



PERCEPTION OF THE CITY OF MONTERÍA FROM AN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract- *The purpose of this work was to identify the perception that the international tourist has of the municipality of Monteria - Cordoba - Colombia. For this purpose, a methodology with a mixed approach is carried out, a descriptive type of research, using non-probabilistic sampling as a demographic selection technique, where a certain set of individuals that are considered representative for the characterization of an entire population are studied. For the research, a demographic selection of foreigners visiting the city of Monteria is carried out, therefore, the probability is unknown since it does not have the same opportunities to select the sample with the judgment or expert selection, whose method is based on choosing the respondents guided by the experience of the expert researcher in the field. The development of the research is composed of 3 parts. First, an interview is conducted with experts in the area of tourism in the city of Monteria, in order to later analyze what was explained by the participants. Secondly, an interview is conducted with foreign tourists in order to know their perception of tourism during their stay in the city of Monteria. Finally, a survey model is carried out for the hotel sector with the intention of knowing the flow of visitors in the city.*

Keywords- *bilingualism, hotels, perception, tourism agents*

INTRODUCTION

The analysis of tourism can be considered recent, since the trend of "pleasure travel" began to be studied shortly before the beginning of World War I, where tourism is understood as the set of processes, especially economic, of influx, permanence and return of a tourist in a given municipality, state or country (Schullern zu Schrattenhofen, 1911). Pleasure travel is understood as travel outside the place of residence for personal reasons, which may arise from the search for rest or relaxation due to stress or unexpected calamities, fun by getting out of the comfort zone and the desire to get to know a new place. Pleasure trips are usually prepared prior to the trip, that is, having a plan of everything that will be done, however, they can also arise spontaneously, as in the case of people who travel on business, but decide to stay and sightsee in the area where they are or those who decide to take a trip in their free time.

This first approach towards the recognition of tourism can be seen by analyzing the "History of the Titanic", since May 1911, the announcement and authorization of this majestic Olympic Class Cruise Ship generated great expectation around the world, attracting millionaire businessmen as members of royalty from France, Germany and Ireland, in addition, there were upper-middle class passengers from the United States, Canada, Argentina and Egypt. This meant a great benefit for Southampton, England to sustain the maiden voyage on April 10, 1912, since all the hotels, restaurants and businesses around the event received great profits from the arrival of the more than two thousand future passengers, and likewise creating an image that to this day identifies them internationally as an attractive and historic place for maritime tourism.



Subsequently, during the period known as "the happy twenties" (1919 to 1939) there was a period of economic boom due to the increase in per capita income that allowed individuals to travel to other places in search of leisure, culture, family relations, among others. It is then when Arthur Bormann defines tourism as the set of trips made for pleasure or for commercial reasons where the absence of the habitual residence is temporary (Bormann, 1933).

Continuously, in 1965 the International Congress of Sociology was held in Mexico, in which a new approach was taken to define tourism, stating that it is the set of human interactions, such as displacements and temporary stays, entertainment, among others, with purposes as diverse as human desires are multiple and encompassing a varied range of motivations (Cutíño, 2002). Thus, the motivations reported range from the search to get out of a stressful situation, spend more time with their loved ones, live out of the ordinary experiences (ecotourism, cultural tourism, among others), to the simple interest of getting out of the routine in a sudden way. As mentioned above, this new definition was given in Mexico, which is not surprising, since the country has been developing a great participation in international tourism, being the city of Cancun the most recognized Mexican tourist destination worldwide, achieving the image of the most exclusive natural spa in the Caribbean for millions of families, couples, influencers or even solo adventurers. Subsequently, in 1985, the traditional definition of tourism was questioned to include all movements of people without distinguishing their motivations, leading to the understanding at the 1994 International Conference on Tourism and Travel Statistics that tourism are those activities carried out by people during their trips to places other than their usual environment, for a consecutive period of time of less than one year, for leisure, business and other purposes (World Tourism Organization, 1994). Leisure travel is understood as interest in visiting places for cultural, natural or entertainment recognition, and business travel is understood as investments, partners and training in a territory other than the home country.

The economic growth of a nation depends on various sectors, one of them being tourism, which is a component that can have a very positive effect on countries. This means that, if tourism increases, the monetary expenditure of tourists is higher, which generates a growth in the country's GDP, resulting in a reaction directly proportional to such growth (Webster &, 2014).

After the pandemic caused by covid-19, tourism was one of the most affected sectors at the economic level, which is why the governmental entities of the different countries of the world have sought strategies to promote tourism in their nations. As well as, to promote those regions where their main economic activity was the tourism sector and to reactivate little by little the entrance and exit of tourists around the world.

Continuing with the international context, the UNWTO revealed that by the year 2022 there will be more than 900 million international trips, evidencing an increase in the number of international tourists worldwide, double that of 2021, but less than in 2019. Due to the growth, UNWTO forecasts a strong demand for domestic and regional travel that will continue to drive the importance of the tourism sector in international stability (UNWTO, 2023).

Tourism in Colombia

In 1931 the Colombian Congress studied the possible benefits of encouraging tourism in the country and did so through Law 86 of that year, in which it decreed in Article 1 "The official tourism service is created and the Government is empowered to establish the respective office, under one of the Ministry of the Office..." (Ministry of Justice and Law, 1931).

In the decade of the 50's tourism took value in Colombia creating entities of the tourism sector in the country. The first was the Colombian Association of Travel and Tourism Agencies (ANATO), which since 1949 began its purpose of sustaining travel agencies as a business fabric in the country's economy, guaranteeing the quality of services to tourists (Colombia.co, 1949). In 1954, the Colombian Hotel Association (ACOTEL) was created with the objective of motivating the strengthening of the hotel sector in the country. Later, it would become representative in international tourism, becoming the Hotel and Tourism Association of Colombia (COTELCO) in 1971 (Hosteltur, 1971). In 1957, under Decree 272, the creation of Empresa Colombiana de Turismo S.A. was established, which seeks to relate to the tourism industry by promoting collaboration between



the country's tourism and transportation agencies (La junta militar de gobierno de la República de Colombia, 1957).

Years later, in 1984, the interest in promoting tourism was reflected in two important events in the history of Colombian tourism. On the one hand, the first Terminal Terrestre de Bogotá began operations in order to manage bus and cab service at the interprovincial, interdepartmental and international level, creating relations with countries such as Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Venezuela and Brazil with the city of Bogotá (Terminal de Transporte S.A., 1984). On the other hand, that same year Colombia made the decision to close the Gorgona Island Prison in order to put aside the history of acts against humanity in favor of human rights (Radio Nacional de Colombia, 1984). Gorgona National Natural Park was immediately established as one of the main destinations for ecotourism in the country.

Subsequently, the Colombian government became more interested in tourism, and in 1996, Law 300 was enacted, which issued the general tourism law and recognized its importance in Article 1: "Tourism is an essential industry for the development of the country and especially of the different territorial entities, regions, provinces, and fulfills a social function" (Congress of Colombia, 1997).

Law 300 of 1996 also gave rise to the creation of the Vice Ministry of Tourism, however, it was formalized in Decree 2785 of 2006 where it is attached to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (MINCIT) with the purpose of directing tourism policy and what derives from it to encourage tourism, turning the sector into a more competitive and sustainable one (Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, 2006).

With the aforementioned law it is decreed to constitute the Tourism Promotion Fund established in Article 42 implemented to control the resources from the Parafiscal Contribution for tourism promotion purposes. Changing its name later as National Tourism Fund (FONTUR) since 2012 and would be guided by the rules imposed by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (Fontur Colombia, 2012).

Continuously in the same year, Article 7 of Law 1558 created the Superior Council of Tourism as the entity among state entities in charge of directing the different projects hand in hand with the tourism policy defined by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism whose organization is also coordinated by the aforementioned Council (MINCIT, 2012).

In sequence with the defined organizations and laws, in the following years there were different campaigns led by entities in charge of advertising Colombia as a destination and promoting tourism. Among them "Pro Colombia", an organization that encourages Tourism, Foreign Investment, non-mining energy exports and preservation of the country's image. Which in 2014 stated the results of tourism promotion, among them: "Participation in 33 international tourism fairs, tourism entrepreneurs held more than 13 thousand business appointments, 75 familiarization trips with 464 companies that impacted 16 regions of the country with entrepreneurs coming from 48 countries, 40 press trips with 102 international media that yielded 2,422 publications in 23 countries..." (ProColombia, 2014).

By 2021 the Pro Colombia entity strengthens its alliance with WWF Colombia (World Wildlife Fund) through a memorandum whose interest is that the country becomes an international benchmark of sustainability through the offer of sustainable tourism and the preservation of the culture and the biodiverse heritage that characterizes the country (WWF Colombia, 2022).

According to Law 388 of 1997, all municipal and district territories in the country must have a set of planned political-administrative actions to efficiently guide the development and use of space in harmony with the environment and cultural traditions. Therefore, these plans must project sectors such as: infrastructure, tourist plant, inventory of natural attractions, among others, in order to determine whether the territory has a tourist vocation.

Specifically, the department of Córdoba has a tourism development plan that "defines the actions necessary to take advantage of tourism as a means of development for the department" (Gobernación de Córdoba, 2012). Within its formulation there are several objectives, such as: eliminating underdevelopment conditions through tourism, creating an attractive environment for investors, managing major works and development programs before the national government,



generating stable employment linked to tourism, linking agricultural activity to the tourism sector as part of its development, among others.

Within the aforementioned Tourism Development Plan of Córdoba (2012-2021), the actions to be handled are postulated, including: Monteria hospitable and orderly city, support local travel agencies, enhance the Los Garzones airport, strengthen the quality of tourist accommodations in Monteria, promote a heritage conservation plan for the historic center of Monteria, improve land, air and maritime infrastructure, create more competitive products with the use of natural and cultural values, and prioritize the environmental and business sustainability of tourism in the destination (Gobernación de Córdoba, 2012).

Finally, in 2021 the Colombian Association of Travel and Tourism Agencies (ANATO) in the section "National Destinations" highlighted Monteria for positioning itself as the first tourist destination thanks to projects that develop the orange economy and tourism reactivation. In response, local governmental entities emphasized their interest in promoting tourism in the city, pointing out their proposals within their current Development Plan, so that Monteria is seen as a tourist destination and not as an intermediate point for those who go to other areas (Mayor's Office of Monteria, 2021).

THEORETICAL REFERENCES

Background

Departmental Level

Among the first antecedents we find the thesis carried out by María A. Díaz in July 2017 (Díaz et al., 2017) whose objective is to develop a strategic plan for Córdoba, seeking alternatives that improve the social economy of the department with new forms of income generation and stability of its inhabitants. This work evidences problems such as the concentration of the department in business tourism and accommodation service without high standard quality, in addition to environmental problems caused by electrification and water treatment problems. The research first uses an AMOFHIT analysis, with the purpose of identifying strategies, strengths and weaknesses of certain fundamental areas of the Department and its Government, such as: Administration, infrastructure, human resources, among others. Consequently, it makes use of Porter's diamond methodology to evaluate dimensions such as demand conditions, related and auxiliary sectors, factor conditions, and business strategies and rivalries, as well as to measure the region's competitiveness and evidence of clusters. As conclusions, he stated that, in spite of having a great biodiversity, the department of Córdoba has not yet managed to position itself as a reference for foreign trade in the national and international tourism sector, therefore, taking advantage of the available resources of the area, he proposes to have a port, develop a tourism platform, reduce illiteracy rates, develop infrastructure and guarantee the peace agreements.

Continuing with the departmental context, there is the SWOT Analysis carried out by Marlen Ruiz in 2017, with the purpose of gathering all the necessary aspects to be able to outline a good tourist offer with positive results duly planned on the Department of Córdoba. Said scheme, applied on the territory and population of Monteria as a sample, allows explaining in detail the objectives, needs, keys and necessary conditions to implement a strategic tourism plan for Monteria and Córdoba, among the objectives it raises: to meet the needs of the local government and the general public, to promote the products and experiences developed and to project a favorable image of the project. As a conclusion, it stipulates that reliable information must be promoted in order to make the right decisions, define the tourism profile of the projects in order to have the right offer for the studied demand, define the economic potential of Monteria in terms of "City Marketing", and finally, visualize the feasibility and sustainability of the plan (Ruiz, 2017).

Municipal Level

Within the municipal context of Monteria, in the first place, the research conducted by Rosana Garnica (Galvis, 2013) analyzes from a geographical point of view the distribution of facilities and tourist attractions in Monteria. Her area of study is the capital of the department of Córdoba which concentrates a little more than 300,000 inhabitants in its urban area, on the other hand, the methodology used is inductive and descriptive type with a mixed approach where use was made of



spatial analysis according to Thiessen polygons, likewise, the population sample was of 99 facilities (hotels, restaurants, banks, among others). As a result, 56 hotels were identified, such as the Santorini Soft and the Florida Sinú. 26 restaurants were identified that show the cultural diversity of the gastronomy of the Colombian Caribbean and the Sinú symbol; however, there are also international chains that mark the opening towards globalization, Finally, the commercial centers with more urban influence were identified, such as the Alamedas del Sinú and Plaza de la Castellana, in addition, the slow development of recreational and sports planning is evidenced, the most outstanding being the Jaraguay Clubs and more recent sites such as the Ronda del Sinú. As a conclusion, Monteria is an emerging tourism process despite the lack of development and planning plans for the sector, it continues to present endowments and recovery of sites of interest that place the city in an important role as a tourist destination, but likewise it is still necessary to design tourism planning instruments in order to promote favorable conditions for social, environmental and economic momentum.

Finally, there is the work done by Adriana Sanchez (Sanchez, 2017) about the design of a cultural tourism product in the urban area of Monteria, the development of the research is descriptive and the proposed methodology is SECTUR. that said, the research was conducted through surveys directed to 320 tourists, 77 restaurants and 38 hotels. Finally, Monteria requires the implementation of a tourism product as soon as possible, since it is in a period of growth and must take advantage of the resources it has and find an identity for the population and heritage conservation; As recommendations, public and private entities should review the way of counting the number of tourists entering the city, start a training process for tourist guides, improve the supply of jobs in the tourism sector and adapt the existing attractions, create more attractions and at the same time improve the recreation places by investing in benefits and facilities for any person or company that participates in the project.

According to William James (1884), human perception is "the function by which information about the external world is given to us". In other words, James understood perception as the process by which human beings obtain information about the environment through the senses.

For James, perception is not a simple grasping of sensory stimuli, but involves an active interpretation of the information received. Therefore, perception depends not only on sensory information, but also on previous experience, attention, expectations and other psychological and cognitive factors (James, 1945).

According to Jerome Bruner (1956), human perception is an active process of selection, organization and interpretation of environmental stimuli according to the individual's previous schemas. Bruner argues that perception is a constructive and subjective function, in which the individual does not simply receive information from the environment, but processes and interprets it according to his or her expectations and previous experiences.

In modern psychology, it is considered that interaction with the environment is not possible without perception, a constant flow of sensory information. Perception is the set of processes and activities that are related to the stimulation that reaches our senses, through which we obtain information about our environment, our actions and our internal states. This definition, based on the existence of learning, considers perception as a process consisting of three phases: selection, interpretation and correction of sensations, resulting in a mental image that is formed with the help of experience and individual needs (University of Murcia, 2005).

Perceptions and even definitions of tourism are very varied, although the existing academic literature agrees on one constant: tourism is the movement of people from one place to another and what it seeks is the spillover or expenditure derived from it, this leads to understand the economic aspect as the primary motivation for the practice of this activity, although it is not the only one.

In this context, the commonly used phrase "cobbler to your shoes" is mentioned in relation to tourism, which highlights the disadvantage of professionals in the sector compared to other areas such as medicine, biology or nursing. In these latter areas, it is necessary to have specific training to practice, but in tourism, anyone can develop the activity for profit, which gives rise to different



perceptions on the part of the participants. Therefore, tourism can be analyzed from two perspectives: that of the entrepreneur or direct beneficiary, and that of the collective in general, including neighbors, owners, hotels and communities where tourist centers are located, among others.

Consequently, many entrepreneurs see tourism only as a way to obtain personal profits without considering the well-being of the community where the tourism activity takes place. In contrast, community-based tourism seeks to benefit the participating population, not only in economic terms, but also through training, inclusion and good living (Alcívar, 2018).

A tourist is a person who has the objective of going to a destination territory different from the usual one, with a maximum stay of one year, for the purpose of fun, relaxation, investment or other motivations, provided that his stay includes an overnight stay, otherwise, he is also considered a tourist as long as he has carried out tourism activities during the day (UNWTO, 2008).

According to UNWTO (2008) tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon that involves the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal, professional or business reasons. These people are called travelers (who may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or non-residents) and tourism encompasses their activities, some of which involve tourism expenditure.

"Tourism is the totality of the relations and phenomena produced by the travel and stay of persons away from their place of domicile, in so far as such travel and stay are not motivated by gainful activity" (Hunziker & Krapf, 1942).

The Political Constitution of Colombia of 1991, firstly, in its article 52, distinguishes sports and other recreational and competitive activities as benefits for the integral formation of the human being, and recognizes and promotes the right to use free time for the realization and practice of such activities of the Colombian society. In this context, tourism can be considered part of the recreational activities which facilitates the guarantee of this right throughout the territory, both national and international.

Law 60 of 1968, established incentives for the tourism industry, promoting its protection as a "source of foreign exchange and national work", seeking the creation, restoration and improvement of national tourism resources. It also stipulates that the National Tourism Corporation in Colombia will have the following functions: to request the government to declare as national tourist resources those urban or rural areas to be developed under special plans, to coordinate and regulate the urban development of such areas, and to expropriate, if and when necessary in accordance with the regulatory law, any urban or rural area declared as a national tourist resource. Law 32 of 1990, this regulates the exercise of the profession of travel agent, defining it as a businessman who exercises in the tourism economy a profession that includes intellectual and technical services as well as industrial, commercial and mandate activities; therefore the activity is recognized as a profession of higher education whose exercise in the country is authorized and covered by this law, and in which activities can be developed such as: The provision of tourism services typical of travel and tourism agencies, Directing and conducting research aimed at increasing tourism activity, providing advice to companies that develop tourism activities, Exercising teaching and collaborating in scientific research in higher education, among others.

Law 300 of 1996, "General Law of Tourism", this law addresses the importance, principles, conformation, planning, promotion and market discipline for the tourism sector. It mainly defines tourism as an essential industry for the development of the country and especially of the different territorial entities and fulfills a social function, for which reason, the State will give it special protection due to its importance for national development. Next, it refers to other points such as the classification of tourism, tourism promotion and the international tourism corporation, as well as tax incentives for the promotion of tourism, authorization for tourist tolls, rights and obligations of tourist users, control and sanctions to tourist service providers, including the tourism police, hotel establishments, travel agencies, gastronomic establishments, bars and similar, among other relevant points for the maintenance and evolution of tourism throughout the Colombian territory.



Conpes Document 3397 of 2005, this document deals with the Tourism Sector Policy, proposing several competitive strategies related to the recovery and sustainability of the tourism sector in order to position it as one of the most important within the national economy. It considers that in order to consolidate a "new tourism development model", six major strategies should be focused on: Institutional strengthening necessary for the development of the activity, Improvement of safety conditions for travelers, Establishment of an aggressive and sustained promotion and marketing campaign, Preparation of the tourism offer, Training of human resources and tourism awareness, Consolidation of a tourism information system that allows the formulation of government policies and the use of information and communication technologies.

Law 1558 of 2012, this Law highlighted the importance and principles of the national tourism activity, in the same way it stated how the competitiveness of the tourism sector should be organized and promoted through the creation, protection and use of the country's tourist attractions, prioritizing sustainable development and the joint participation of the public and private sectors.

Law 1955 of 2019, by which the National Development Plan 2018-2022 "Pact for Colombia, Pact for Equity" is issued, which seeks to lay the foundations of legality and entrepreneurship that allow equal opportunities for all Colombians. Said National Development Plan is composed of public policies called "Covenants", among which three structural covenants are distinguished: Legality, for the protection of individual freedoms and guarantee of human rights; Entrepreneurship, to expand opportunities for Colombians, formalize work and strengthen companies; and Equity, in the search for equal opportunities through a modern social policy and achieve social and productive inclusion.

Law 2068 of 2020 "General Law of Tourism", which contemplates provisions that strengthen cultural tourism, in the first instance articulates its purpose which is to promote sustainability and establish measures to conserve, protect and take advantage of tourist destinations and attractions in Colombia. It also seeks to strengthen the formality and competitiveness of the tourism sector and promote the recovery of the industry through the implementation of incentives, improvements in quality and the adoption of actions to promote transformation and generate opportunities in the sector.

METHODOLOGY

A mixed approach is used, which consists of the collection, analysis, integration and discussion of quantitative and qualitative data, to obtain a more complete picture of the phenomenon in a pure or adapted form under the costs of the research (Hernández Sampieri, 2014). Individually, quantitative data are that closed or statistical information for the exhaustive explanation and demonstration of certain behaviors in an objective and controlled way. On the other hand, qualitative data are open information obtained through the observation of the qualities of a phenomenon, in a flexible and recursive way, starting from small populations and adopting a wide range of methods for the use of materials (Cedeño Viteri, 2012).

The research is descriptive because it is desired to acquire information through data collection and interviews to experts in the area of tourism in the municipality of Monteria, in such a way that a recognition of the image that the international tourist has of the city is achieved and then the data obtained are analyzed by statistical methods.

Non-probabilistic sampling by judgment or expert selection is used. Non-probabilistic sampling is a demographic selection technique in which a certain set of individuals considered representative for the characterization of an entire population are studied. While the judgment or expert selection is that non-probabilistic sampling method that is based on the knowledge, judgment or experience of the researcher to select the appropriate elements or individuals of the sample (Parra Velazco, 2017). For the research, a demographic selection of foreigners visiting the city of Monteria is made, therefore, the probability is unknown because it does not have the same opportunities to select the sample with the judgment or expert selection, whose method is based on choosing respondents guided by the experience of the expert researcher in the field.



The population selected for the research is composed of experts in the area of tourism, comprising a total of three (3). Likewise, foreign tourists are randomly located in the city of Monteria, reaching a total of three (3) interviews, each one from different countries. Finally, a model survey was conducted for the hotel sector in the city of Monteria, with the participation of six (6) of them, represented by managers, reservation chiefs or operational administrators.

The development of the research is composed of 3 parts. First, an interview is conducted with experts in the area of tourism in the city of Monteria, and then an analysis is made of what was explained by the participants. Secondly, an interview is conducted with foreign tourists in order to know their perception of tourism during their stay in the city of Monteria. Finally, a survey model is carried out for the hotel sector with the intention of knowing the flow of visitors in the city.

For the development of the research, information was obtained through interviews with experts on regional and national tourism, with the aim of highlighting the current reality of tourism in the municipality and propose strategies that bring together all the strengths recognized to solve the weaknesses exposed by these experts; below is the analysis of the testimonies provided by the interviewees:

According to Luis Puche, former director of the tourism office in Monteria in the period from September 2021 to December 2022, states that tourism in Cordoba and Monterita is sadly incipient and we do not have an established tourism product. Among the four components of tourism are: in the first place, the superstructure which are the guilds in charge of reinforcing tourism, in the case of the department of Córdoba, the institutions are deficient. Secondly, the tourist plant made up of hotels, restaurants, bars, tour operators, transporters and the few tourist guides present problems because they are not highly competitive. Third, the transportation infrastructure for passengers arriving in the city consists of the Los Garzones airport and the Monterita transportation terminal, among other public transportation services, which have tourist activity; however, Montería is considered a transit city, meaning that passengers arrive to go to places around the city, such as the beaches near the city. In fourth place, there are the tourist attractions that are the sites that are in a territory to offer to visitors, in the capital of Cordoba are not reached to put together tourist packages where the tourist can be entertained for a whole day. For all this, it is necessary to design, execute, potentiate and value the resources of the city, such as: the Sinú river, the cultural center "Guillermo Valencia Salgado" and some sites of interest in the rural area.

According to Ernesto Valdez, current coordinator of the tourism office in Monteria in 2023, one of the most outstanding problems is the disintegration between agents belonging to the tourism sector, therefore, the union must be strengthened to sell the city, since it has a potential that can be exploited, the main one would be cultural tourism and under that approach create tour packages focused on gastronomy, dance, music and rural sector that characterizes the municipality of Monteria. From there, strengthen the image of the city to give it better visibility. In addition, he notes that the lack of continuity in the projects focused on tourism and the continuous rotation of people in that position affect the development of the strategies that previously the administration or the person in charge of the office had initiated to its development.

According to Juan Flórez, current tourism liaison between Córdoba and Sucre, explains that the city is not recognized nationally as a tourist city, because it is not being sold as such but as a place to do business and investments. Consequently, the tourism that is practiced in the city occurs spontaneously when the visitor arrives in Monteria as a city of passage and finds tourist attractions in the area, creating an interest in knowing them. Even so, there is a need to strengthen the attractions of the city and to achieve this, both the private and public sectors must join forces to create a much more advanced infrastructure and reach the target markets and create visibility of the city nationally and internationally.

Three interviews were conducted with randomly selected foreign tourists in different sectors of the city in order to know the reason for their visit and their thoughts about the municipality of Monteria. The following is the perception of three of them, classified by their country of origin.

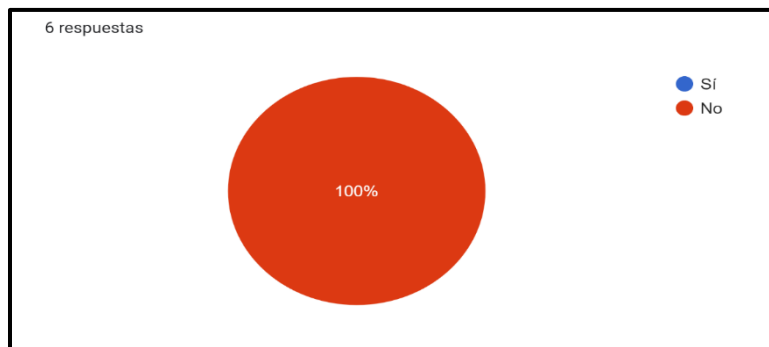
The Australian tourist said that the reason for her trip to the city of Monteria is because she has relatives there and her stay would last 30 days, it is for this reason that she has visited the city



more than five times, she also said she would visit Monteria again during the vacation season to reconnect with her family and additionally perform recreational activities such as holiday dance classes that allow her to enjoy even more her stay in the city.

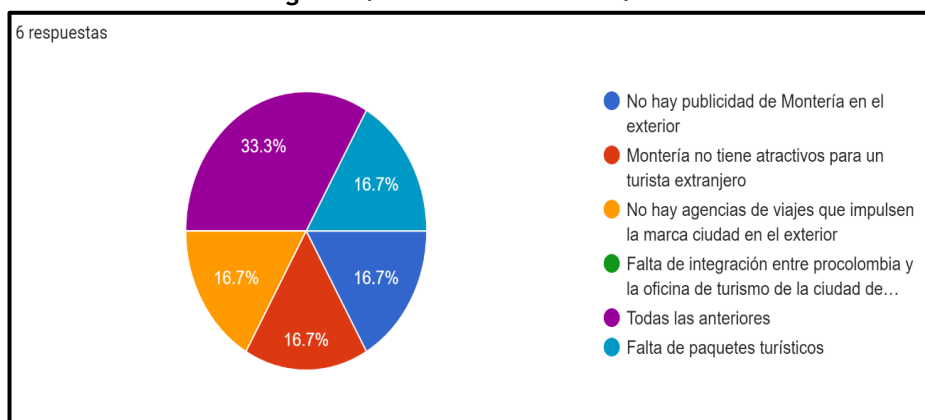
The tourist of Belgian origin indicated that his stay in the city of Monteria is due exclusively for reasons of work in the trade sector, he explained that he takes advantage of the festivities with high demand of participants in different cities and countries to take his point of sale of food and thus has a high flow of buyers, so he took into account the Livestock Fair 2023 to try a new sector, because he had never visited the city, thus completing his stay a total of 7 days. In addition, he showed his interest in returning to Monteria as a tourist to get to know the recognized tourist sites. The foreign tourist explained that his reason for visiting Monteria from South Korea is caused by tourism, his interest in learning about new cities and cultures was his main motivation, he had also received recommendations from Colombian friends specifically Monterianos he had met in his country. This being his first visit to the city of Monteria, his stay was for a total of 9 days, and he explained that he would visit Monteria again to reconnect with friends he had made during his stay. With the results obtained during the study on the perception from an international tourism approach in the city of Monteria, the data tabulation was carried out. A graph is obtained from the whole survey to observe the tendency of the answers obtained to later give a conclusion of the results.

Figure 1. Duly supported by your experience, do you believe that international tourists coming to Monteria recognize it as a tourist city?



The graph shows that 100% of the respondents concluded that foreign tourists who come to Monteria do not recognize it as a tourist city.

Figure 2. If the answer is no:

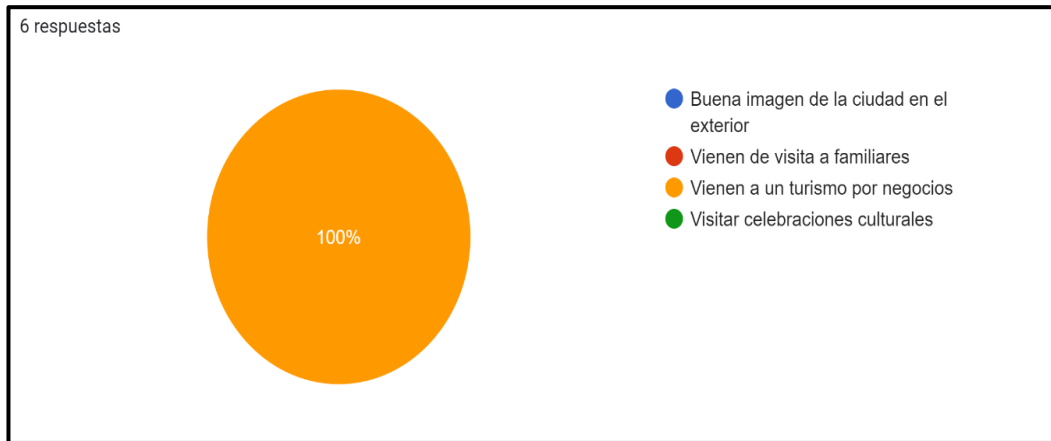


According to the graph, 33.3% of the people surveyed believe that Monteria is not recognized as a tourist city because there is no publicity of Monteria abroad, there are no tourist attractions in the city for an international tourist, there are no travel agencies that promote the city brand abroad



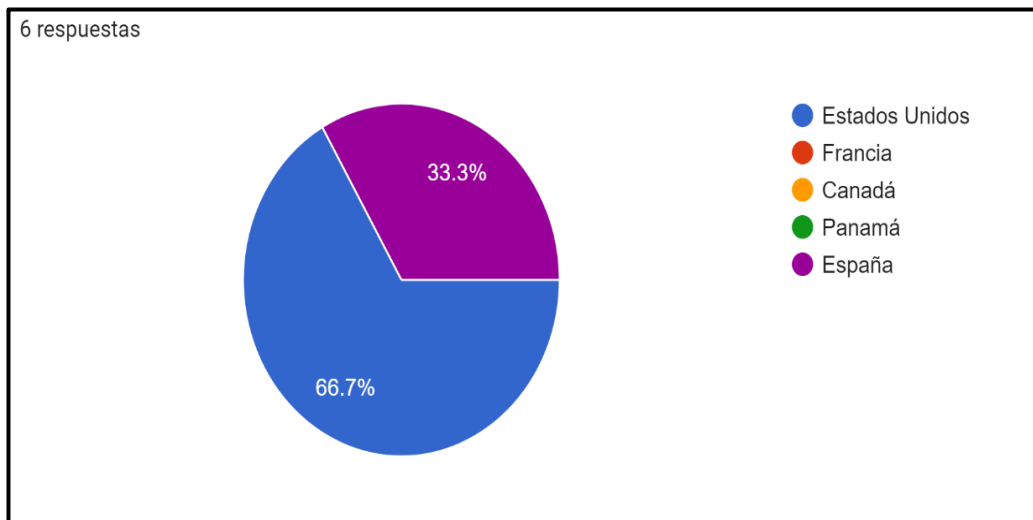
and there is a lack of integration between Procolombia and the tourism office of the city of Monteria. On the other hand, 16.7% say that it is due to the lack of travel agencies that represent us internationally, another 16.7% say that it is because there are no attractive attractions for a foreigner and finally another 16.7% conclude that there are no tourist packages established for the city to be recognized as a tourist destination.

Figure 3. From his point of view, the traveler who arrives to Monteria does so because of:



It can be observed that 100% of the people surveyed indicate that foreigners who come to the city do so for business tourism.

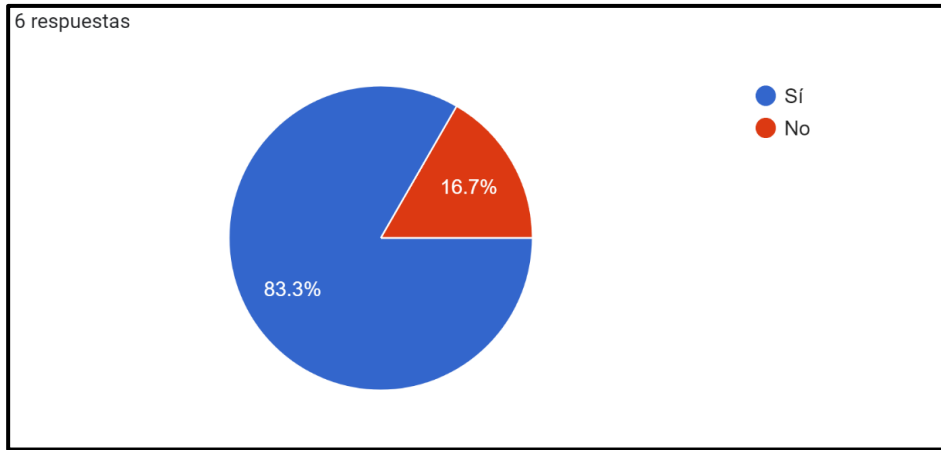
Figure 4. Within their records, foreigners coming to Monteria usually come from:



The graph shows that 66.7% of those surveyed stated that the majority of foreign guests arriving at their hotels come from the United States, while 33.3% indicated that the country that visits their facilities most often comes from Spain.

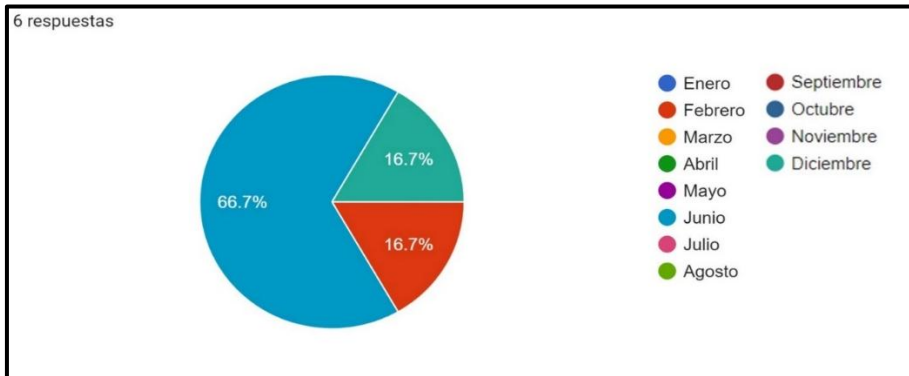


Figure 5. Do you think Monteria has tourist attractions that foreign tourists would like to visit?



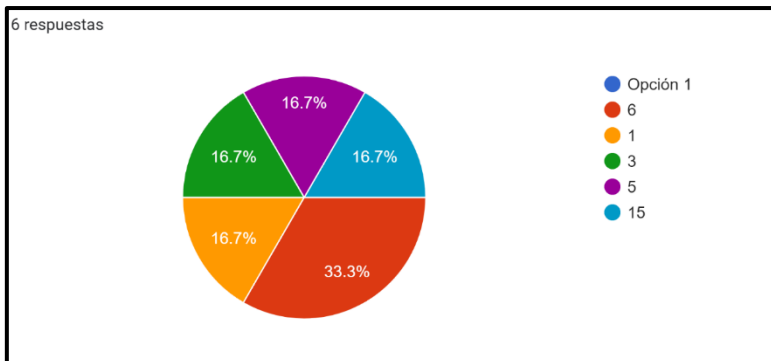
It can be observed that 63.3% of the people surveyed believe that Monteria has potential attractions that foreign tourists may like to know, on the other hand, 36.7% believe that the city does not have attractive attractions for people visiting from abroad.

Figure 6. In which season do you receive more foreign tourists?



It is possible to visualize that 66.7% of those surveyed have the highest foreign tourist demand in the month of June, while 16.7% say that the month where they receive the most international guests is in the month of December and another 16.7% say that it is in the month of February.

Figure 7. On a monthly basis, how many foreign tourists on average are arriving at your hotel?



The graph shows that 33.3% of the people surveyed receive approximately 6 foreign guests per month. Another 16.7% say that they receive approximately 5 foreign guests per month, another 16.7% say that they receive approximately 5 foreign guests per month, another 16.7% say that they



receive 3 foreign guests per month, and finally the remaining 16.7% say that they only receive 1 international guest per month.

Conclusions

Today the city of Monteria is visited by 36 foreigners monthly average, annually the figure rises to 432 an important data that impacts the different economic sectors of the city, the months of June, December and February are identified with greater presence of foreigners in the city which could be noted that they are for business reasons their main reason and with little participation other reasons such as family and friendships.

The place of origin of the foreigners who visit the city from the USA and Spain are key in order to understand that the city has commercial attractions to establish links and strengthen international relations, it is identified that the city of Monteria is not recognized as a tourist city at an international level.

Foreigners who visit the city usually do so on the recommendation of friends or relatives who live in the city. There is a lack of cultural and natural tourist attractions that should be taken advantage of and strengthened in order to be competitive in the tourism sector. There is a lack of information about the city and the sites that can be visited in the city, which means that tourists do not know what to visit during their stay in Monteria. Monteria does not have an established tourist route that allows tourists to stay several days in the city, so it becomes a city of passage to reach other tourist destinations, it is expressed that there is a dispersion between agents of the tourism sector, which causes misinformation about events that encourage foreigners want to stay for more days in the city. In the city of Monteria there is a lack of initiative on the part of the governmental entities to promote tourism through projects that remain over time, allowing the tourism approach to turn Monteria into a competitive city in the tourism sector.


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