpha), chi squared. A gender and socio-demographic study was conducted in order to identify statistically significant differences in motivations, and to achieve this, non-parametric statistical procedures were also used [including the Kruskal – Wallis H test (Kruskal & Wallis, 1952) and the Mann – Whitney U test (Mann & Whitney, 1947)] to study the possible differences between men and women relating to the issues at hand.

Results and Discussion

Socio-demographic profile of the visitors

In order to fully comprehend the relationship between men and women, based on socio-demographic variables, a significant chi-square test was performed to find the variables that are relevant for the analysis. Regarding the socio-demographic profile of the sample, 55.6% were men and the remaining 44.4% were women (Table 1). When crossing variables between gender-age and gender-primary occupation, it was detected that there were significant differences ($x^2 = 14.109$; $p = 0.028$) and ($x^2 = 53.44$; $p = <0.001$) respectively. Respondents in general were young people, with 62.4% between the ages of 20 and 39, and 23.6% were private employees. Likewise, when analyzing the age of men and women according to their level of education, differences were also observed, since the older guests had a higher level of education (gamma coefficient = 0.147, $p = 0.025$); something similar to the results obtained by Nicoletti et al., (2019).

Table 1. Socio-demographic profile versus gender of the visitors in typical food restaurants.

Categories	Male	Female	Total	x^2	Sig ^a
	243	194	437		
Age				14.109	0.028
<20 years old	10	22	32		
20-29 years old	76	71	147		
30-39 years old	74	52	126		
40-49 years old	42	23	65		
50-59 years old	23	11	34		
>60 years old	17	15	32		
Marital Status				4.943	0.293
Single	106	99	205		
Free union	22	21	43		



Widower	6	7	13		
Married	97	60	157		
Divorced	12	7	19		
<i>Level of Education</i>				3.96	0.2660
Primary Education	9	5	14		
Secondary Education	59	63	122		
University Education	150	110	260		
Master's/PhD	25	16	41		
<i>Primary Occupation</i>				53.44	0.000
Student	33	34	67		
Private business	25	15	40		
Government Employees	38	32	70		
Employees	60	43	103		
Independent Professional	52	22	74		
Homemaker	0	29	29		
Unemployed	3	4	7		
Retired	7	9	16		
Informal Workers	14	3	17		
Other	11	3	14		

^aPearson's chi-squared test

Motivations of the visitors

Regarding tourist motivations in relation to the visit to “*las huecas*”, it was determined that “To taste a typical dish” [$\bar{x} = 3.91$] was the main motivation; something similar to the “sensory experience” from Almeida and Garrod (2017) and the “sensory appeal” from Kim and Eves (2012). The next motivating factor in importance was “I need to eat” [$\bar{x} = 3.77$]. Another motivational variable was “To meet friends” [$\bar{x} = 3.69$], similar to the motivations found in previous research (Fields, 2003; Kim and Eves 2012; Andersson, Mossberg & Therkelsen, 2017). Also, the “because they were invited” [$\bar{x} = 3.58$] variable is an important reason for visiting these typical restaurants, as well as “through custom or habit” [$\bar{x} = 3.18$]. On the other hand, the motivational variable “for a celebration” [$\bar{x} = 2.68$] is the last position in the ranking, i.e. it is likely that visitors do not go to the “*las huecas*” to celebrate a special event or date. Finally, the other motivation scores were as follows; “So as not to cook” [$\bar{x} = 2.97$]; “Because of its difficult preparation” [$\bar{x} = 2.92$] and “Family tradition” [$\bar{x} = 2.86$]. See results in table 2.

Table 2. Motivations of visitors toward “*las huecas*”

Motivational Variables	Male	Female	F	Sig
To taste a typical dish	3.95	3.85	2.05	.726
I need to eat	3.88	3.63	5.15	.272
To meet friends	3.74	3.62	1.43	.838
Because they were invited	3.40	3.79	11.44	.022
Through custom or habit	3.29	3.05	5.03	.284
Because of its difficult preparation	2.88	2.97	4.50	.342
Family tradition	2.86	2.85	1.48	.829
So as not to cook	2.79	3.19	8.50	.075
For a celebration	2.66	2.70	6.40	.171

Source: Prepared by the authors from their own data.

Due to the transversality of the study, the U Mann Withney test was applied for gender analysis based on motivational variables. Only 3 of the 9 motivations were disclosed, because they were the only ones that obtained a bilateral, asymptotic significance $p < 0.05$. Thus, it can be seen that one of the reasons for going to typical restaurants was “So as not to cook” $p = 0.011$, where women stand out on the “much” scale with 35.1%. Meanwhile, another differentiating reason for going to “*las huecas*” was “because they were invited” $p = 0.014$ and men (55.1%) and women (63.9%) stand out in the sum of the “quite - much” scales. Finally, due to the biological needs of feeding (because you need breakfast / lunch), i.e. the “I need to eat” variable is the main motivating factor for men to go to a typical restaurant 48.6%, $p = 0.040$. See results in table 3.



Table 3. Gender in relation to motivations

Motivational Variables Cronbach's Alpha: .769	Categories	Male 55.6%	Female 44.4%	Total	Value of "U"	Sig
So as not to cook [\bar{x} = 2.97]	Little bit	36.6	25.8	31.8	23441.0	0.011
	Something	12.3	10.3	11.4		
	Regular	13.2	18	15.3		
	Quite	11.1	10.8	11		
	Much	26.7	35.1	30.4		
Because they were Invited [\bar{x} = 3.58]	Little bit	21.8	9.8	16.5	20517.0	0.014
	Something	11.1	12.4	11.7		
	Regular	11.9	13.9	12.8		
	Quite	15.2	16.5	15.8		
	Much	39.9	47.4	43.2		
I need to eat [\bar{x} = 3.77]	Little bit	10.3	13.9	11.9	21014.5	0.040
	Something	7.8	7.7	7.8		
	Regular	13.6	18	15.6		
	Quite	19.8	21.6	20.6		
	Much	48.6	38.7	44.2		

Source: Prepared by the authors from their own data.

Assessment of local food in typical restaurants.

In order to identify the main attributes of the typical restaurants called "*las huecas*", visitors were asked to assess certain attributes in order to learn about possible strengths and weaknesses. The findings revealed that respondents have highly positive attitudes towards the "taste and quality" of the culinary preparations [\bar{x} = 4.62], which results are similar to those found by Lee & Whaley (2018), as well as the "service & courtesy" of employees [\bar{x} = 4.38], which are similar to those by Nicoletti et al., (2019). In addition, this fits the correlation between this attribute and general satisfaction <0.05. Similarly, respondents also value the "speed" of the food service [\bar{x} = 4.41]. However, the following aspects received slightly lower values: restaurant "facilities" [\bar{x} = 4.13] and "ambience" [\bar{x} = 4.24]. These aspects may need more attention from the sector so that they can improve and increase tourist satisfaction. Results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. List of the attributes in typical food restaurants and the socio-demographic traits

Attributes of typical food restaurants	Mean	SD	Mann- Withney U Gender	Kruskal-Wallis			
				Age	Marital Status	Level of Education	Primary Occupation
Facilities	4.13	1,009	0.85	0.955	0.074	0.038	0.045
Ambience	4.24	0.915	0.67	0.917	0.437	0.017	0.048
Variety of offer	4.17	0.968	0.813	0.703	0.049	0.298	0.045
Speed	4.41	0.842	0.149	0.916	0.603	0.176	0.230
Prices	4.35	0.98	0.411	0.463	0.854	0.237	0.020
Service & courtesy	4.38	0.872	0.697	0.454	0.327	0.040	0.130
Taste and quality	4.62	0.74	0.789	0.939	0.362	0.681	0.076

The level of significance is 0.05. SD = Standard deviation

The Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis test χ^2 showed that gender and age had no impact on the attributes. In contrast, Marital Status, Level of education and Primary

occupation, did reveal differences. Thus, performing the post hoc test on the Marital Status variable, we learned that there are statistically significant differences related to the variety of offer (Kruskal Wallis = 9,534; $p = 0,049$), i.e. there are differences between the groups "free union - divorced", as demonstrated by the statistical test ratio $\chi^2 = -86.672$; $p = 0.007$, favorable to the "divorced" because the ranking is greater, $r = 281.08$ compared to the "free union" group $r = 194.41$. Similarly, there are differences between the "single-divorced" groups $\chi^2 = -70.711$; $p = 0.012$. In other words, divorced people have a better attitude towards food in typical restaurants.

There were differences between the grouping of the Level of education variable and the attributes, i.e.: facilities (Kruskal Wallis = 8.431; $p = 0.038$); ambience (Kruskal Wallis = 10,143; $p = 0,017$); and service & courtesy (Kruskal Wallis = 8.322; $p = 0.040$). The U-Mann Withney test was applied to identify the mean differences between pairs of groups. In the case of the facilities variable, there are differences between "university education - primary education" ($\chi^2 = 87.040$; $p = 0.041$), which would mean that the higher the education, the higher they value the facilities. In the "service & courtesy" variable, there were differences between the "university education - Master's/Ph.D" groups. This is demonstrated by the statistical test ($\chi^2 = -42.775$; $p = 0.023$) and would seem to indicate that the higher the level of education the better people tend to value customer service. Regarding the "ambience" of the establishment, there are differences in the grouping including "university education - secondary education", $\chi^2 = 28.828$; $p = 0.023$, and also between "university education - primary education", $\chi^2 = 64.841$; $p = 0.041$, indicative of the fact that university students are more critical when assessing the décor in the restaurants called "las huecas". In primary occupation, it was also revealed that there are differences related to the "facilities" (Kruskal Wallis = 17.233; $p = 0.045$), ambience (Kruskal Wallis = 17.051; $p = 0.048$), variety of offer (Kruskal Wallis = 17.256; $p = 0.045$) and prices (Kruskal Wallis = 19.699; $p = 0,020$) variables.

Satisfaction of the visitors

It was possible to detect that there was a significant and positive correlation between the overall satisfaction of tourists and the various service attributes. In addition, it was found that the price of the culinary offer has the highest coefficient (correlation = 0.338), followed by the taste and quality of the dishes (correlation = 0.322) sold in typical restaurants, and both are aspects that have a greater influence on overall service satisfaction. Results are shown in table 5.

Table 5. General satisfaction versus attributes of typical restaurant. (Spearman Correlation)

Attributes	r	Sig.	R ²
Facilities	0.301**	0.000	0.072
Ambience	0.308**	0.000	0.072
Variety of offer	0.308**	0.000	0.069
Speed	0.294**	0.000	0.064
Prices	0.338**	0.000	0.059
Service & courtesy	0.288**	0.000	0.050
Taste and quality	0.322**	0.000	0.045

** The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.1

It was measured on a scale of 1 to 5, being "1 = dissatisfied" and "2 = very satisfied" over the 7 attributes that try to assess the different aspects related to typical restaurants. It was observed in table 6 that all the attributes received a high score and that there were no statistically significant differences in relation to gender. Rhee, Yang and Kim, (2016) indicated that the food attribute was the most important factor in restaurants, in this research, visitors both men and women, agreed that "taste and quality" and "service & courtesy" are the main characteristics of "las huecas" perhaps because food is the main attribute that consumer look for in a restaurant (Bardwell et al., 2018). In this sense, a



destination has intact its possibilities of promoting gastronomy as one of its axes of diversification and consolidating itself as a destination (Lopez-Guzman et al., 2018). Gastronomic tourism could also play a crucial role in the sustainable development of the territories, improve the local economy, and strengthen cultural identity (Andersson, Mossberg & Therkelsen, 2017). Importantly, it can increase the quality of life of residents (Hjalager, 2003).

Table 6. Attribute satisfaction in typical restaurants “las huecas”

Attributes	Male	Female	F	Sig
Taste and quality	4.63	4.61	.771	.942
Service & courtesy	4.38	4.39	3.03	.551
Speed	4.36	4.46	5.39	.249
Prices	4.33	4.36	7.80	.099
Ambience	4.26	4.23	1.04	.903
Variety of offer	4.17	4.18	1.36	.850
Facilities	4.14	4.12	5.61	.230

Source: Prepared by the authors from their own data.

Conclusions

Gastronomy is an integral part of the traveler's behavior, and it can be one of the main reasons tourists provide when choosing a destination (Lee & Scoot, 2015), as it constitutes an important expense during their stay (Kivela & Crofts, 2006), it is the way to improve the image and attractiveness of destinations (Nicoletti et al., 2019) and it is also a vehicle that reduces the problem of sustainability in tourism (Vázquez-Martinez et al., 2019; Ramphal & Nicolaidis, 2014). Thus, in order to respond to a more demanding consumer who seeks authentic sensations oriented towards gastronomy, local restaurants highlight their offer with native culinary preparations, made from ingredients grown in the area or extracted from marine ecosystems, since this particularity generates added value to the customer experience (Pieniak et al., 2009). In addition, although the food production process is an attraction for tourists, so is visiting local food markets i.e. knowing where the raw material to be transformed comes from (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016). It even makes taking excursions to find marine fauna an interesting activity for tourists, so they can collect their own food and experience the traditional sea cuisine of an area. Finally, food and drink aim to direct the local community towards a development model oriented upon three vital axes: preserving identities through the revaluation of cultural practices and customs, strengthening the popular and solitary economy through dynamic activities with temporary or permanent local products; and ensuring the sustainability of the destination focused on reducing the carbon footprint and its impact on the food chain (Pearson et al., 2011). This is in order to guarantee sustainable consumption and production modalities, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This manuscript analyzed the relationship between tourism and gastronomy in Guayaquil city, Ecuador, and the results provide valuable information for private organizations and DMOs, because they improve our understanding of the characteristics of visitors and the motivations that drive them to visit “las huecas”, and they also reveal the high attributes of the restaurants “las huecas” it is in line with theoretical background, thus concurring with Rhee, Yang and Kim (2016) who found that the food attribute was the most important factor, regardless of the type of restaurant visited. This will allow companies to create tourism marketing products or strategies based on the needs of a modern tourist, technohumans or humanoid tourism actors (Sigala, 2018). Thus, the manuscript contributes to the analysis of the perception of local food, it reinforces the findings from previous research on this important aspect (Carvache-Franco et al., 2019 a), and it contributes to



academic literature with new specificities that arise during a local cuisine experience, and with it, this increases scientific knowledge in this area.

The main limitation found in the study is the temporality in the collection of the sample, because on holidays and weekends the influx of local and foreign tourists which usually increases substantially. It would also be interesting to expand this research to consider loyalty and the desire to return to a venue, and to theorize cooking gaps uncovered in this area.

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