TITLE:

WETLAND TOURISM IN NATURAL PROTECTED AREAS: SANTAY ISLAND (ECUADOR)

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Tourism and wetlands have a complex and deep relationship.
- Santay Island is a Ramsar Site of International Importance and the homeland of five species of existing mangroves in Ecuador.
- There are three different typologies of visitors
- The results indicate that tourists found great satisfaction and enjoyed the visit to Santay Island

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this paper is the analysis of the relationship between two important factors in the decision making process of a tourist when choosing a destination: motivation and satisfaction. This research is done in a wetland protected area named Santay Island located in Ecuador. The results show evidence that there are two motivational dimensions to visit the place: an ecological-hedonic and a social-gastronomic motivation. The first dimension is the most important, which is a very common fact in these types of destinations. Both dimensions discriminate each other in the degree of satisfaction perceived by the visitors. The analysis of the motivations allows identifying three different typologies of visitors that are of great importance to segment the market in order to consolidate Santay Island as a wetland ecotourism destination: The eco-social-hedonic tourist, the eco-hedonic tourist and the social tourist. The conclusions highlight the need of considering the motivational profile of the satisfied tourist as managerial instrument to the community of Santay in order to help them obtain better profits, not only economic, but social and cultural benefits.

KEY WORDS

Ramsar Site, Natural Protected Area, Ecotourism, Motivation, Satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Wetlands are considered as some of the most productive ecosystems of the world because they supply water, food, building materials, transportation, coast protection, and also they bring important opportunities for tourism and recreation (World Tourism Organization – WTO- 2012). The uniqueness of wetland tourism has become a significant component in the tourism industry, particularly in developing countries (Khoshkam, Marzuki & Arzjani 2014). Wetland areas have a lot of capabilities to attract tourists; this implies the possibility to become in important tourist destinations for travelers due to the delighting resources of these zones. Likewise, the correct management of these areas may generate economic incentives, as well as social and environmental benefits (Bego & Maltezi 2011). On the other hand, public perception of wetlands and the search for new experiences is boosting the

development of these zones as tourist areas. Wetlands become part of the experiences searched for by tourists. In that sense, the relationship between wetlands and tourism was analyzed at the 11th meeting of the conference of the Ramsar parties in 2012 where the important and closed relationship among wetlands, tourism and recreation was established. It also intended to give answer to three questions: First, which factors influence in the success and sustainability of tourism in wetlands; second, which are the best practices of tourism that preserve wetlands; and third, how the different stakeholders that work in wetlands help its conservation (WTO 2012).

Many wetland tourism destinations are located in developing countries. This may help maximize and foster a sustainable development of tourism. In this sense, Latin America has experienced an exponential growth in the number of receptive tourism through the years, although this has not necessarily enabled the local community to gain greater economic or social, cultural, and environmental benefits (Novelli & Gebhardt 2007). In order to prove those benefits, it is necessary to consider 2 aspects: first, the determination of the management to accomplish the tourist planning as well as the degree of involvement of the members of the local community; and second, the tourist profile, the motivations and the number of visitors that arrive to a certain geographic area (Nyaupane, Morais & Dowler 2006). Tourism may also have positive effects in preserving local culture (Giampiccoli & Kalis 2012) and may recover cultural facts that might be already lost (Al-Oun & Al-Homoud 2008).

In the case of Ecuador, there is some academic research that deals with this economic sector. The most relevant are from Ruiz-Ballesteros (2011), Erskine and Meyer (2012), Ruiz-Ballesteros and Brondizio (2013), Everingham (2015) and Gascón (2015).

This paper aims to present the analysis of the situation of wetland tourism that is planned and managed by the local community in a natural protected area, considered a Ramsar Site of international importance: Santay Island, located in Ecuador (South America), through the discussion of a field study based on a survey conducted throughout the year 2015. This paper purports to determine the motivations and degree of satisfaction of the tourists that visit the isle; and in this manner contribute to cover an area little discussed in the literature in the region. In addition, the material may foster the debate about the tourist structuring in this geographical zone. The rest of this paper is organized as follows: After this introduction, we provide the theoretical framework; the third section presents a description of the wetland; the fourth section introduces the methodology used in the research; a fifth section reports the

results of the empirical study and finally, the last section concludes about the objective proposed.

BACKGROUND

Tourism can be conceived as a main tool to improve the socio-economic conditions of determined rural communities. The World Tourism Organization (2002) program named Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) searches, through tourism, for the socioeconomic development of depressed geographical areas. It also supports that the reduction of poverty in rural zones can be accomplished by establishing small businesses that are managed by the local community, which can provide goods and services to travelers, and can lay bare their cultural and environmental resources. Moreover, this implies the possibility of generating new jobs, mostly for women and young people, and creating complementary activities, but never substituting the traditional economic sectors of that zone (WTO 2012). In this sense, wetlands tourism is a good manner to achieve these objectives.

Tourism and wetlands have a complex and deep relationship. Besides the fact that tourism brings development and conservation of the space, it also promotes health, community participation and education. Also, the stakeholders involved in the management of this economic endeavor may include the development of activities such as tourist guidance, restoration, handcrafting or cultural performances (Ling, Ramachandran & Shuib 2013).

There are three different lines of research that expose the relationship between wetlands and tourism (WTO 2012). The first one is the analysis of wetland tourism management, which examines the maximization of economic benefits that this activity can generate, the reduction of adverse environmental effects or the accommodation systems that tourists may opt in the most sensible and fragile zones. The second is the analysis of the relationship between wetlands and the tourist sector is addressed on the side of tour operators´ work, the study of the access to the zone or the creation of additional services for tourists that are provided by the local community. Third is the analysis of the planning and structuring of the policies that rule wetland tourism. According to these three research guidelines, the analysis of the zones where wetland tourism is performed involves different subjects such as ecotourism, wildlife tourism, landscape and place enjoyment and gazing on landscapes (Ryan, Ninov & Aziz 2012).

The available literature on wetland tourism attempts to give answer to three questions: Who is visiting wetlands? Why are these people visiting wetlands? When do they tend to visit

wetlands? (Do, Kim, Kim & Joo 2015). In this context, the increasing number of tourists visiting wetlands is a consequence of the development of ecotourism; and, for this reason, it is of great need that travelers perceive the authenticity of the zone as a necessary condition to satisfy the tourist expectations about this natural location. (Ryan et al. 2012).

Wetland tourism can bring many benefits that depend on the relationship among the local community, natural resources, cultural conservation and tourism itself (Zhang & Lei 2012). This presupposes the conservation and sustainable development of wetlands (Macharia, Thanya & Ndirity 2010), which can be achieved through the settlement of control indicators such as: classification of tree ages, harvesting season, presence of endangered fauna, wetland´s proximity to natural land use, habitat area and water quality control. Among of them, it is necessary to determine the interdependence between wetlands conservation, poverty reduction and institutional development (Van der Duim & Henkens 2007).

The scientific literature glances through different studies conducted in wetlands. Hornoiu, Padurea, Nica and Maha (2014) and Do et al. (2015) illustrate the analysis of the demand. There are other contributions about wetland tourism in Iran (Khoshkan et al. 2014), Malaysia (Aminu, Ludin, Matori, Wan Yusof, Dano & Chandio 2013) and Dubai (Ryan et al. 2012).

Wetland tourism can bring positive and negative effects (Van der Duim & Kenkens 2007; WTO 2012). The positive aspects are the improvements over local, regional and national economies, the support on the local community´s socio-cultural heritage conservation and the creation of resources for wetlands´ conservation. On the other side of the spectrum, negative impacts of tourism over wetlands may be the building of facilities and the direct outcome resulted from the mere presence of tourists in the wetland ecosystems.

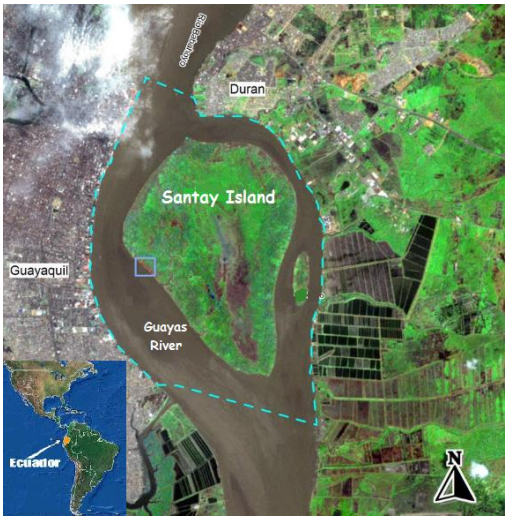
DESCRIPTION OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

In recent years, Ecuador is becoming a more appealing destination in Latin America, mainly because of its patrimony richness (with 2 cities recognized as Cultural Patrimony of Humanity by UNESCO-Quito and Cuenca-), its variety of gastronomy, its natural protected areas and its cities with some relevance for business activities (the case of Guayaquil). In the year 2014, Ecuador received 1,557,000 foreigners, mainly coming from Colombia, United States, Peru, Argentina, Chile, Spain and Germany. This implies that tourism represents a great economic engine for this country with a level of contribution to the economy of $ 1,487.20 million in 2014 (Ministry of Tourism of Ecuador, 2015). Tourism is the third contributing sector for the national economy after banana and shrimp, without considering

the oiling sector. The evident economic importance of tourism and its development has been reflected in the academic researches performed by Erskine and Meyer (2012), Everingham (2015), Gascón (2015) and Croes and Rivera (2015).

Santay Island is located at the delta of Guayas River. The island is 800 meters from the city of Guayaquil. This continental space has 4,705 hectares of halophytic vegetation, flooding forest and tropical dry forest which provides a habitat to various protected-by-national legislation species of animals and biological diversity. Despite being in a developed area, this terrain provides refuge for a great number of aquatic breeds that migrate to the rivers and the sea. These unique characteristics make this Ramsar Type "I" (Intertidal forested wetlands, including mangroves swamps, etc.) site account the designation of #1041 world´s Ramsar of International Importance since year 2000.

Figure 1: Geographical location of Santay Island (Ecuador- South America).



Source: http://mapasdesantay.blogspot.com.es/

Santay Island is the homeland of five species of existing mangroves in Ecuador, which cover almost half of its territory. The fauna of the island has a diverse array of birds, reptiles and mammals. Some birds such as parrots, macaws, turkey vultures, herons, hummingbirds and woodpeckers make part of the fauna. The identified reptiles are iguanas, frogs, toads and turtles. Among the mammals, fishing bats, "jamaicensis" bats, mice and badgers can be found. This wetland guards 60 vegetable species, 12 reptile varieties and 128 kinds of birds, which 12 are registered as vulnerable and threatened in the List of International Trade in Endangered species and the World Conservation Union (Rodríguez, Larrea, Ruiz, Nogales, Suárez, Jaramillo & Guerrero 1995).

The designation of the island as a Ramsar Site has incited an Environmental Management Plan dependent on the conservation and sustainability of the location. Thus, policies and objectives were set in order to control the interventions of the community of San Jacinto of Santay over the wetland. In the framework of national and international policies of environmental protection, it was declared as a National Recreational Area and added to the National Patrimony of Protected Areas in 2010 (Ministry of Environment of Ecuador, 2011). The declaration of Santay as a natural protected zone and its international importance forbids from transforming it into urban zone (Navas 2013).

The Ministry of Environment of Ecuador regulates and allocates the sustainable usage of the island, where around 250 inhabitants reside and are in charge of the wetland conservation (Ministry of Environment of Ecuador, 2013). According with the Management plan (Ministry of Environment of Ecuador 2013) Santay is divided into zones of: restoration (697.94 ha.), conservation (1,069 ha.), multiple uses (59 ha.) and a strict conservation sub-zone (252 ha.). The citizens of the island are grouped together in the Association of Settlers San Jacinto de Santay. They have 96.69 hectares of the island intended to offer wetland tourism.

The wetland tourism at Santay Island generates positive externalities in the intervention areas as a green and recreational place located a few minutes from the city of Guayaquil. With the purpose of preserving this habitat, each element of the infrastructure at Santay has a moderate environmental impact and is properly planned. Therefore, no natural phase of its ecosystems is interrupted. The Ministry of Environment of Ecuador (2013) has developed a Financial and Functionality Sustainability Plan for this Recreational Area to assure economic sustainability. Although access to the National Protected Area is free of charge, the tourist services yield income to the local community.

In June 2014, a pedestrian´s bridge that connects Santay Island to the city of Guayaquil was opened, producing an exponential growth in the number of visitors. The period of 2012 registered 900 visitors. This number increased up to 22,309 in 2013. After the inauguration of the bridge, the number of visits grew up to 717,818 persons and 491,715 visits were registered in 2015 (Ministry of Environment of Ecuador 2016).

METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

Data collection instrument

The analysis of wetland tourism performed at Santay Island, a declared Ramsar Site natural zone, has been conducted through a survey applied to a representative sample of

visitors. The survey was based on previous papers related to the analysis of tourists´s motivations (Yang & Wall 2009; Dodds, Gracia & Homes 2010; López-Guzmán, Sánchez-Cañizares & Pavón 2011; Do et al. 2015) and responds to a group of variables with respect to the tourist´s socio demographic profile, average expenditure, information sources, motivations to go, satisfaction after visiting the island and loyalty to the destination. In this sense, respondents were asked to rate the importance of each of 12 different items connected with the motivations to visit the island and 14 items pertinent to the perceived satisfaction. To this end, closed and Likert scale questions were included in the survey.

Data collection

The researchers collected the data about the tourists' opinion at Santay Island from June to September 2015. The self-administered and anonymous questionnaire was distributed in Spanish and English and filled by tourists with total independence. Nevertheless, researchers were present in case of any difficulties that arose. Survey collectors selected the respondents randomly in keeping with the requirements of probability principles. The first question made to the selected persons asked if their habitual residence was in the city of Guayaquil, excluding them if the answer was affirmative. A pretest of 25 surveys was done in order to detect possible deviations and errors. A convenience sample, commonly used at this type of research where the respondents are available in a determined space at a determined time (Finn, Elliott-White & Walton 2000), of 1002 surveys were collected. The sample was not stratified by any variable (e.g. gender or country of origin) due to the lack of previous investigations that support stratification, and the refusal rate was very low and of no significance. The population of this study is the 717,818 visitors to the island in 2014. The margin error for the investigated population, estimated for a significance level of 95% is ± 3.1%. Therefore, the results may be extrapolated to the entire population without reticence.

Information processing and interpretation

Data is analyzed by using a diverse array of statistical techniques: First, a statistical test of reliability (Cronbach´s Alpha) to evaluate the metric properties of the instruments applied; second, a statistical method used to reduce the set of variables in a dataset (factor analysis); third, a multivariate grouping of cases technique (cluster analysis); and, fourth, statistical data models used to analyze the variance (ANOVA and post hoc test) in order to compare groups of quantitative variables. The collected data is organized, tabulated and interpreted using the IBM SPSS Statistics 22 program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-demographic profile of the tourist

The socio-demographic profile of the tourists is shown in Table 1. The first data of interest is the age of the tourists visiting the island, as the average age is lower than 40. The students stand out from the categories of professions, followed by independent workers and employees which are deeply related to the high level of education of the visitors. Also, when analyzing the level of education in relation to the age, there is a positive association between them (gamma statistic = 0.234; p = 0.000).

Table 1: Socio-demographic profile of tourist

Variables		*Percentage*	*Variables*		*Percentage*
Gender (N = 1,002)	Male	**48.0%**	**Educational level (N = 1,002)**	Elementary	**3.5%**
	Female	**52.0%**		Secondary	**42.0%**
				University	**45.1%**
				Postgraduate	**9.4%**
Age (N = 1,002)	Less than 30	**43.0%**	**Country of origin (N = 1,002)**	Ecuador	**70.8%**
	30-39	**23.1%**		United States	**7.0%**
	40-49	**18.7%**		Germany	**2.7%**
	50-59	**10.0%**		Spain	**2.6%**
	60-69	**4.3%**		Colombia	**2.5%**
	Older tan 70	**0.9%**		Italy	**2.1%**
				Chile	**1.5%**
				Peru	**1.2%**
				Other	**9.6%**
Monthly Income in US dollars (N = 859)	Less than 500	**29.9%**	**Profession (N = 1,002)**	Student	**23.2%**
	500 - 749	**14.7%**		Independent professional	**22.3%**
	750 – 999	**14.7%**		Employee	**22.2%**
	1,000 – 1,249	**14.4%**		Public servant	**13.7%**
	1,250 – 1,499	**9.3%**		Household chores	**8.3%**
	1,500 – 1,749	**3.7%**		Director/Entrepreneur	**6.1%**
	1,750 – 2,000	**3.1%**		Retired	**3.8%**
	More than 2,500	**10.2%**		Unemployed	**0.4%**

Source: Own elaboration

In regard of the tourist´s country of origin, 71% of them are Ecuadorian, whilst the rest are foreigners. The national tourists mainly come from two big provinces named Pichincha and Azuay and represent 41% of this category. Foreign visitors come from United States, Germany and Spain. Santay Island is an attractive local tourist destination and it binds family and friends together; 58% of visitors come to visit it due to recommendation from them which are the main source of information about the island.

In the findings obtained in the research, 30% of respondents declared a monthly income lower than US$ 500 compared to the 10.2% that indicate that they earn more than US$ 2,500. There are differences on the declared income in relation to gender, a significant association has been detected (contingency coefficient= 0.184; p= 0.000) that implies that the level of income declared by women is a 16% lower than men´s. The minimum wage is Ecuador for 2015 was US$ 354.00 and the average monthly income was US$ 892.

Average Expenditure, loyalty and awareness

The average expenditure during the visit to Santay is US$ 6.5; there is a positive association between the monthly income and the expenditure (gamma statistic = 0.217; p = 0.000), which means that tourists that earn more, spend more, and the ones who earn less, spend less. Interestingly, foreign visitors spend a higher amount (US$ 7.1); there is a significant association between the expenditure and nationality (contingency coefficient = 0.116; p = 0.034). Considering the number of tourists that visited Santay Island during 2014 and the expenditure, we have calculated the estimated annual income derived from the tourist activity in this natural protected area. In this sense, the annual demand is estimated at US$ 4.8 million, predominantly corresponding to national visitors (US$ 3.3 million) and US$ 1.5 million derived from international tourism.

The repetitiveness index of the visit to Santay is low, only 12.5% of the respondents visited the island beforehand, but it is important to remember that the tourist offer of Santay is recent. As it may seem coherent, the main eco tourists that repeat the visit to the area are Ecuadorians (15%), compared to a 6% that are foreigners, mainly Americans. The average number of nights that tourists stay reaches four, 21% did not stay in Guayaquil and the rest stayed at least one night. There are significant differences between national and international tourists (Anova F-test statistic = 238.731; p = 0.000). The foreign stayover almost doubled national´s (5.5 nights compared to 3). There is a clear relationship of direction and intensity between the income and stayover index (gamma statistic = 0.179; p = 0.000). One observes that the overnight days increase as the declared income level increases. The preferred

accommodation of the tourists is the house of family and/or friends, followed by the hotels. This Data supports the existence of a family/friends bond in a high percentage of visitors of Santay Island, this represents an evidence that this space is a tourist destination of clear national nature. Results also show that tourists know about the island as a tourist destination by word of mouth from family and friends; followed by media announcements and brochures.

Motivations of the visit

An essential aspect of tourism is to know about the tourist´s desires and expectations of experiences when visiting a destination. The motivational variable drives the decision because it is currently thought to be one of the main incentives of the tourist to select and go on a trip. The reasons why an individual chooses a destination such as Santay and travels there may be diverse. On that matter, we designed a question in the survey with different items trying to know the most frequent and relevant motivations analyzed in previous investigations (Lee, Lee & Wicks, 2004; Yuan & Jang, 2008; Devesa, Laguna & Palacios, 2010), adapting them to the specific characteristics of this tourist destination and its visitors. After the pretest, we selected 12 items on a Likert-type scale of 5 points in which 1 means "Unimportant" and 5, "Very important" in order to determine the relative importance of a series of factors in their decision to visit the protected wetland (all the items are shown in Table 2). Internal and external factors were included, as established by Crompton's theory (1979) between pull and push reasons. The Cronbach´s alpha coefficient of the final scale reaches a value of 0.835, which indicates a commendable internal consistency among the scale items. The critical level (*p*) associated with the F- statistic (362909) in the analysis of the variance to test the null hypothesis that all items on the scale have the same mean (ANOVA) is less than 0.001. This reveals that is not possible to maintain the hypothesis that the means of the elements are equal.

An interclass correlation analysis lets us, in general terms, identify four of the items that showed low correlations. Those items are omitted in the factor analysis, without implying a significant reduction of the level of consistency of the motivational variables (Cronbach´s alpha= 0.777; F=259.662, < 0.001). A factor analysis is made using the reasons to visit or motivational variables as shown in Table 2. This made possible the extraction of 2 motivational dimensions to visit the wetland Santay Island ecosystem. While the interest lies in the factor scores derived from these components as a tool to establish the strength of the motivations of each visitor, it is useful to characterize each of the extracted factors.

Table 2: Rotated factor matrix – Motivation of the visit to the wetland Santay Island.

Motivational variables	Components		Dimensions
	1	2	
Contact with nature	0.827		**Ecological-Hedonic**
Discover the natural wealth: flora, fauna and landscapes	0.760		
Search of tranquility	0.744		
Disconnect from routine	0.739		
Another visit of my tour	0.573		
Spend time with family and/or friends		0.845	**Social-Gastronomic**
Desire to visit new destinations		0.576	
Taste the gastronomy		0.511	
Auto values	2.852	1.655	
% of variance	35.650	35.650	
Cumulative %	20.691	56.341	
KMO	0.842		
Bartlett´s Test of Sphericity	Chi-square = 2134.149 Sig. < 0.001		

Extraction method: Principal axis factoring.

Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization.

Source: Own elaboration

According to Table 2, the first factor is associated with the nature motivations, which are usual reasons in tourist destinations that have a diverse and rich ecosystem, together with hedonic motives. This factor represents the tourists who see the visit as an instrument to expand their knowledge about nature and, at the same time, find a way out from the stress of everyday life. We have called this first factor as *Ecological and Hedonic Reasons*, and it explains almost 36% of the total motivations' variance matrix. Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.814) of the five items that make up this dimension of motivation reveals the reliability of the subscale. The second of the factors found, called *Social and Gastronomic Reasons* explains almost 21% of the total variance matrix of motivations and relates to a tourist who sees the visit as a tool for sharing time and new experiences with people close to their environment (partner, family and / or friends), and also enjoy the cuisine offered in the dining that is managed by members of the local community. The value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.571) is also a reliable subscale. These results demonstrate the existence of various motivational schemes to attend Santay as a nature tourist destination, which are in line with the core of Crompton´s motivational theory (1979) that categorized the reasons that affect the tourist behavior into two main groups: first, the socio-psychological reasons, where

the trip or the visit is a means of satisfying social or psychological type of needs from individuals or groups; and second, cultural reasons, where satisfaction would be obtained from the own attributes of the destination.

Table 3: Characterization of clusters from the means of the motivational variables

Motivational variables	Belonging Clusters			ANOVA	
	1	2	3		
	Mean	Mean	Mean	F	Sig.
Contact with nature	**3.5**$^{(*)}$	**4.9**$^{(*)}$	**4.5**$^{(*)}$	345.735	< 0.001
Discover the natural wealth: flora, fauna and landscapes	**3.3**$^{(*)}$	**4.8**$^{(*)}$	**4.4**$^{(*)}$	299.788	< 0.001
Search of tranquility	**3.2**$^{(*)}$	**4.8**$^{(*)}$	**4.2**$^{(*)}$	274.165	< 0.001
Disconnect from routine	**3.6**$^{(*)}$	**4.9**$^{(*)}$	**4.3**$^{(*)}$	241.885	< 0.001
Another visit of my tour	3.4	**4.7**$^{(*)}$	3.5	139.142	< 0.001
Spend time with family and/or friends	4.7	4.9	**2.7**$^{(*)}$	752.738	< 0.001
Desire to visit new destinations	**4.5**$^{(*)}$	**4.9**$^{(*)}$	**3.9**$^{(*)}$	101.602	< 0.001
Taste the gastronomy	2.6	**3.8**$^{(*)}$	2.4	57.386	< 0.001
Practice sports: hiking, biking, etc.	**3.3**$^{(*)}$	4.3	3.9	35.081	< 0.001
Shop handcrafts	2.0	**3.3**$^{(*)}$	1.8	48.814	< 0.001
The fame and reputation of the tourist destination	3.5	**4.7**$^{(*)}$	3.3	128.797	< 0.001
Affordable tourist destination	4.0	**4.7**$^{(*)}$	4.2	50.074	< 0.001

Note: The bolded items correspond to questions of the survey used in the factor analysis to extract the 2 dimensions.

(*) The bolded values present significant differences in two of the three means of the conglomerates of the post-hoc ANOVA

Source: Own elaboration

The study of the motivations provides grounds for establishing a segmentation of Santay as a wetland ecotourism destination. To this matter, we have performed a non-hierarchical cluster analysis with the factor scores from the 2 extracted dimensions. Following the criteria of maximizing the variance between types and minimize the variance within each of them, the best explanation that meets this criteria establishes three clusters. The characterization of the clusters extracted from the means of the motivational variables of the 12 items from the questionnaire as shown in Table 3. The F statistics from ANOVA let us infer that the compared means are unequal, but it does not let us define the differences. The multiple post hoc comparisons have been performed in order to know which mean differs

from others. These types of comparisons are done when it is assumed that the variances are not equal (the critical level associated to Levene´s statistic is lower than 0.05 for almost all cases, so the equality of variances is rejected). The F statistics of ANOVA is based on the achievement of 2 suppositions: Normality and homogeneity. Moreover, as it is not possible to assume that the population variances are equal, we use the statistical methods of Welch and Brown-Forsythe as an alternative to F statistic of ANOVA (Table 4). The critical level associated to both statistics is lower than 0.05, so the hypothesis of equality of means is rejected and we can also say that the average of motivational variables of 3 compared clusters are not equal.

Table 4: Robust Tests of Homogeneity of variances and Equality of means of motivational variables.

Motivational Variables	Homogeneity of variances (Levene)		Equality of means		
Contact with nature	219.207	< 0.001	Welch	88.127	< 0.001
			Brown-Forsythe	102.678	< 0.001
Discover the natural wealth: flora, fauna and landscapes	147.227	< 0.001	Welch	96.273	< 0.001
			Brown-Forsythe	99.524	< 0.001
Search of tranquility	167.562	< 0.001	Welch	85.873	< 0.001
			Brown-Forsythe	106.511	< 0.001
Disconnect from routine	252.932	< 0.001	Welch	65.405	< 0.001
			Brown-Forsythe	72.089	< 0.001
Another visit of my tour	102.103	< 0.001	Welch	60.982	< 0.001
			Brown-Forsythe	56.033	< 0.001
Spend time with family and/or friends	261.619	< 0.001	Welch	86.149	< 0.001
			Brown-Forsythe	135.660	< 0.001
Desire to visit new destinations	219.357	< 0.001	Welch	24.594	< 0.001
			Brown-Forsythe	21.726	< 0.001
Taste the gastronomy	.501	< 0.606	Welch	53.657	< 0.001
			Brown-Forsythe	53.233	< 0.001
Practice nature sports: hiking, biking, etc.	17.579	< 0.001	Welch	24,716	< 0.001
			Brown-Forsythe	27,610	< 0.001
Shop handcrafts	14.680	< 0.001	Welch	64,571	< 0.001

			Brown-Forsythe	68,893	< 0.001
The fame and reputation of the tourist destination	109.476	< 0.001	Welch	54,346	< 0.001
			Brown-Forsythe	48,185	< 0.001
Affordable tourist destination	73.627	< 0.001	Welch	20,626	< 0.001
			Brown-Forsythe	20,815	< 0.001

Source: Own elaboration

The first cluster (Table 3) is integrated by the 11.8% of the sample. It is one of the 2 groups that scores higher in the items related to the social dimension. This cluster also shows the lower scores in the items related to the ecological- hedonic dimension. It describes a visitor that mainly searches a travel option that allows experiencing new sensations along with family and friends. This cluster is named *social tourists*. The second cluster (table 3) includes 83.5% of the sample and it is characterized by the higher scores in all items used to extract the motivational dimensions. This is a tourist that, together with knowing and contacting with nature, thinks about the visit as a tool to break routine, enjoy with family and/or friends and get pleasure from local gastronomy at the same time. As they clearly relate with the 2 extracted dimensions, this group receives the name of eco-hedonic-social tourist. The last cluster (Table 3) is the most reduced, representing only 4.7% of the sample and is characterized by showing the least significant registrations in the items that relate with the social-gastronomic dimension. In respect with the ecological-hedonic dimension, this conglomerate generally shows significant registrations, which implies that it is clearly related to this dimension. This means that this group may belong to an eco-hedonic tourist.

Motivation and satisfaction of the visit

The satisfaction level declared by the visitors at Santay Island is very high. It was measured in a scale from 1 to 5, being 1 “unsatisfactory” and 5, “very satisfactory”, over the 14 items that aim to value different aspects related to the visit to the island. We could establish that the visitors leave the island very satisfied and could study their satisfaction deeply by analyzing the relationship that may exist with the reasons or motivations for the visit. We consider that this connection is essential for a good management and tourist planning. The objective is to determine the motivations that influence in the satisfaction experienced by the visitor to a wetland nature destination as Santay Island. The results reveal

that both extracted motivational dimensions discriminate significantly from the declared degree of satisfaction (Table 5). The correlation indexes, even when they are not very high, sustain the concordance between the average degree of satisfaction and the motivational dimensions. The value of the *Ecological-Hedonic* dimension shows that as the presence of the reasons related to it is higher, the level of average satisfaction declared by the visitors is also higher.

Table 5: Differences: The degree of satisfaction and motivational dimensions.

Motivational Dimensions	ANOVA		Homogeneity of Variance		Equality of means			Pearson´s correlation
	F	Sig.	Levenee	Sig.				
Ecological-Hedonic	27.484	< 0,001	13.234	< 0.001	Welch	6.110	< 0.028	0.34(**)
					Brown-Forsythe	9.443	< 0.003	
Social-Gastronomic	4.270	< 0,002	2.425	< 0.047	Welch	1.241	< 0.389	0.15(**)
					Brown-Forsythe	1.429	< 0.461	
(**) The correlation is significant at the level of 0.01. (bilateral)								

Source: Own elaboration

From the proposed segmentation, we analyze the relationship that the 3 identified clusters may have with the declared satisfaction. The results reveal a very positive value from the 3 identified groups of visitors. The second cluster reveals a higher score, which strengthens the relevance of the detected motivational dimensions. Following the aforementioned, the satisfaction of the visit seems to increase as the ecological and/or hedonic type reasons prevail. Consequently, the first cluster shows that the visitors that do not connect very clearly with the ecological-hedonic dimension give a lower appreciation to the tourist experience. This value highlights that the visitors make significantly different assessments of their experiences corresponding to the degree in which the experience aligns with the visitors´ reasons for the journey. This result has a clear implication for tourism management of the local community of Santay concerning the efforts to increase and maintain the satisfaction and loyalty of visitors. They must be based on an analysis of the reasons for the trip to influence the presence and proper provision of the tourist product.

Table 6: Clusters characterization from the means of the satisfaction variable

Satisfaction Variable	Belonging clusters			ANOVA		Mean
	1	2	3			
	Mean	Mean	Mean	F	Sig.	
Moderate degree of satisfaction	**3.93**(*)	4.52	4.40	41.481	< 0.001	4.44

(*) The bolded values present significant differences in 2 means of the 3 clusters in the post-hoc ANOVA analysis.

The Games-Howell test is done in order to contrast the significant differences among the means.

Source: Own elaboration

The statistics of equality of variance does not allow the assumption that the population variances are equal (Table 7). The robust tests over the means of the satisfaction variable show that the average of the satisfaction variable among the 3 compared clusters are not the same.

Table 7: Robust Tests of Homogeneity of variances and equality of means of satisfaction variables

Satisfaction variables/ Tourist experience	Homogeneity of Variance (Levene)		Equality of means		
Moderate degree of satisfaction	4.764	< 0.009	Welch	27.004	< 0.001
			Brown-Forsythe	32.198	< 0.001

Source: Own elaboration

CONCLUSIONS

In accordance with the presented results, we find that Santay Island, from the motivational point of view, is a wetland tourist destination visited mainly for ecological-hedonic reasons, and also for social motivations. The Ramsar site nomination gives Santay Island a privileged position to continue improving and developing as a nature destination in Ecuador. In this sense, it is necessary to keep working in support of the sustainable development of the tourist destination managed from the local community of San Jacinto Santay.

The tourist that visits Santay is mainly an Ecuadorian young person that expend an average of US$ 6.5 per visitation; this may imply an annual estimated revenue of US$ 4.8 million to the community coming from the tourist activity. In respect to the satisfaction variable, the results indicate that the tourists have enjoyed the visit to Santay Island. The visitors make a significantly different valuation of the experience depending on the reasons that motivated the visit. This fact has a clear implication on the management of the zone and the initiatives to increase the tourist satisfaction, which should be created from the analysis of the reasons that motivate the trip in order to influence the decision to travel to a place and the correct tourist service offering.

The results of this investigation guide the planning of a management model based on sustainable economy initiatives that may help the preservation of the island´s natural wealth, as well as increase and maintain the high satisfaction and loyalty of the eco-social-hedonic tourists. For these purposes, the study gives direction to the planning of programs that minimize the negative impacts of tourism and to deal with human, economic and technical resources for the wetland conservation. These programs on environmental monitoring, maintenance and preservation of the natural beauty, correct waste disposal, water treatment and pollution and noise control, will allow for peace and tranquility searched by tourists and contribute to maintain the attributes that are most valued and which provide more satisfaction.

The organization of these actions must be structured and implemented through community involvement and cooperation on the environmental education of the tourists in pro of preservation of the biotic and abiotic ecosystems. The natural wealth existing in the wetland, which provides visitor's tranquility and relaxation from every day's routine demands such investment on natural protection. The investment may focus on: preservation of the environment per se (vegetable and animal species); the maintenance of ways, correct signage; provision for bike paths, maintenance of rest areas, observation platforms and bird watch towers; all performed in compatible and coherent connection to the natural preservation of the ecosystem. Management of this wetland as a tourist destination may include the coordination, supervision and control of its suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of the plans in order to search continuous improvements that reinforce the positioning of Santay Island as a wetland tourist destination.

In any study of this nature, there are certain limitations in the data gathering. This work is centered in the information obtained from a sample of visitors to a specific zone in Ecuador, and specifically about wetland tourism. This limits the possibility of generalization

and at the same time constitutes a motivation for contrasting with other comparable destinations. Despite these limitations, the results contribute to literature by offering key aspects of Santay Island as a wetland tourist destination. Finally, additional analysis about the image that this natural protected area has from the cognitive and emotional variables is proposed for further investigation.

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Date: / / 2015
Survey taker code:

TOURISM AT SANTAY ISLAND

We are researching about the perception and opinion of tourists that visit Santay Island

Place of regular residence: Province:_____ Country: _____

1. ¿Have you been at the Santay Island before?

1 ❑ First time
2 ❑ Yes, 2 to 3 times before
3 ❑ Yes, more than 3 times before

2. ¿Who has come with you this time?

1 ❑ Alone
2 ❑ With job partners or friends
3 ❑ With couple
4 ❑ With couple and children. Indicate number of children……..
5 ❑ With children. Indicate number of children ……
6 ❑ Other. Indicate……

3. ¿How did you know about the Santay Island as a touristic destination? (You can mark more than one answer)

1 ❑ Recommendation of the travel agency "in-person".
2 ❑ Recommendation of the travel agency "online".
3 ❑ Recommendation of family and/or friends.
4 ❑ Experience of a previous visit.
5 ❑ Tourist brochures.
6 ❑ Announcements on media.
7 ❑ Recommendations on social networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
8 ❑ Club and/or associations
9 ❑ Information found on the Internet

4. ¿Have you used any online resource to prepare your visit to Santay? (You can mark more than one answer)

1 ❑ Booking sites (Booking, Trivago, Kayak, etc.)
2 ❑ Opinions from booking sites (Tripadvisor, Ciao, etc.)
3 ❑ Recommendations from social networks (Facebook, Linkedin, etc.)
4 ❑ Google Maps.
5 ❑ Information found on the Internet

5. Please grade from 1 to 5 (being 1, few; and 5 a lot) the main reasons to visit Santay.

Reasons for the visit	1	2	3	4	5
1. To know its natural wealth: flora, fauna and landscapes.					
2. Contact with nature.					
3. Practice outdoor sports: hiking, bicycle, etc.					
4. Search for tranquility.					
5. Disconnect from routine.					
6. Visit the crocodile interpretation center					
7. The desire to know new places.					
8. Taste the local food (gastronomy).					
9. Enjoy with family and/or friends.					
10. Go shopping: handcrafts, etc.					
11. The fame and touristic reputation of this place.					
12. Another visit from my touristic itinerary.					
13. It is a tourist destination that fits my budget.					

6. ¿How much money did you spend during your visit to Santay?

1 ❑ Less than $5
2 ❑ From $5 to $10
3 ❑ From $11 to $15
4 ❑ From $16 to $20
5 ❑ From $21 to $25
6 ❑ From $26 to $30
7 ❑ More than $30

7. Please grade from 1 to 5 (being 1 "few satisfied", and 5 "very satisfied") each of the following aspects related to you visit at Santay.

Aspects of the visit	1	2	3	4	5
1. The landscape beauty.					
2. The diversity of flora and fauna.					
3. Conservation of natural patrimony.					
4. Conservation of the infrastructure: bridges and walkways					
5. Information points and signs for the visitor					
6. Accessibility of places of interest.					
7. Quality and service of the restaurants					
8. Quality and service of tourists guides					
9. Diversity and quality of the gastronomy					
10. Opportunity to shop: handcrafts, traditional products.					
11. Bicycles ´maintenance					
12. Citizen security					
13. Cleanness and care of the visited places					
14. Kindness of the residents					

8. Where are you staying during your visit to Guayaquil?

1 ❑ Hotel
2 ❑ Apart hotel
3 ❑ Hostel
4 ❑ Family or friends´ house
5 ❑ Camping
6 ❑ Second residence

Date: / / 2015

Survey taker code:

9.Gender:

1 ❑ Male **2** ❑ Female

10. Age:

1 ❑ Less than 30 years old
2 ❑ 30-39 years old
3 ❑ 40-49 years old
4 ❑ 50-59 years old
5 ❑ 60-69 years old
6 ❑ 70 years and older

11. Level of education:

1 ❑ Elementary (finished)
2 ❑ Secondary (finished)
3 ❑ University (graduated)
4 ❑ Postgraduate / Master
5 ❑ Postgraduate / (PhD)

12. Professional category

1 ❑ Directive/entrepreneur
2 ❑ Independent professional
3 ❑ Public worker
4 ❑ Private worker
5 ❑ Housework
6 ❑ Student
7 ❑ Unemployed
8 ❑ Retired

13. Level of monthly income (in US$)

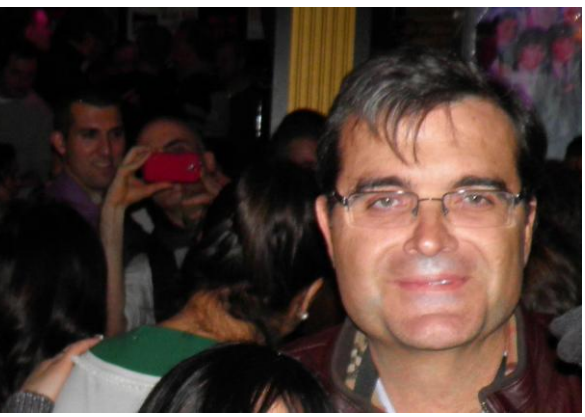
1 ❑ Less than US$ 500
2 ❑ from US$500 to US$749
3 ❑ from US$750 to US$ 999
4 ❑ from US$1000 a US$1250
5 ❑ from US$1250 to US$1499
6 ❑ from US$1500 to US$1749
7 ❑ fromUS$1750 to US$2000
8 ❑ More than US$2000

Thank you

***Author Biography**

Suleen Diaz-Christiansen, Ph.D candidate lives in Guayaquil-Ecuador, where she undertook her graduate studies in Business and Economics. She is Professor at Universidad Casa Grande with more than 14 years of experience in Business, Finance, Entrepreneurship and Marketing. She is also consultant and referee for start-up contests in Peru and Chile. Her major research interests are associated with tourism management in Wetlands, together with Community-Based Tourism, which she considers is the best way to achieve economic development in low-income areas.

Tomás López-Guzmán holds a PhD in Economics and Business Studies and is a Lecturer in Applied Economics at the University of Cordoba, Spain. He has undertaken various exchanges with universities in Europe, Latin America and Africa. His main areas of interest are the economics of tourism and environmental economics, and he has successfully published several articles in this field.



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