

Comparative analysis of the gastronomic tourism offerings in Ecuador and its main South American competitors

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Abstract | This study carries out a comparative analysis of the management of gastronomic tourism in South American capitals as tourist destinations. For its development, the guidelines of the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) (2020) for the development of gastronomic tourism were used as a reference framework, as a benchmarking tool to evaluate the performance of gastronomic tourism in the reference countries. The study employs an integrative methodology, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to generate both descriptive information on the territorial characteristics of the study area and quantitative data to project trends and potential territorial consequences of gastronomic tourism in the analysis units. As a fundamental result, it was possible to draw the parameters that characterise each of the destinations analysed. Additionally, strategies for improving the gastronomic tourism offer in Ecuador are presented.

Keywords | gastronomic tourism, comparative analysis, Ecuador, South American competitors, benchmarking

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1. Introduction

In recent decades, the tourism sector has established itself as one of the most dynamic and rapidly growing industries worldwide. The local gastronomic offer, including food and drink, is a key attraction for visitors, constituting an essential part of the tourist experience.

In Latin America, gastronomic tourism has experienced exponential growth in recent years, with countries such as Peru at the forefront. According to data from the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), Peru has experienced a 20% annual increase in gastronomic tourism over the past five years, resulting in significant economic benefits. In fact, gastronomic tourism represents 10 % of the national tourism Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Peru.

Peruvian cuisine, with renowned restaurants such as Central and Maido, has attracted thousands of international tourists, which has positively contributed to its cultural relevance. A study carried out by the Peruvian Society of Gastronomy (APEGA) reveals that 85 % of foreign visitors consider gastronomy a key factor when deciding to visit Peru.

Ecuador has made significant strides in developing its tourism sector. One of the country's main achievements was its nomination as the best gastronomic destination by the World Travel Awards in 2013. This award demonstrates the growing international recognition of the richness and quality of Ecuadorian gastronomy. The country brand "Ecuador Loves Life" has garnered widespread global recognition, positioning Ecuador as a diverse and sustainable destination (Rodríguez & Hernández, 2023). These international recognitions have solidified Ecuador as one of the leading tourist destinations in Latin America, standing out for both its gastronomic richness and its diverse, high-quality offerings.

These efforts aim to position Ecuador as a premier gastronomic tourism destination, enabling the country to derive economic and social benefits from the diversification and differentiation of its tourism offerings (Ramírez & Castillo, 2022; Fernández et al., 2021; Martínez & Ortiz, 2023; Jiménez & Vega, 2020). Proper management and promotion of gastronomic tourism are key strategies to ensure the efficiency and sustainability of Ecuadorian tourism development.

Given the growing trend of travellers to experience the authentic cuisine of the destinations they visit, the present study aims to carry out a comparative analysis of the tourist gastronomic offer in Ecuador, and its main South American competitors: Buenos Aires (Argentina), Lima (Peru), Santiago de Chile (Chile), and Bogotá (Colombia).

The generation of scientific knowledge for the management of gastronomic tourism is crucial for the development of both tourists and locals. This comparative analysis enabled the

identification of specific characteristics, challenges, and opportunities of the destinations analyzed. It will focus on the capitals of the selected countries due to their geographical location and similarity in the gastronomic products offered (Cabral et al., 2024; Chamoli & Agarwal, 2024).

The research aimed to contribute to the management of Ecuador's gastronomic tourism, identify deficiencies in the management of Ecuadorian gastronomic tourism, and propose improvements based on sound studies. The information obtained is crucial for developing effective and sustainable strategies that promote gastronomic tourism in Ecuador and strengthen its position as a premier tourist destination. These insights can be beneficial for authorities and stakeholders in the Ecuadorian tourism sector to design effective strategies that position national gastronomy as a distinctive and appealing element for visitors.

2. Literature Review

Gastronomic tourism management is a topic that currently requires greater academic input. According to the UNWTO (2020), this type of tourism activity is characterised by the traveller's experience with activities and products related to the gastronomy of the place.

Gastronomy has become a key component in determining the attractiveness and dynamism of the tourism sector. According to Mariani and Bresciani (2022), the gastronomic offer in local restaurants has a significant positive impact on the perception of tourist destinations and on consumers' attitudes towards local gastronomy. This is further evidenced by the findings of Hsu et al. (2022), who developed and validated a scale to measure the affective components of gastronomic tourism, highlighting the importance of culinary experiences in tourists' satisfaction and loyalty.

In line with this, Yu et al. (2022) demonstrated how live streaming of gastronomic events can stimulate impulsive consumption, suggesting that innovation and professionalisation in the presentation of gastronomy can attract more tourists and improve their experience. Furthermore, Franco et al. (2022) analysed the ability of luxury hotels to coordinate a local gastronomic business ecosystem, highlighting the importance of relational, combinative, and promotional capabilities in the tourist offer (Moreira et al., 2024; Moura et al., 2024).

These recent investigations reinforce Bessière's (1998) assertion about the potential of gastronomic tourism to boost local economies and complement the UNWTO (2020) report on the significant expenditure by tourists on food during their trips. In this context, a wide variety

of studies on tourism in general and gastronomy in particular have been reported, notable examples being the works of Hernández-Mogollón et al. (2020) and Kesgin et al. (2021).

Benchmarking became popular in the 1990s and has improved the operating results of large international companies through continuous and systematic comparative analysis. Several research studies on the subject have been reported, developed in the context of tourism and gastronomy (Arrieta-Espinoza et al., 2023; Breit et al., 2022).

There are several studies that, in some way, address research similar to the objective of this research. The research developed by Oliveira (2016), although conducted in a different context, has applicable parallels for gastronomy as a tourist product in the region. Similarly, Schenkel and Alves (2017) analyse the concept of sustainable gastronomic tourism and its application in South America. In comparison, Botti et al. (2020) provide an analysis of the link between gastronomy, tourism, and the "Slow Food" movement that can be extrapolated to the region.

With more specific scopes, Álvarez and González (2019) analyse how local gastronomy influences tourism development in different regions of Argentina, and Schenkel (2015) analyses the key factors for the development of gastronomic tourism in Argentina. For their part, Leal and Padilha (2018) investigate how the artisanal cheese route of Minas Gerais in Brazil has become a gastronomic tourist attraction.

Likewise, there are several reports from international or governmental organisations, both outside and within the region, that address the topic under study. For example, the UNWTO (2020) studies the role of gastronomy in cultural and experiential tourism in South America, and the UNWTO Guide to the Development of Gastronomic Tourism (GDTG, 2019) establishes a set of criteria to evaluate gastronomic activity. The Spanish Foundation for the Innovation of Crafts (FUNDESARTE, 2017) compiles good practices and trends in gastronomic tourism in several Latin American countries.

In the region, the National Tourism Service of Chile (SERNATUR, 2012) sets out guidelines for developing gastronomic tourism. The Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism of Peru (MINCETUR, 2015) includes guidelines for developing gastronomic tourism in Peru, and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Tourism of Colombia (2019) addresses the importance of the gastronomic offer for nature tourism.

The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report (FEM, 2019), although not focused exclusively on gastronomic tourism, addresses important aspects such as cultural resources and transport infrastructure, which are related to the criteria of "Cultural Environment" and "Connectivity". This report positions the countries in the following order: 1) Argentina, 2)

Colombia, 3) Peru, 4) Chile, and 5) Ecuador. Likewise, it highlights Chile as the best in air and land transport infrastructure and places Santiago de Chile as the best-connected city.

3. Methodology

The study employs a descriptive methodology, utilizing a cross-sectional design. The steps followed for the development of the research are described below.

3.1. Definition of the evaluation parameters

To define the comparison parameters to be used, a group of experts was formed, all university professors with a fourth-level degree and five or more years of experience in research and teaching in the field of gastronomy and tourism. The expert group, based on the characterisation of the state of the art, decided that, for the study, the comparison parameters defined in the Guide to the Development of Gastronomic Tourism (UNWTO, 2020) should be used, which are in Table 1.

Table 1. Criteria and elements considered

Parameters	Description
Natural and cultural environment	Attractiveness of the place at a landscape and cultural level where the gastronomic activity takes place.
Product	The quality of the product or raw material used to develop the gastronomic experience is evaluated.
Elaboration	The treatment of the raw material is valued, maintaining its quality and enhancing its flavour in a natural way in the kitchen.
Quality of service	It is related to attention and providing clear, transparent information for tourists.
Price	The cost of the product for tourists is evaluated.
Experiences	The number and quality of the tourist experiences that are developed around gastronomy are valued.
Connectivity of the destination	The frequency and number of destinations connected to the gastronomic destination at a national and international level are valued.
Offer communication	The quality of communication for promoting the gastronomic destination's offerings is evaluated.
Variety	The number of product categories of the destination is evaluated.
Diversity	The number of products by category of the destination is evaluated.

Parameters	Description
Professionalisation	The development and the intention of professional development in the gastronomic sector are evaluated.
Profitability	The cost-benefit of gastronomic activities is evaluated.
Positioning	Assesses the conceptual territory occupied by the gastronomic destination and how it is projected.
Visibility	Evaluates the presence of the gastronomic destination in its markets.
Innovation	Evaluates the degree of innovation in the gastronomic tourism offer and the processes of relationship with tourists.

Source: Authors' elaboration

Additionally, the experts agreed to incorporate the biosecurity criterion, understood as the set of biosecurity protocols and proposals in the gastronomic field, as a means of protection for tourists. This criterion is included because of the health crisis caused by COVID-19.

3.2. Design of the research instruments

Once the parameters to be evaluated were defined, it was decided to apply two different instruments to subsequently develop a triangulation of the results obtained through both instruments. It was decided to develop an interview with expert representatives from each destination under analysis, and on the other hand, to survey clients who consume gastronomic services in each of the destinations. In both instruments, the parameters defined in the previous step were considered. To evaluate the survey parameters, a five-category Likert scale was used, ranging from "totally disagree" to "totally agree."

3.3. Definition of the sample

For the development of the research, the capitals of Ecuador (Quito), Argentina (Buenos Aires), Peru (Lima), Chile (Santiago), and Colombia (Bogotá) were selected, recognized for their relevance in gastronomic tourism. Table 2 presents a general characterisation of these destinations.

Table 2. General characterisation of the investigated destinations

Variables	Tourist destinations				
	Quito, Ecuador	Buenos Aires, Argentina	Lima, Peru	Santiago de Chile, Chile	Bogotá, Colombia
Agricultural Products	Tropical fruits, vegetables, grains, and dairy products	Grains, beef, fruits, and vegetables	Fruits, vegetables, grains, coffee, fish products	Fruits, vegetables, wines, seafood	Coffee, tropical fruits, and flowers.
Percentage of GDP from agricultural production	8%	5,4%	7%	3%	6.1%
Products consumed	Cereals, meats, dairy products, fruits, and vegetables	Meats, baked goods, dairy products, fruits, and vegetables	Tubers, fruits, vegetables, meats, fish	Meats, dairy products, fruits, vegetables, baked goods	Meats, tubers, fruits, vegetables, dairy products
Average monthly expenditure on food consumption (2021)	\$233	\$24,000	\$900	\$180,000	\$400,000
Exports	\$3,400*10 ⁶ (2022)	\$40,000*10 ⁶	\$7,000*10 ⁶	\$18,000*10 ⁶	\$7,000*10 ⁶
Number of Tourists (2019)	590,000	2.9 *10 ⁶	4.8 *10 ⁶	2.7*10 ⁶	1.6*10 ⁶
Sources	Ministry of Tourism	Statistics and Census Directorate	Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism	Undersecretariat of Tourism	ProColombia

Source: Authors' elaboration

For the development of the interviews, two experts were selected from each of the destinations under analysis, whose characteristics are shown in Table 3.

To apply the survey, the population was assumed to be infinite, considering that the total number of tourists visiting the destinations is 12,590,000 tourists. For this population, equation 1 was assumed to determine the sample size.

$$n = \frac{k^2 * p * q}{e^2} = 384.16 = 385 \quad (1)$$

Where:

k: 1.96 for a 95% confidence level:

p: 0.5 and q=0.5

e: 5% researcher error

Table 3. Characterisation of the experts interviewed by destination

Destination	Profiles
Quito, Ecuador	- Municipal Tourism Department - Quito Chamber of Tourism and Gastronomy
Buenos Aires, Argentina	- City Tourism Undersecretary - Buenos Aires Restaurant and Bar Association
Lima, Peru	- PROMPERÚ - Peruvian Gastronomy Association (APEGA)
Santiago de Chile, Chile	- Chilean Tourism Undersecretary - Chilean Chefs Association
Bogotá, Colombia	- ProColombia - Colombian Association of the Gastronomic Industry (ACODRES)

Source: Authors' elaboration

The determined sample size was subjected to stratified sampling with the composition shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Sample composition

Destination	Total tourists	%	Sample size
Quito, Ecuador	590 000	4.69	18
Buenos Aires, Argentina	2 900 000	23.03	89
Lima, Peru	4 800 000	38.13	146
Santiago de Chile, Chile	2 700 000	21.45	83
Bogotá, Colombia	1 600 000	12.71	49
Total	12 590 000	100.00	386

Source: Authors' elaboration

3.4. Data processing

All quantitative data collected through the applied instruments were recorded in a database to be processed with IBM SPSS 25. For their characterisation, descriptive statistics analysis was used, specifically through the absolute or relative frequency values of each parameter evaluated in each of the destinations. Additionally, a multivariate statistical analysis was conducted, specifically a correspondence analysis, to construct a positioning map of the destinations based on the evaluated parameters. To verify the existence of significant differences in the means of the evaluated parameters, the statistical program declared that a chi-square test was used.

Subsequently, based on the observed results and the qualitative information collected, the expert group conducted a SWOT analysis of the Quito, Ecuador, destination. Based on this analysis, a group of improvement strategies for this destination was formulated.

4. Results

Figure 1 shows the general behaviour of the parameter evaluation, as assessed by both clients and experts. It can be seen that the best evaluated parameter is Service Quality, while the natural and cultural environment is the least evaluated. In addition to these two extremes, it is interesting how several factors are located in two intermediate values in two different ranges. Likewise, the striking coincidence in the evaluations carried out by customers and experts is noteworthy.

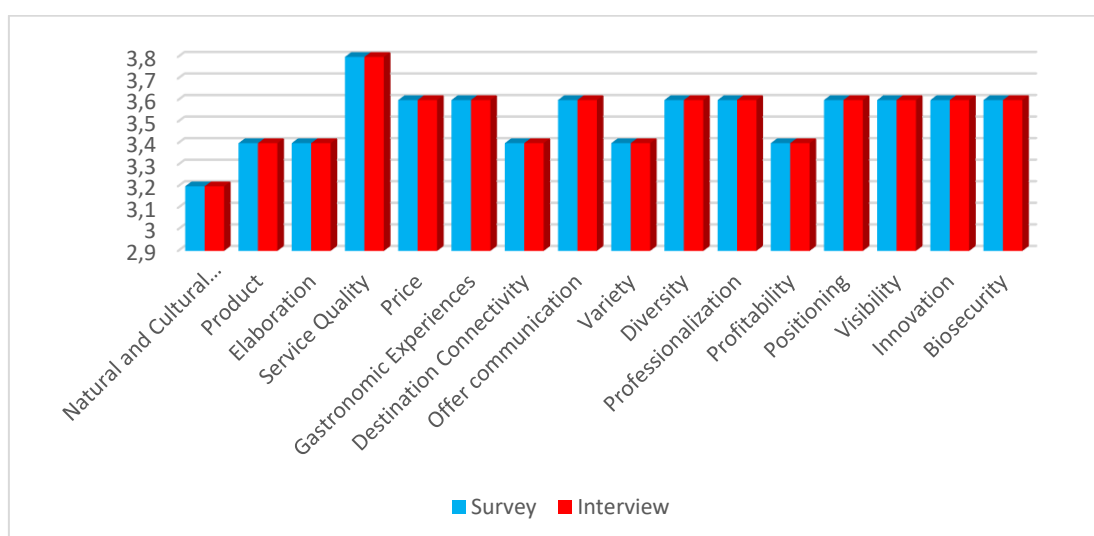


Figure 1. Evaluation of the parameters by customers and experts

Source: Authors' elaboration

Figure 2 shows the overall evaluation of the cities by both groups of evaluators. Similarly, the evaluations remain relatively similar, with a slight improvement in the customer evaluations compared to the expert evaluations.

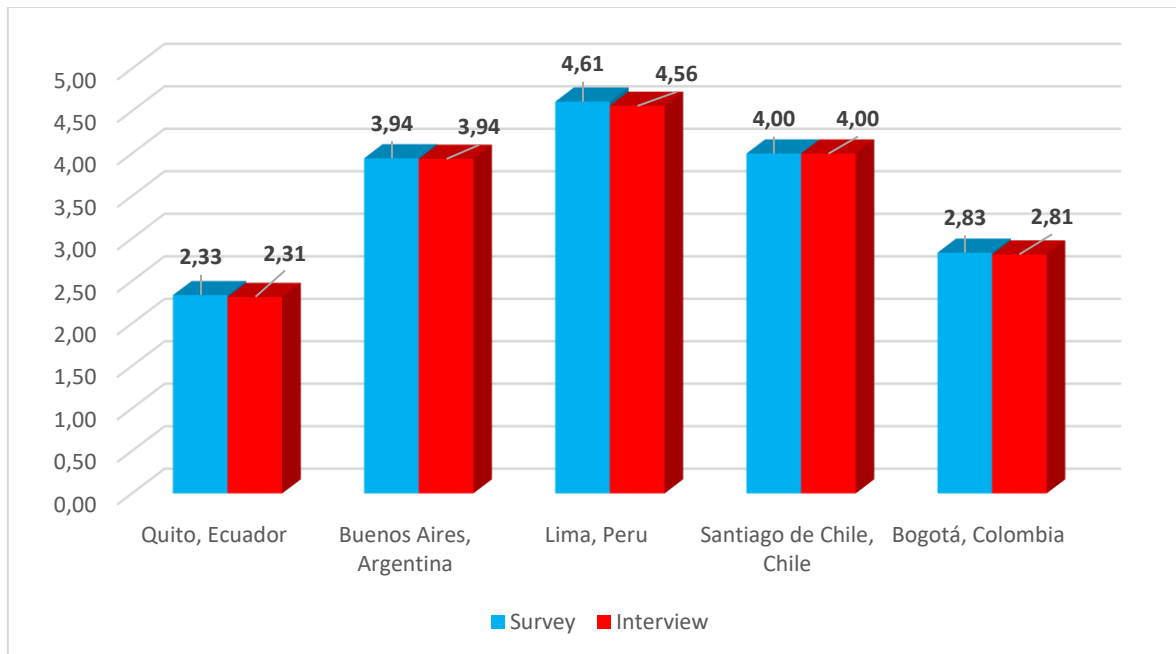


Figure 2. Overall performance of the parameters evaluated by customers and experts

Source: Authors' elaboration

The results of each of the parameters evaluated in each of the cities can be seen in Table 5. When comparing each criterion between the different study units, it is evident that Quito shows the worst results in all criteria, except for Product and Manufacturing, where the worst practices are seen in Bogotá (Colombia). The best practices of the criteria are divided between Buenos Aires (Argentina), Lima (Peru), and Santiago de Chile (Chile).

In order to comprehensively represent the positioning of each of the parameters evaluated in the five destinations under analysis, a correspondence analysis was carried out, the results of which can be seen in Figure 3. The observation that Quito has a different position compared to the other destinations is reaffirmed, standing out fundamentally for the products offered and their preparation. Likewise, the destination Bogotá presents a distinct profile, characterized by attributes such as professionalism, experience, and profitability.

Table 5. Behaviour of the evaluated parameters

Variables	Quito, Ecuador			Buenos Aires, Argentina			Lima, Peru			Santiago de Chile, Chile			Bogotá, Colombia		
	Interview	Survey	Media	Interview	Survey	Media	Interview	Survey	Media	Interview	Survey	Media	Interview	Survey	Media
Natural and Cultural Environment	2	3	2.5	5	4	4.5	4	5	4.5	3	4	3.5	2	3	2.5
Product	4	2	3	3	4	3.5	5	5	5	3	4	3.5	2	3	2.5
Elaboration	4	2	3	3	5	4	5	4	4.5	3	3	3	2	2	2
Service Quality	3	4	3.5	4	3	3.5	5	5	5	4	3	3.5	3	2	2.5
Price	2	4	3	4	3	3.5	5	5	5	4	3	3.5	3	2	2.5
Gastronomic Experiences	2	3	2.5	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	3
Destination Connectivity	2	2	2	4	4	4	3	5	4	5	4	4.5	3	3	3
Offer communication	2	2	2	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	3
Variety	2	2	2	4	4	4	3	3	3	5	5	5	3	3	3
Diversity	2	2	2	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	3
Professionalisation	2	2	2	4	4	4	5	3	4	4	5	4.5	3	3	3
Profitability	2	2	2	4	4	4	3	5	4	5	4	4.5	3	3	3
Positioning	2	2	2	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	3
Visibility	2	2	2	4	4	4	5	3	4	4	5	4.5	3	3	3
Innovation	2	2	2	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	3
Biosecurity	2	2	2	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	3

Source: Authors' elaboration

On the other hand, Peru, Santiago de Chile, and Buenos Aires are in much more favorable positions and distinguished by the rest of the parameters evaluated.

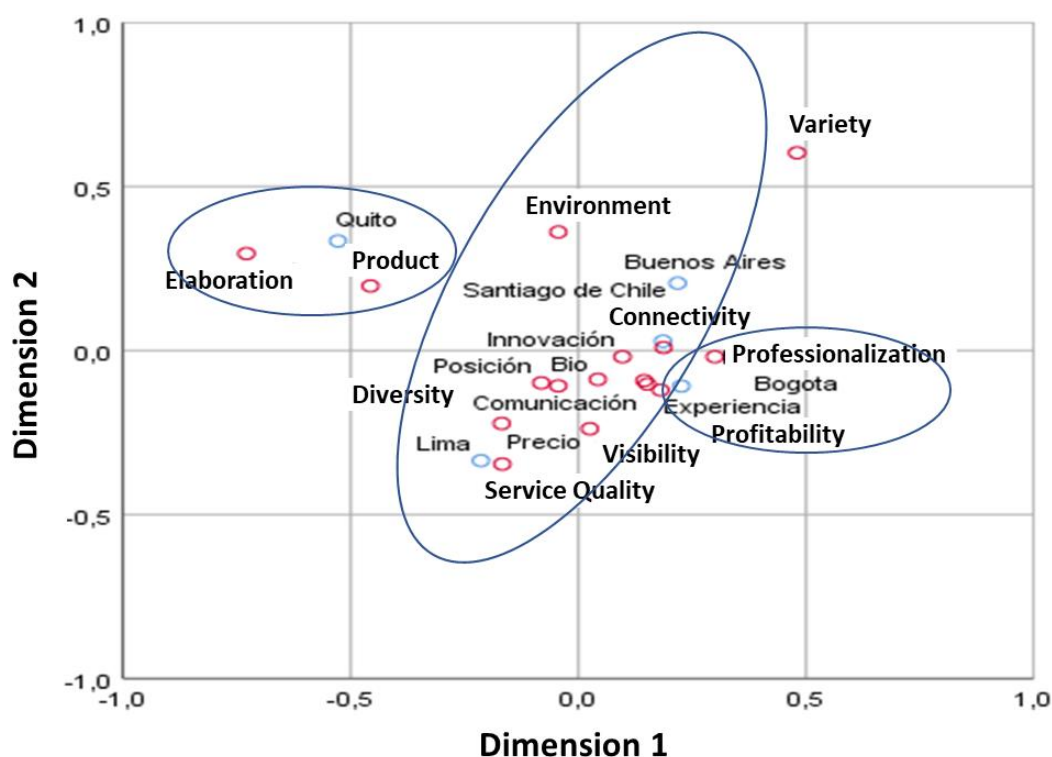


Figure 3. Positioning map

Source: Authors' elaboration

To verify the significance of the differences in the evaluation of the parameters between the cities studied, a chi-square test of comparison of means was carried out. The results are presented in Table 6. According to these results, statistically significant differences are observed in all parameters, except for Service Quality, with a confidence level of 99.95%. For price, the confidence level is 99.9%.

Table 6. Comparison of means by the chi-square test

Criteria	Significance
Cultural environment	0.003
Product	0.003
Elaboration	0.003
Service quality	0.100
Price	0.003
Experiences	0.100

Connectivity	0.003
Offer communication	0.003
Variety	0.003
Diversity	0.003
Professionalisation	0.003
Profitability	0.003
Positioning	0.003
Visibility	0.003
Innovation	0.003
Biosecurity	0.003

Source: Authors' elaboration

Table 7 presents the attributes that most distinguish each of the destinations evaluated.

Table 7. Parameters most distinguished by destination

Criteria	Best Practice
Cultural environment	Buenos Aires, Argentina
Product	Lima, Peru
Elaboration	Lima, Peru
Service quality	Lima, Peru
Price	Lima, Peru
Experiences	Lima, Peru
Connectivity	Santiago de Chile, Chile
Offer communication	Lima, Peru
Variety	Santiago de Chile, Chile
Diversity	Lima, Peru
Professionalisation	Lima, Peru
Profitability	Santiago de Chile, Chile
Positioning	Lima, Peru
Visibility	Lima, Peru
Innovation	Lima, Peru
Biosecurity	Lima, Peru

Source: Authors' elaboration

Once the evaluation of the criteria carried out by the experts has been analyzed and the surveys have been completed, a ranking of the positioning can be drawn up, based on the sum of all the points accumulated by each study unit during the evaluation.

Thus (Figure 4), it can be stated that Lima, Peru, is the best-positioned city from the point of view of gastronomic tourism among the study units analysed, followed by Santiago de Chile, Chile; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Bogotá, Colombia; and finally, the city center of the research, Quito, Ecuador. This shows the need for management proposals that enrich and contribute to the improvement of gastronomy as a constituent element of tourism.

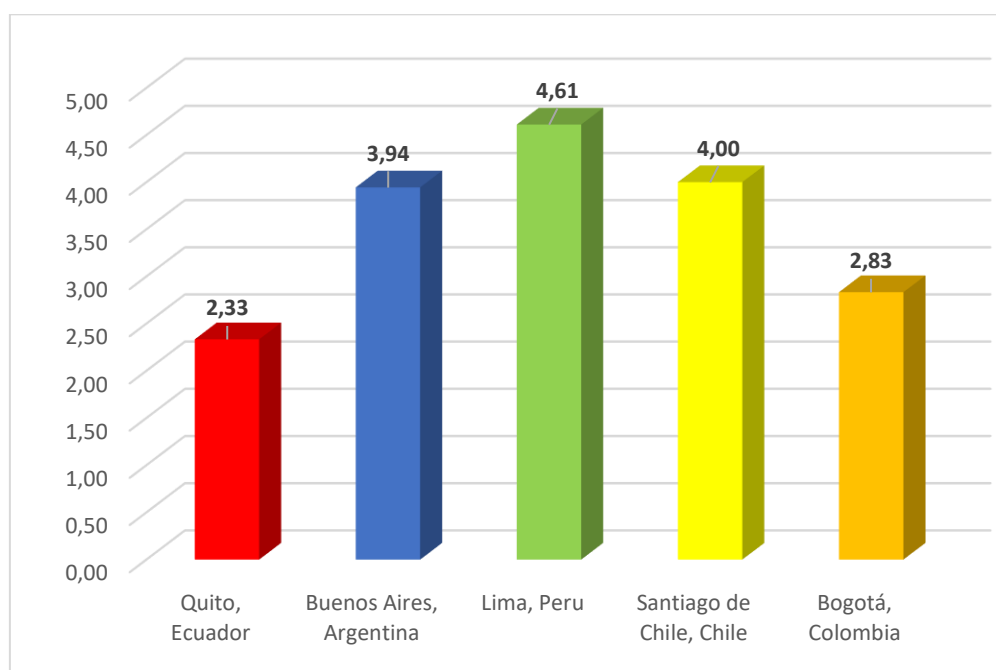


Figure 4. Ranking by country

Source: Authors' elaboration

In accordance with the observed results, the group of experts conducted a SWOT analysis of the Ecuadorian tourist gastronomic offer in comparison with that of Buenos Aires, Lima, Santiago de Chile, and Bogotá, as shown below.

Strengths:

- **Product diversity:** Ecuador has a vast variety of tropical fruits, vegetables and dairy products that enrich its gastronomic offering.
- **International recognition:** Quito has been internationally recognised for its gastronomy, as demonstrated by awards such as the "Best Gastronomic Destination" by the World Travel Awards.
- **Authenticity and tradition:** Ecuadorian cuisine stands out for its traditional recipes and the use of native ingredients, which attracts tourists in search of authentic experiences.
- **Commercial infrastructure:** Quito has a solid commercial infrastructure with more than 20,000 establishments dedicated to the marketing of food and beverages.

Weaknesses:

- Lack of promotion and marketing: Compared to Buenos Aires and Lima, the international promotion of Ecuadorian gastronomy is still limited.
- Professional training: Professionalisation in the Ecuadorian gastronomic sector needs improvement compared to cities such as Bogotá and Santiago de Chile.
- Quality of service: Despite the rich product offering, the quality of service in gastronomic establishments can vary significantly.

Opportunities:

- Growth in gastronomic tourism: The growing global interest in gastronomic tourism offers an opportunity to position Ecuador as a key destination in South America.
- Innovation in the offer: Introducing new gastronomic products and preparation methods can attract more tourists interested in unique experiences.
- Increased exports: Boosting exports of high-quality food products can strengthen the economy and improve international recognition.

Threats:

- Regional competition: Cities such as Buenos Aires, Lima, and Santiago de Chile are already well-positioned in the gastronomic tourism market, representing direct competition.
- Economic volatility: Economic fluctuations can affect investment in the gastronomic sector and tourism in general.
- Sanitary conditions: The need to comply with high biosecurity standards due to the COVID-19 pandemic and future health crises could increase operating costs and affect tourists' perception of safety.

Based on the SWOT analysis, the following improvement strategies were designed:

- Promote cohesion between the productive and service sectors.
- Conduct research to identify and take advantage of the benefits of local raw materials.
- Develop enriching tourist experiences, such as creating gastronomic routes and cultural experiences that involve local gastronomy or improving the identity of Quito's gastronomy and its international perception.

- Implement innovative promotional campaigns that highlight gastronomy as a means to understand the city better.
- Improve transportation infrastructure to facilitate travel to and within the city.
- Encourage culinary and service training and education to improve the perception of the destination.
- Create and improve specialised trade sites such as fairs, traditional markets, and delicatessens.
- Establish gastronomic research and training centers, such as universities and institutes.

5. Conclusions

At the end of this research, the following key conclusions can be drawn:

It was demonstrated that the World Tourism Organisation's (UNWTO, 2020) guide to gastronomic tourism development can serve as a benchmarking tool of great utility and applicability among South American destinations. Its structure enables a comprehensive and comparative evaluation of various aspects of gastronomic tourism, providing a solid framework for ongoing improvement.

The criteria proposed by the UNWTO guidelines are pertinent and enriching, both from a theoretical and practical perspective. The criteria analysed include: cultural environment, product, preparation, quality of service, price, experiences, destination connectivity, communication of the offer, variety, diversity, professionalisation, profitability, positioning, visibility, and innovation. Additionally, the biosecurity criterion was incorporated, given its relevance in the current context and its potential future implications.

The evaluations carried out indicate that Lima, Peru, stands out as the destination with the best practices in gastronomic tourism, while Quito, Ecuador, presents the most significant areas for improvement. This highlights the need to adopt specific strategies to enhance the competitiveness of Quito.

At the regional level, the variables with the worst results were Communication of the Offer, Positioning, Professionalisation, and Quality of Service. In Quito, specifically, the most problematic criteria were: Communication of the offer and positioning. These areas require priority attention to improve the perception and quality of the gastronomic tourism offer.

Ecuador boasts a unique gastronomic wealth, which represents a significant strength. However, it requires improvements in aspects such as quality, professionalization, and international promotion to consolidate itself as a competitive gastronomic destination at the regional level. It is crucial that in Quito, proposals promoting collaboration between the public and private sectors, as well as among different sectors, are prioritized. This collaboration is essential for improving the management of gastronomic tourism and achieving significant improvements in the quality of the offer. Strategies must focus on training, effective promotion, and innovation in the gastronomic offer.

5.1. Managerial implications

These findings can be utilized by authorities to develop targeted strategies, including specialized marketing campaigns and professional training programs, to enhance the tourist experience. The suggested strategies, such as enhanced international promotion and improved service quality, can be implemented by authorities and tourism sector stakeholders to enhance the competitiveness of Quito's gastronomic offerings. Furthermore, training and capacity-building initiatives can raise quality standards, benefiting both tourists and local service providers.

5.2. Limitations of the study and future recommendations

Future research could focus on exploring the experiences of gastronomic tourists in greater depth across different cultural and economic contexts. In addition, longitudinal studies that analyse the long-term impact of gastronomic promotion strategies on tourist perception and satisfaction would be of great value. It would also be interesting to investigate how innovation in gastronomic products and services can influence the competitiveness of tourist destinations.

It is recommended to conduct additional studies that utilize the UNWTO gastronomic tourism development guide as a comparative tool in various cities in Ecuador. This will enable the country to be fully recognized as a premier gastronomic tourism destination. To advance this line of research, it is recommended that additional studies be conducted to examine the implementation and effects of the suggested strategies in various contexts. Finally, comparative studies between more cities and countries would help to generalise the findings and identify best practices at a global level.

The main limitations of the research include the lack of specific information and the absence of similar comparative studies, which makes direct comparison of results difficult.

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