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Assessment of tourist security in Quito city through importance - performance analysis

Abstract

Security in tourism is one of the topics that captivate the attention of academics and practitioners in destination management. However, despite the abundant scientific literature on the subject, even this assessment is a subject little explored from an integral perspective of demand. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the tourist security in Quito with the proposal of a set of attributes and the use of the importance- performance analysis. This study incorporates the expert judgment and the survey technique, as well as a process of descriptive and bivariate analysis. The results reveal the key aspects that should be improved according to the security that the city must offer to the tourist, as well as the position of Quito compared to other destinations perceived by the demand as safer. This study expose a set of safety attributes tested in Quito that could serve as inputs for similar studies in other cities without ruling out other types of destinations. In addition, it focuses the assessment of tourism security through five perspectives: attributes, the general environment of the destination, potential risk groups, visited sites and comparative destinations, amplifying the framework of analysis in urban destinations according to their condition of inhabited spaces.

Key words: security; tourism; destination; expectations; perceptions; Ecuador

Introduction

Security is one of the fundamental needs of the human being (Maslow, 1979), which confronts two essential fronts: chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression; and the sudden and painful alterations of daily life, whether at home, at work or in the community (PNUD, 1994). Korstanje (2017) notes that each culture, country or any type of human organization develops its own conception of what is safe and dangerous.

Security in the travel and tourism business, as well as the qualitative assessment called risk perception, are issues that have increasingly attracted people's attention in recent years (Fangnan, Yaolong & Yuanyuan, 2016), because it is a factor that can shape or blur the image of a destination (Gilboa, Jaffe, Vianelli, Pastore & Herstein, 2015), equally the drastically influence the outcome of the tourist experience (Hernández & De la Torre, 2016) and their intention to return (Khuong & Nguyen, 2015). With regard to the importance of security Tarlow (2016) points out "most visitors tend to avoid areas of conflict and tourism industry professionals go out of the way to claim that their destination is one that is safe and secure" (p. 235) while Ghaderi, Saboori and Kloshkam (2016) confirm a significant relationship between security and international tourist demand.

Taking this into account, safety has been recognized as a determinant of the competitiveness and / or sustainability of a tourist destination (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003; Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Enright & Newton, 2004; Alonso, 2009; WEF, 2016; Rodríguez & Espino, 2016). Grunewald (2010) argues that

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security must be interpreted as a subjective state that allows perceiving the displacement in a space free of real or potential risks. According to Ganzo, Martínez, Pérez and Keaton (2010), tourism security comprises "the protection of life, health, physical, psychological and economic integrity of visitors, service providers and members of receiving communities" (p. 91). This meaning allows noting that security is a latent variable that practically affects all the actors in destination from a broad perspective.

In this context, article begins with a general literature review of tourism security field and then more specifically explains the "Importance/Performance Analysis" as a useful tool in tourism research and its potential to be used in tourism security studies. Then methodology used to determine the dimensions and attributes of security in the context of Quito as an urban destination follows in order to provide the details of the research instruments, sampling techniques and data analysis. After this, the results are exposed beginning with the characteristics of the sample and determining the influential variables in tourist safety. Following, it is explained the Importance/Performance Analysis with respect to three focal points: tourist safety attributes, general environment of the tourist destination and perception of safety against potential risk groups. In addition, the perception of tourism security is described in relation to the sites visited in the city as well as in relation to other destinations visited by respondents. Finally, the paper presents the main conclusions and implications for destination management in Quito, and the contributions given for this study to safety and security research in urban destinations.

Literature review

Safety and security research in tourism

In addition to the literature mentioned in introduction that has contributed to a better understanding of the nature of security and the perception of risk in tourism, it is worth mentioning the contributions of Fangnan, Yaolong and Yuanyuan (2016). They find that tourism risk perception includes three views: subjective feelings, objective evaluation and the cognition of exceeding the threshold portion of the negative consequences or negative impact that may occur during travel. Hernández and De la Torre (2016) point out that the perception of risk depends and increases with respect to variables such as distance and proximity of destination, age, occupation and gender, educational level and contexts of origin of the tourist. Fernandes, Lacay and Gandara (2016) assert that security is not simply restricted to criminality. This coincides with Mawby, Tecau, Constantin, Chitu, and Tescasiu (2016) who find that tourists interpreted security more broadly than focus on crime and disorder.

"It was perceived to include security from any of the concerns that might trouble tourists and make them feel less" at home "in their environment-for example, health, and the availability of good, inexpensive health care; food quality; trust, and the feeling that one is not being exploited (e.g., by taxi drivers); finance and the ease of changing currency or using credit cards; and orientation, i.e., knowing where one is, and the availability of information centers, maps, and signage in appropriate languages. In a crime context, respondents also cited the need to be able to trust the police, an emphasis on safety in tourist accommodation, and a clean and well-lit public environment, particularly around the public transport system and safe parking facilities" (p. 6)

Along the same line, Grünewald (2010) proposes eight security variables around the tourist activity: public safety, social security, medical security, information and facilitation security, safety in recreation at events, road safety and transport, environmental safety and security of tourist services. Profuse research on issues of security in tourism abounds in determinants and indicators from the point of view of supply. However, there are still few contributions aimed at establishing a set of factors to assess security

from the demand point of view. Among the studies that have turned their attention to the analysis of tourists' perception of safety and security, the ones made by Mawby (2000), Barker, Page and Meyer (2003), Tecau, Constantin, Tescasiu and Chiti (2014), Ahmad, Mohd and Toh (2015) stand out. However, as referred by Ghaderi, Saboori and Kloshkam (2016) existing studies often focus on single aspects of security but destination security as a whole is largely overlooked.

In this context, this study aims to assess tourism security in Quito based on demand and through a comprehensive and innovative approach that allows the determination of gaps between expectations and perceptions of obtained results in the tourist experience, for which the analysis matrix of performance importance will be used. Authors consider that the main contributions of this research lie in two aspects. On the one hand, the structuring of a set of safety attributes appreciated by the demand in destinations of urban cut like Quito, which could serve as inputs for similar studies in other cities without ruling out other types of destinations. On the other hand, the tourist security assessment through five perspectives: attributes, general environment of the destination, risk groups, visited sites and comparative destinations, which amplifies the analysis framework of the tourist security in urban destinations that by their nature need a systemic vision since in these the tourist space is fused with the space of the residents.

Importance – performance analysis (IPA)

IPA was initially developed by Martilla and James (1977) as a low-cost and easily understood technique to evaluate consumer acceptance of a marketing program. As noted by Frauman and Banks (2010) cited by Griffin and Edwards (2012), the IPA method distinguishes satisfaction as a function of the importance of a product or service to a customer, and the performance of a business or agency in providing it. Sever (2015) considers that although IPA was originally developed for marketing purposes, its application has extended to various fields, tourism, food service, education, healthcare, banking, public administration e-business and information technologies.

Boley, McGehee and Hammett (2017) point that IPA is one of the most ubiquitous methodological tools used in tourism research, which owes its widespread acceptance to its simplicity and ability to provide valuable tourism management techniques. It allows researchers to visually identifying gaps between stakeholders' perceptions of the importance of a specific attribute and the actual performance of a firm or destination on that attribute. It use a quadrant matrix where managers are able to see in which of the four quadrants the attribute falls: 1: "Concentrate Here", 2: "Keep up the Good Work", 3: Low Priority and 4: "Possible Overkill". Hence, each quadrant within the IPA matrix shows a strategy that helps managers identify areas of interest as well as actions needed to improve customer satisfaction.

IPA has been applied in a wide spectrum of tourist areas, highlighting the destination's competitive position (Enright & Newton, 2004; Griffin & Edwards, 2012; Dwyer, Dragicevic, Armenski, Mihalic & Cvelbar, 2014) and destination management and marketing research (Taplin, 2012; Fallon & Schofield, 2006; Tonge & Moore, 2007; Lee & Lee, 2009; Coghlan, 2012 ;Murdy & Pike, 2012; cited by Junio, Kim & Lee, 2016). The Importance-Performance analysis is based on the Paradigm of Disconfirmation of Expectations (Bigné & Andreu, 2004). The IPA itself is considered an expectation -disconfirmation model that models customer satisfaction as a function of importance (or alternatively, expectations) and performance of different product or service attributes (Martilla & James, 1977; as cited by Sever, 2015, p. 43).

Since IPA is a widely accepted method and scope in tourism studies, it has been considered pertinent to approach it to the analysis of tourist safety, where there is a little empirical evidence of its use and

where it is considered that the tool can throw key information for the decision-making in the management of destinations.

Methodology

Determination of dimensions and attributes of tourist security

Based on the dimensions of tourism security proposed by Grunewald (2010), this research carried out a work of selection and classification of attributes by the Delphi method. For this, a battery of 44 attributes collected from the specialized literature was presented to a set of 7 experts for evaluation on a Likert scale of agreement / disagreement of 5 points. The selected experts were tourism professionals linked to the areas of tour operation, guide and tourist transport, considering their acute knowledge about the behavior and perceptions of the tourist, given their daily and close working condition with him. Two rounds of evaluation were made, setting as a threshold of consensus of 60% in the value of the medians, since it has been previously applied in similar tourist studies (Pulido & Navarro, 2014). After the analysis of final results, some attributes of the bibliographic base and the expert proposal were discarded and others were added, consolidating a new being of 50 attributes.

Research instrument

The questionnaire was structured in three blocks of questions. The first block was directed to know the profile of the tourist and included questions on gender, age, educational level, place of residence, companion, stay at destination and travel planning.

The second block was aimed at knowing what security attributes are considered important or vital for tourists to feel safe in a travel destination and what is the assessment of their performance in Quito. For the evaluation of this block, the Likert five-point attitude scale was used, one of the most used in research of perception or tourism experience to denote a balance between extremes and midpoints. The scale for the importance assessment of the attributes was: (1) not important, (2) less important, (3) neutral, (4) important, and (5) very important. The scale for performance appraisal was: (1) terrible, (2) bad, (3) regular, (4) good and (5) excellent, plus the option does not apply.

The third block was constructed to know how the perception of security can change according to the type of exposure or experience, taking as reference the study by Ahmad, Mohd and Toh (2015). In this block two sections were defined to assess importance and perception of security, as well as a section to assess the perception of security in specific sites of visit and a final section to assess Quito compared to other destinations visited by the respondent.

The first section asked the survey respondent to assess how important is to feel secure in different places and circumstances: a) walking in the city during the day, b) walking in the city during the night, c) taking public transportation, d) crossing the streets by pedestrian crossings, (e) orient themself easily in the city, (f) at the accommodation site, and (g) at the places where I is being fed. A 5-point Likert scale was used: from (1) Not important, (2) less important, (3) neutral, (4) important, and (5) very important. This section was also asked to assess how the performance of Quito was, or in other words, how safe the tourist was in Quito with respect to the items previously valued. For this, a Likert scale of 5 points was applied: from (1) very unsafe, (2) unsafe, (3) neutral, (4) safe, and (5) very safe.

The second section asked the respondent to assess the importance given to potential risk groups and the degree of perceived affectation to them. The potential risk groups set out in the study were: (1) Delinquents, (2) Beggars and drunks, (3) Bustling neighbors, (4) Informal sellers, (5) Sex workers. The

5-point Likert scale used to assess to what extent it is important not to be affected by potential risk groups was: (1) not important, (2) less important, (3) neutral, (4) important, and) very important. In contrast, the scale for assessing the extent to which the tourist was affected was: (1) very affected, (2) affected, (3) neutral, (4) less affected, and (5) not affected.

The third section was aimed at assessing tourist safety in the most visited areas of the city. For this purpose, the respondent was asked to assess the perceived security in a set of 13 sites selected from bulletins generated by the Metropolitan Public Tourism Company of Quito, which refer to the sites most visited in the city. The sites subject to evaluation were: Historic Center, La Ronda Street, El Panecillo, Mitad del Mundo, Pululahua Geobotanical Reserve, La Mariscal, Cable Car, Handicraft Market, La Marín, Central Market, Itchimbia Park, Carcelén and Quitumbe Land Terminal, and Mariscal Sucre International Airport. The 5-point Likert scale used for this assessment was: (1) very unsafe, (2) unsafe, (3) neutral, (4) safe, and (5) very safe.

The fourth and final section was structured through two closing questions in which the respondent was asked to mention the safest tourist destination according to their personal experience, and then compare it to Quito giving also a valuation on a graphical scale of 10 points.

The questionnaire was tested in a pilot sample of 30 individuals. As a result, 23 attributes that did not exceed the established threshold (0.35) in the total item correlation test were discarded. In this way, a set of 27 attributes was consolidated for application in the survey. With this procedure, the reliability analysis of the instrument was performed using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a calculated value of 0.94 considered excellent (George & Mallery, 2003).

Sampling technique and data analysis

For the application of the measurement instrument, the most important tourist areas of the city were considered: La Mariscal and the Historical Center; declared "Special Tourist Zones" by the municipal authority. Non-probabilistic sampling was applied for quotas in accommodation establishments and dispersion spaces such as museums, restaurants and others. The sample was divided into two installments (16% La Mariscal and 84% Centro Histórico), calculated from the visitor flows registered in 2016 in the Institutional System of Tourism Indicators of the Tourism Management Body of Quito.

A total of 384 valid questionnaires were retrieved that were applied between April and June 2017. They were processed through the SPSS and EXCEL programs. The analysis of the results was descriptive and bivariate using the Spearman rank correlation coefficient. For the structuring of the IPA matrix, the means of each attribute were matched according to their importance and performance rating to be placed on a Cartesian plane using as the crossing point of the axes the total means of valuation of importance and performance.

Results

Characteristics of the sample

The sample consisted of men (48.7%) and women (51.3%) aged 25-35 (47.7%), under 25 (24.5%) and tourists aged between 46 and 65 (12.4%), as shown in table 1. The study confirms the officially managed data on the average stay in Quito, since the percentages show that the period of stay is from 1 to 15 days. 33% of respondents remain in the city for about 1 to 3 days; 31% from 4 to 7 days and 26% 12 days or more. The tourists surveyed travel mostly in couples or alone, in family groups

or friends, only 8.3% of the survey respondents traveled to Quito in working groups. 75.5% of all respondents travel to Quito on their own account while 24.5% plan their trip through a travel agency. Table 1 presents the socio-demographic variables in greater detail.

Table 1
Socio-demographic variables

Variable	Frecuency	%	Variable	Frecuency	%
Gender			**Place of residence**		
Male	187	48.7	Germany	10	2.6
Female	197	51.3	Argentina	20	5.2
			Australia	21	5.5
Age			Belgium	5	1.3
Under 25	94	24.5	Bolivia	6	1.6
Between 25 & 35	183	47.7	Brazil	6	1.6
Between 36 & 45	48	12.5	Canada	22	5.7
Between 46 & 65	54	14.1	Chile	4	1.0
66 and above	4	1.3	Colombia	30	7.8
			Cuba	2	0.5
Stay at destination			Denmark	5	1.3
1 a 3 days	127	33.1	El Salvador	18	4.7
4 a 7 days	119	31.0	Scotlland	4	1.0
8 a 11 days	35	9.1	Slovakia	2	0.5
12 or more days	103	26.8	Spain	8	2.1
			Estonia	2	0.5
Educational level			France	21	5.5
Primary	2	0.5	Netherlands	20	5.2
High school	54	14.1	England	25	6.5
Bachellor	231	60.2	Irland	6	1.6
Posgraduate	97	25.3	Israel	2	0.5
			Italy	1	0.3
Travel planning			Mexico	9	2.3
By my own	290	75.5	New Zeland	2	0.5
With travel agency	94	24.5	Peru	25	6.5
			Puerto Rico	4	1.0
Companion			Dominican Republic	2	0.5
Family group	48	12.5	Sweden	10	2.6
Group of friends	79	20.6	Switzerland	9	2.3
Work group	32	8.3	Uruguay	1	0.3
Couple	103	26.8	USA	68	17.7
Alone	122	31.8	Venezuela	14	3.6

Influential variables in tourist security

In general terms, the socio-demographic variables studied did not show influence on the perception of tourist security of the people surveyed, except in very few exceptions. The first one was related to age and gender, which showed influence in the perception of tourist security at the lodging and feeding sites, where p values of 0.006 and 0.001 respectively were obtained. The second is related to the affectation perceived by the respondents who planned their trip on their own, in relation to vulnerable groups such as delinquents and sex workers, for which p values of 0.005 and 0.006 respectively were obtained. Finally, the third is related to gender, which showed dependence on the importance given

to the affectation by the vulnerable group of beggars and drunks, for whom the calculated p-value was 0.006.

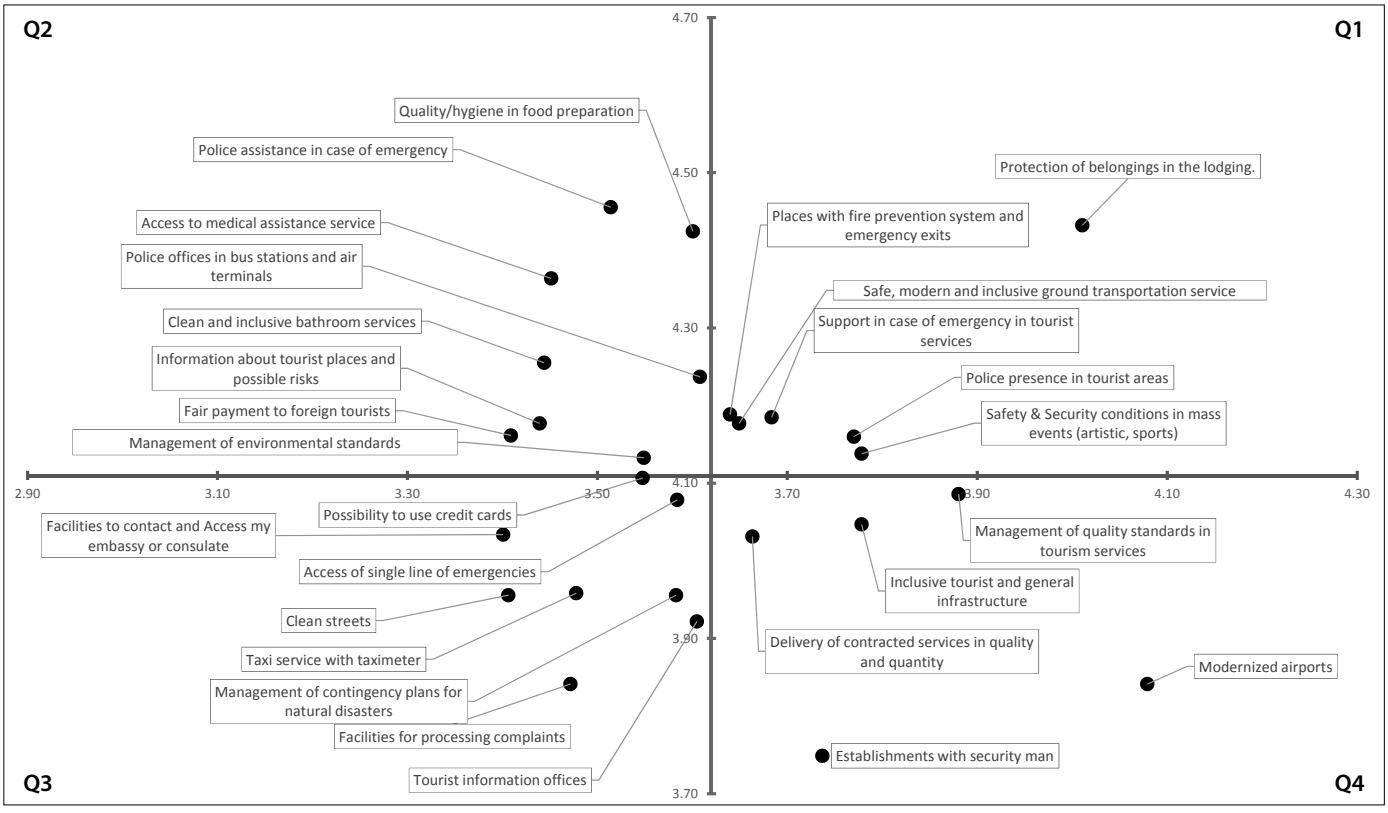
Importance – performance analysis

Tourist safety attributes

The calculated values for the means of importance and total performance correspond to 4.11 and 3.62 respectively, representing the crossing coordinates for the axes of the IPA matrix, from which are generated the quadrants where the importance and performance scores of each tourist safety attribute studied are located. With the overall average score obtained from the 27 attributes, it can be seen that Quito's performance as a safe destination is less than the total importance that tourists give to the group of attributes that would conform a destination of this type. Figure 1 shows the IPA matrix for tourist security in Quito.

Figure 1

IPA matrix for tourism security in Quito



First quadrant "Keep up the good work". In this are those attributes that tourists consider of high importance and with a good performance in Quito. These are: police presence in tourist areas; safe, modern and inclusive ground transportation; sites with fire prevention system and emergency exits; support in case of emergency in tourist services; protection of belongings in the lodging and conditions of security in mass events.

Second quadrant "Concentrate here". This quadrant charts those attributes considered highly important to tourists but which show poor performance. Which is why it is necessary to direct resources and structure strategies to improve them. The attributes in this quadrant are: police offices in land and air terminals, emergency police assistance, access to health care services, quality / hygiene in food preparation, clean and inclusive health services, information about tourist sites and possible risks, fair payment to foreign tourists, handling of environmental standards.

Third quadrant "Low priority". The third quadrant exposes the attributes that have been qualified with low importance and low performance, that is, attributes that do not demand more work since they do not require great attention because of their little influence in the perception of security of the tourist. These are: access to a single emergency line, clean streets, tourist information offices, ease of contact and access to my embassy or consulate, facilities for processing complaints, possibility of using credit cards, taxi service with meter, management of contingency plans for natural disasters.

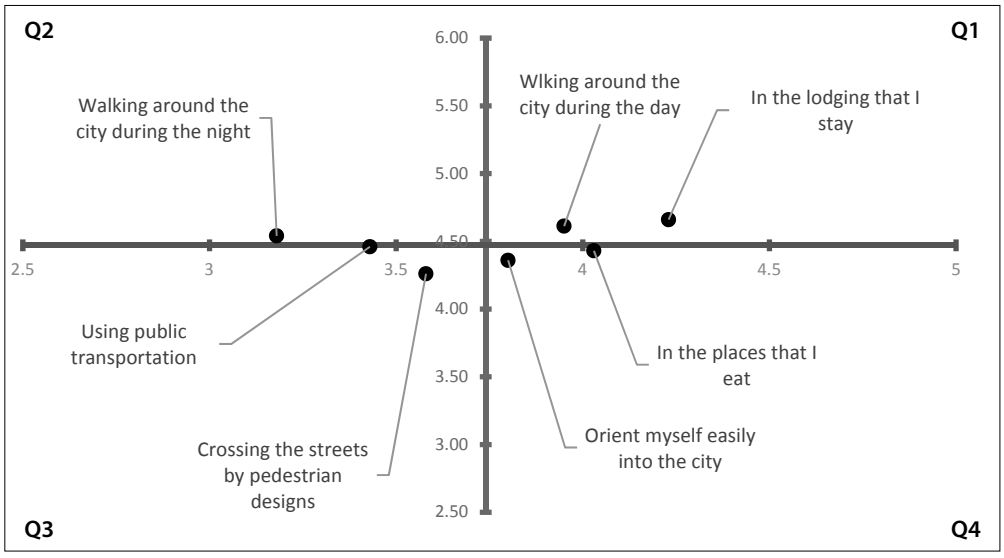
Fourth quadrant "Possible excess". The fourth quadrant groups attributes that have been valued with low importance and high performance. The attributes of this quadrant are: Compliance services contracted in quality and quantity, establishments with guardianship, management of quality standards in tourist services, general infrastructure and inclusive tourism, and modernized airports.

In general, it should be noted that the percentages of non-applicability represent positive percentages in relation to the absence of risk situations experienced.

General environment of the tourist destination Quito

For the analysis of how safe the tourists felt in the general environment offered by Quito, the axes of the IPA matrix intersected with the total mean of the variable that measures: How important is it to feel secure? (4.47 points), and the total average performance of the variable that measures: How safe I felt in Quito? (3.74 points), in both cases, in relation to the 7 items presented to the respondent. Next, figure 2 presents the IPA grid for General Environment and followed by this, the analysis of the quadrants.

Figure 2
IPA matrix for general environment in Quito



In quadrant 1 there is a high importance and high performance in the perception of safety when walking in the city during the day and in the lodging where they are staying. The results showed that 6%

of all respondents felt insecure in the city during the day, while only 1% said they felt insecure in the city's accommodation establishments.

In quadrant 2, there was a high importance but low performance in the perception of safety when walking in the city during the night and when taking public transport. In this regard, 75.7% of the respondents felt neutral or confident, in contrast to 24.3% of tourists who felt very insecure and insecure when walking during the night. It was the case of tourists who did not evaluate the item, which could be a prevention to leave at night or the absence of an activity that will motivate their departure. Regarding the perception of safety when taking public transport, it was observed that 37% of the respondents considered the service to be safe, 36% considered it neutral and 14.06% perceived the service as insecure and very insecure.

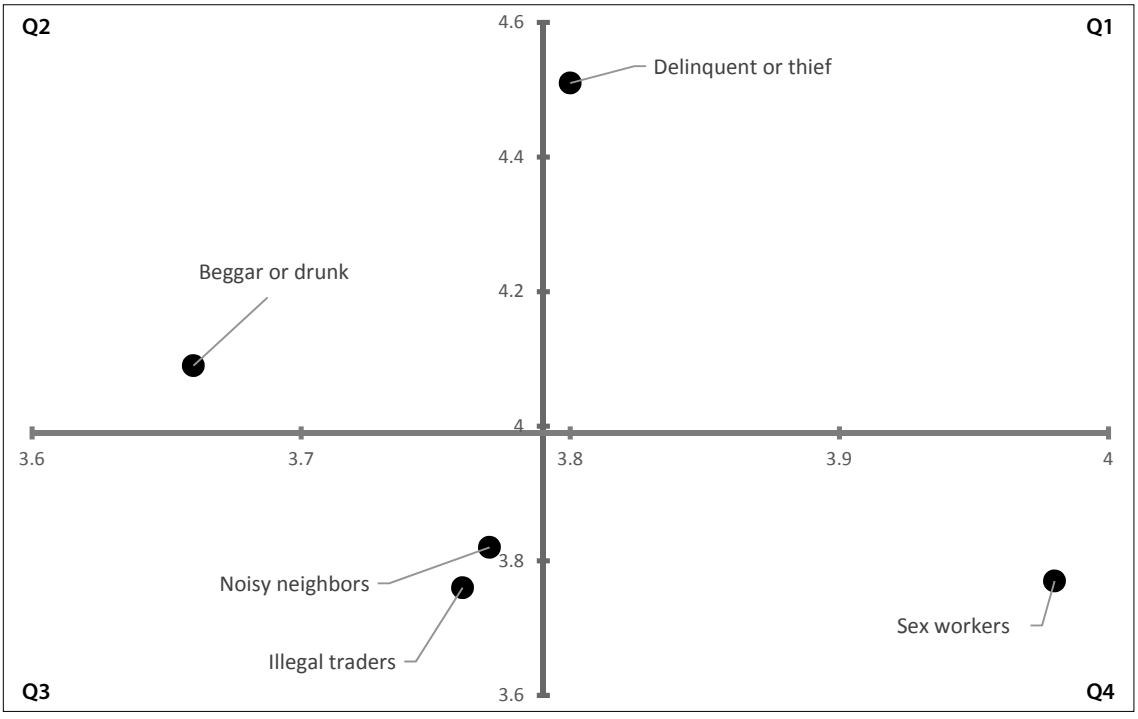
In quadrant 3, there was low importance and low performance in the perception of safety when crossing the streets. In this regard, 44% of respondents considered feeling safe and 34% considered feeling neutral. 8.9% felt very insecure and insecure when crossing the streets of the city.

Finally, in quadrant 4, there was a low importance and a good performance in the perception of safety by being easily oriented by the city and in the places where the tourist feeds.

Analysis of security perception against potential risk groups in Quito

For the analysis of how affected the tourists were with the potential risk groups identified in the city, the axes of the IPA matrix were intersected with the total mean of the importance variable (3.99 points) and the total mean performance (3.79 points). Next, figure 3 presents the IPA matrix for the perception of security against potential risk groups in Quito.

Figure 3
IPA matrix for security perception against potential risk groups in Quito



In quadrant 1 it can be noted that for the tourist it is very important not to be affected by criminals and thieves. In fact, 86% of tourists were not affected by thieves or criminals, for robberies or assaults. However 3% of the tourists were very affected and 10.9% affected by some episode of robbery or assault. Therefore, within the IPA grid the item is in the limit close to the second quadrant.

In quadrant 2 it is found that tourists consider it highly important not to be affected by drunks and beggars. Most of the tourists responded feeling neutral and little affected. 13.24% of the tourists felt very affected and affected.

In quadrant 3 it is found that tourists consider it important not to be affected by bustling neighbors and during their visit in the city they felt neutral in front of this group. As for informal sellers tourists consider it important not to be affected by them, however 12% of tourists were affected and very affected by this group.

Finally in quadrant 4 it is found that 49.7% of tourists surveyed considered it important or neutral not to be affected by the group of sex workers. 45.6% of the tourists surveyed said they did not feel affected, while 28.9% felt neutral towards the group, 17% little affected, 6.5% affected and 1.8% very affected.

Analysis of visited sites

From 14 visit sites considered by the respondents it is confirmed that tourists perceive most sites as "safe", excepting the Mariscal Sucre International Airport, which was rated as very safe. The La Marín sector was designated as neither safe nor unsafe. As a general rule, it is found that both Special Tourist Zones "Historic Center and La Mariscal" are considered safe areas. Table 2 shows the assessment given by the tourists surveyed as well as the percentage of those who stated that they visited each site.

Table 2
Valuation of visited sites

Visited sites	N° of visits	%	Neither safe nor unsafe	Safe	Very safe
Centro Histórico	248	64.58		4	
La Ronda	160	41.67		4	
El Panecillo	91	23.70		4	
Mitad del Mundo	148	38.54		4	
Reserva Geobotánica Pululahua	65	16.93		4	
La Mariscal (Plaza Foch)	146	38.02		4	
Teleférico	76	19.79		4	
Mercado Artesanal (La Mariscal)	109	28.39		4	
La Marín	69	17.97	3		
Mercado Central	100	26.04		4	
Parque Itchimbia	65	16.93		4	
Terminal terrestre Carcelén	110	28.65		4	
Terminal terrestre Quitumbe	111	28.91		4	
Aeropuerto Internacional Mariscal Sucre	188	48.96			5

Quito's tourist security in relation to other destinations

From a total of 160 responses received to the last question, where tourists were asked to mention the safest destination they have visited and to rate Quito against them on a ten-point scale, a high variety of opinions were found, with 71 destinations considered safer than Quito. Faced with these, Quito received on average 6.4 points. However, in the vast variety of destinations perceived as safer, no greater

coincidence of opinion was observed, noting that the most cited destination (Cuenca) accounted for only 10% of the opinions. It was also found that after Cuenca, the destinations most commonly designated are Stockholm and Sydney.

Focusing the analysis by regions, it was found that at the national level the destinations considered safer than Quito are Cuenca, Guayaquil and Baños; while at the Latin American level stand out: Bogotá, Salento, Lima, Cusco, Machu Pichu, Argentina, Santiago de Chile, La Paz and Buzios. At the North American level emerge: Toronto, Calgary, Vancouver, Miami and New York. In the European continent stand out: Stockholm, Berlin, Munich, Dublin, Brussels, London, Barcelona, Amsterdam, Oslo and Zurich; while in Asia blunt: Dubai, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Singapore and Kyoto. Finally in Oceania, highlight Sydney, Perth, Brisbane, Melbourne and Wellington. Table 3 presents this distribution in detail.

Table 3
Destinations considered safer than Quito

Position	Safe destinations referred	Frecuency
1	Cuenca	16
2	Estockholm	8
3	Sidney	7
4	Bogotá, London, New York, Tokyo	5
5	Ámsterdam, Baños, United States of America, Ft. Lauderdale, Miami, Santiago de Chile	4
6	Barcelona, Berlin, Galapagos, Havana, Lima, Melbourne, Mexico	3
7	Aruba, Brazil, Buzios, Cuba, Dublín, Hong Kong, La Paz, Madrid, Moscu, Oslo, San Juan de Puerto Rico, Singapore, Toronto, Vancouver	2
8	Argentina, Ashenlle, Brisbane, Brugges, Brussels, Buenos Aires, Chile, Copenhaguen, Cordoba, Costa Rica, Cuzco, Dubai, Spain, France, Frederick, Guayaquil, Netherlands, Innsbruck, Kyoto, Como Lake, Munich, Panama, Paris, Perth, Portugal, Dominican Republic, Reykjavik, Rome, Salento, San Francisco, Seattle, Sweden, Tel Aviv, Trinidad & Tobago, Umea, Venice, Vienna, Wellington, Zurich.	1

Conclusions and implications

This study aimed to assess the tourist safety in Quito from the perception of demand through the matrix of performance importance analysis. In the process, a set of 27 tourist safety attributes relevant to the tourist were identified and validated through the expert judgment and the survey technique, framed in ten dimensions recognized in the specialized literature. In this context, the attributes are fully applicable for a city like Quito that has the characteristics of an urban destination whose main products are framed in the lines of cultural and heritage tourism; meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions. The set of safety attributes tested in Quito could serve as inputs for similar studies in other cities without ruling out other types of destinations.

In this study, assessment of tourism security is addressed from five perspectives: attributes, general environment of the destination, risk groups, visited sites and comparative destinations, which broadens the analysis framework of the tourist security in urban destinations. It is particularly important noting that destination management in cities need a systemic vision since in these the tourist space fuses with the space of the residents. In this sense, perception of security is subject to more aspects than those that are under the control of the tourism industry. In fact, perception varies according to the urban spaces tourists access and can be influenced by human groups with which they may eventually perceive

greater risk, without forgetting that it is even conditioned by previous experience in other destinations considered safer. These elements considered in this study in a grouped way, aim to contribute to research of tourist safety in other urban contexts.

The matrix is a mechanism for the application of the theory of disconfirmation of expectations. That is why the importance given to the attributes of safety versus the perception of the performance of the city in such attributes, have been the basis of this research in the objective of identifying gaps between the expectations of the tourists and what the city offers in terms of security. From this, it can be affirmed that the security for the tourist in Quito is shown ambivalent, that is to say above the expectations in some attributes and below of the same ones in others. In this context, it is found that the tourist perceives that the city of Quito lives up to its expectations regarding police presence in tourist areas, ground transportation service, sites with fire prevention system and emergency exits, support in case of emergency in the tourist services, protection of belongings in the lodging and conditions of security in massive events. On the contrary, it considers that the city of Quito is below expectations in police offices in land and air terminals, emergency police assistance, access to health care services, quality / hygiene in food preparation, services clean and inclusive sanitation, information on tourist sites and possible risks, fair collection of foreign tourists, and environmental standards management.

The interpretation of the IPA matrix shows that the areas where greater efforts should be invested from the destination management spaces are precisely those where expectations have not been exceeded. It is important to take into account that the low value of importance or performance of some attributes may be due to the fact that some of the tourists surveyed did not have an experience that made them feel insecure and appreciate such an attribute as can be the case of medical services or inclusive tourism infrastructure. The study reveals that for tourists visiting Quito the general security environment is in line with expectations when it comes to walking in the city during the day or staying in the accommodation. On the contrary the expectations of safety are not satisfied when walking in the city during the night and when taking the public transport.

On the other hand the study highlights the importance given by tourists to the presence of two groups of potential risk to their safety: criminals and thieves, and drunks and beggars. In this regard, it should be noted that, although in general terms the perception of affectation manifested by tourists was low, there were people who felt affected by criminals and thieves (13.9%) and drunks and beggars (13.24%), which suggests actions that contribute to decrease this perception, because they are not disregardable percentages. The same recommendation is poured for the case of street vendors since despite being a minor aspect for the tourist, if it was perceived affectation in 12% of the respondents.

The study indicates that 13 of the 14 visit sites analyzed were considered safe and only the sector of La Marín requires an improvement of the security. Finally, this research provides important information about Quito's position vis-a-vis other destinations in the field of tourism security, placing it below 71 options with an average score of 6.7 out of 10, which confirms the need for improvement in attributes proposed in this study.

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