

# El consumo cultural como medio para el desarrollo del turismo internacional. Un análisis aplicado a Villavicencio – Colombia<sup>1</sup>

**María Cristina Otero Gómez**<sup>2</sup>

Universidad de los Llanos  
motero@unillanos.edu.co

**Wilson Giraldo Pérez**<sup>3</sup>

Universidad de los Llanos  
wgiraldo@unillanos.edu.co

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## RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza los flujos turísticos internacionales y su relación con el consumo cultural, tomando en cuenta las calificaciones dadas por los consumidores a Villavicencio – Colombia. Se abordaron 3 dimensiones: percepción de imagen del destino; evaluación de la calidad del destino; y niveles de satisfacción a partir del consumo cultural. Es un trabajo cuantitativo de análisis correlacional entre variables que contó con un tamaño de muestra de 121 turistas internacionales. El objetivo permitió analizar el desempeño del consumo cultural mediante la correlación entre la oferta turística de Villavicencio y los niveles de satisfacción del turista internacional. Se destaca que el consumidor valora significativamente la comida tradicional y el baile típico, no sucede lo mismo con los deportes autóctonos. Sin embargo, las posibilidades de recomendar el destino son altas, lo que dinamiza el consumo cultural.

**Palabras Clave:** *Consumo cultural, turismo, internacionalización.*

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## Cultural Consumption as a means for International Tourist development. An analysis applied to Villavicencio – Colombia

### ABSTRACT

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1 Artículo resultado de la investigación titulada “Determinación de las estrategias que generan el posicionamiento de Villavicencio como destino turístico internacional” desarrollada entre el 5 de junio de 2015 y el 4 de mayo de 2016, código C03-F05-021-2015. Esta investigación fue financiada por la Universidad de los Llanos y se circunscribe al grupo de investigación Dinámicas de Consumo de la Facultad de Ciencias Económicas.

2 Doctoranda en Marketing, Magíster en Mercadeo, docente y directora del grupo de investigación Dinámicas de Consumo de la Facultad de Ciencias Económicas de la Universidad de los Llanos, Villavicencio (Colombia).

3 Doctorando en Marketing, Magíster en Mercadeo, docente de la Facultad de Ciencias Económicas de la Universidad de los Llanos, Villavicencio (Colombia).

This article analyses the international touristic flows and their relation with cultural consumption by keeping into account the qualification given by consumers to Villavicencio - Colombia as a tourist destination. Three dimensions were taken into account: 1) image perception of the cultural destination, 2) perceived quality of the destination, and 3) satisfaction levels based on cultural consumption. This is a quantitative work based on the correlational analysis of variables, taking 121 international tourists as sample size. It outlines the fact that the consumer significantly values traditional food and traditional dance, but the same doesn't happen with autochthonous sports. The possibilities of recommending the destination to promote cultural consumption are high.

**Key Words:** *Cultural consumption, internationalization, tourism.*

## Consumo cultural como meio de desenvolvimento turístico internacional. Uma análise aplicada a Villavicencio - Colômbia

### RESUMO

Este artigo analisa os fluxos turísticos internacionais e sua relação com o consumo cultural, tendo em conta as classificações dadas pelos consumidores para Villavicencio - a Colômbia como um destino turístico. Eles levaram em conta três dimensões: 1) a percepção da imagem de destino cultural de; 2) a qualidade percebida do destino, e 3) níveis de satisfação com o destino. É um trabalho quantitativo apoiada pela análise de correlação de variáveis, tomando como tamanho da amostra 121 turistas internacionais. Ele salienta que o consumidor aprecia comida significativamente tradicional e dança tradicional, não é assim com os esportes locais. As possibilidades para recomendar o destino para promover o consumo cultural são elevadas.

**Palavras Chave:** *Consumo, internacionalização, turismo, cultura.*

### 1. Introduction

Tourism as an economic activity has had one of the best performances in recent times around the world. Indeed, according to the World Tourism Organization, the arrival of international tourists increased 4.4% in 2015 to reach a total of 1,184 million compared to 2014 (UNWTO, 2016).

In Colombia, according to a report from the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, the income

of non-resident foreigners went from 1,967,814 people in 2014 to 2,288,342 in 2015, representing a variation of 16.29%. The report shows that the departments with the fastest growing distribution are Antioquia, with 38.7%, Risaralda, with 31,8% and Valle del Cauca with 24,5% (MINCIT, 2016). In the category of the tourism developed in the country, 68.2% of foreigners who visited Colombia from January to June 2015 did it for leisure, 15.2% for business, and 6.1% for events

(Dinero, 2015). Although there is no reported data on foreigners, in the survey on Cultural Consumption in Colombia developed by the National Department of Statistics, the data shows that in 2014, the cultural activities which was most attended by persons aged 12 years old and over were the municipal or departmental festivities with 31.0% (DANE, 2014).

For the case of Villavicencio, during the year 2015 and taking as a source the registry of foreigner entry,

the figure rose to 4.184 (Migración Colombia, 2016). This number corresponds to 0.18% of the total number of foreigners who entered the country. The largest concentration of tourists occurs in the months of June, October and December. Over these dates, different events take place, such as the International Tournament of Joropo, the World Encounter of Coleo, and the Llanero Festival of Villavicencio.

The three events are held annually and have, as their main focus, the Llanera culture, which is based on recreating the peculiarities of population groups living in the savannas of Colombia and Venezuela; among them are the indigenous people, the llaneros, and the settlers. Much of Llanera traditions are associated with livestock. However, other elements that have enriched the cultural heritage of Colombia are present, such as costumes, music, typical dishes, dance, myths, legends, popular medicine and songs, and architecture, among others.

While it is true that the percentage of the participation of Villavicencio, as an international tourist destination, compared to the main destinations in the country is minimal, authorities have included in their Government plans the internationalization of the destination through cultural activities.

These activities constitute a

strategy of communication and promotion of the destination in order to contribute to the positioning of the city brand, reducing the formation of stereotypes, since, as Kotler, Gertner, Rein & Haider (2007) say, “a stereotype suggests a widely held belief that is often very distorted, it is simplistic and it is deeply rooted. For example, the Caribbean, Mexico and Colombia generate many well-known stereotypes” (p. 204). In this way, direct contact with cultural events allows a more objective interpretation in relation to what the tourist destination truly is.

This article will present some of the results of a research funded by the Llano University, which sought, as an objective, to “analyze the correlation between the tourist offer of Villavicencio and the levels of satisfaction of the international tourist consumer.” The paper initially presents a review of recent contributions to the cultural consumption subject and how it relates to tourism. Then the methodology used is described, detailing the techniques used, the instrument and the studied sample. Next, the results that support the contribution of cultural consumption to the development of a tourist destination are explained, taking into account the interpretations of the international consumer, and finally, the conclusions and limitations of this work are presented.

## ***Literature review***

The development of tourist destinations supported by their cultural richness is partly attributed to the increase of cultural consumption, where the symbolic value is preceded by the commercial value. This is how it is presented by García (1999), who defines this consumption as “the set of processes of appropriation and uses of products in which the symbolic value prevails over the values of use and change, or where at least the latter are configured as subordinate to the symbolic dimension” (p. 42). To this aspect, the fact that the author began his writing with a reflection on the lack of research related to the public, consumption and reception of cultural goods in Latin America at the end of the 20th century must be taken into account.

Subsequently, studies that argue “that the phenomenon of consumption with which we have had to live for decades deserves to be considered from the perspective of culture” (Páramo, 2004, p. 225) have been published, and the approach to said consumption gives the socio-economic conditions of the population the category of an important factor in determining access forms or levels of cultural consumption (Almanza, 2005). Moreover, Duque (2008) guides towards the symbolic interpretation analysis when he considers that

culture is learned through observing, consuming, traveling and interacting with other people (p.44). This means that cultural consumption is a mix of tangible and intangible elements, and determining its concept, value and quality becomes a complex but necessary task.

Some studies on cultural consumption done in previous decades were limited to inquiring about the use of leisure time directed towards the use of printed material, radio, film and television, leaving aside other cultural elements. This exclusion, according to the argument of Güell, Morales & Peters (2011), is due to, on the one hand, “weak precision of what is considered as an appropriate cultural object through the processes of consumption,” and on the other, “the reflection on what is a ‘cultural good’ is still inconclusive” (p. 51). In this way it is demonstrated that the debate continues.

However, the proposal of a basic cultural consumption basket designed for Latin America was created, which concerns other elements that respond to the structure of present-day society and defines cultural goods and services more accurately, like this:

- Editorial and printed media (books, newspaper and magazines.)
2. Music (recorded music and radio.)
3. Audiovisual (cinema, television and video.)
4. Live performances (concerts, theatre and dance.)
- 5.

Visual arts (visual arts exhibitions and photography.)

6. Patrimony (tangible and intangible patrimony, and craftwork.)
7. New media (Internet and video games.)

Together, these are the cultural goods and services which will be understood as eventually available for cultural consumption (Güell et al., 2011, p. 59).

This basket is built based on the results of a survey which presents variations in its application depending on each country. For example, for Colombia, the National Department of Statistics (DANE) determined the following as main study variables:

Attendance to presentations and cultural events, attendance to cultural spaces, and attendance to cinema; printed reading and digital books, magazines and newspapers; Reading of blogs, forums, Web pages and emails; consumption of audiovisual media such as videos, television, radio and recorded music; realization of cultural practices and attendance to workshops on artistic and cultural areas (DANE, 2014, p. 2).

This contribution, although significant, focuses on analyzing, among other aspects, consumer spending and its levels, and the inequality in access to cultural products, but it does not reveal aspects relating to the liking that its acquisition represents. In addition to this, polls carried out by

different bodies such as the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), in the majority of cases are aimed at characterizing the aggregate variables susceptible to valuation within the GDP, so it does not show a difference between the consumption of national and foreign residents.

Within this context, cultural consumption has a direct relation with tourism, as, according to the Mexico Ministry of Tourism (SECTUR): “all tourist travel has a cultural involvement; tourism is not explained without culture.” (SECTUR, 2015) This is confirmed by the World Tourism Organization, defining it as “a social, cultural and economic phenomenon” (UNWTO, 2007) in which the visitor makes a “consumption during the trip which requires an expenditure that can be handled, among other products, with fees to gain access to museums, theme parks, shows, food and cultural events.” (MINCETUR, 2001, p. 37) In this way, trips encourage cultural consumption in which there is an agent (consumer) with a series of needs that they expect to be met when they arrive at their destination.

But this criterion is not accepted in its entirety, as Senabre (2007), who opposes manifestations related to the “transformation of the anthropological value of the past, like marketing products” (p. 74) expresses it. This rejection also questions the role of

the tourist, as Moragues (2006) refers to it: “the profile of the current tourist is not mostly cultured and scholar. Trivialization is part of the context of their daily lives and of much of their cultural or pseudo-cultural consumption.” This last author considers the relationship between tourism and cultural consumption, a frivolous process.

The complexity in the analysis of the topic has a few more conciliatory positions, as it is the case of Ayala (2009), who believes that “the cultural consumption of touristic travel is a positive development, provided that the activities are of quality and autochthony, it is ensured that they do not cause negative impacts, and are based on criteria of sustainability.” (p. 173)

Based on the above considerations, and taking into account that the greater influx of tourists in Villavicencio occurs during the development of the main cultural events, a conceptual synthesis with some definitions that correspond to research carried out during the current century, was made.

Table 1. Definition of cultural events in the 21st century

CULTURAL EVENTS	
Wyse, N., Campos, L. C. & Araújo, M. L. da S., 2000	Events bring together groups of people around a common goal and help to develop tourism. Ultimately, they attract people from other cities or regions, encourage the economy and enrich the cultural life of the city where they are held.
Richards, G. & Wilson, J., 2001	Cultural events, in particular, have emerged as a means to improve the image of the cities, to give life to the streets of the city and renew pride in its citizens for their hometown.
Hoyle, H. L., 2002	The event should emphasize the way in which the participant will benefit from their presence in it since the promise of a better performance or simply having a good time, will contribute to conveying certain brand values.
Balduino, B.; Balduino, J. & Menezes, P., 2011	The organization of events is one of the activities that generates more revenue, mobilizing the productive chain of tourism. It also has a strong influence on the image of the destination if the event has been well planned.
Marujo, N., 2015	Cultural events create opportunities for travel, increase consumption and promote development, justifying the constant struggle by government entities to attract national and international events.

Source: Own elaboration, 2016.

For the previous revision, the authors agree that these events are a means that relate to cultural identity, benefits and consumption with the development of tourism. In the words of Ribeiro, Vareiro, Fabeiro & Blas (2006) “cultural events in recent years were revealed as a quite dynamic “tourist product” (p. 65). Conceptually, tourist products are composed of “basic services (food and accommodation) and complementary services which provide character and quality, i.e.

added value.” (Garcia, 2005, p. 116)

In addition to the above, it is important to highlight the dynamism of demand, which is analyzed in the present study based on a set of assessments made by international tourists not only about events, but about the entire cultural offer. However, it is necessary to clarify that “the cultural context of the consumer also plays an important role, since depending on their cultural background, the perception around the feeling of being looked

after varies depending on the regional elements of its idiosyncrasy in reference to quality of service” (Raajpoot, 2004). This ratifies the connotation of the symbolic element and its role within the consumer object of study.

In this sense, it is necessary to consider the valuation by the demand in connection with the performance of the touristic product, because by not doing so, the implications in the long run may be unfavorable. According to Ejarque (2005) cultural

events usually temporarily attract visitors, but then “they do not produce significant effects later on in touristic flows” to the destination (p.171). In this regard, the unsustainability of the destination, in some cases, is due to the ignorance of the consumer, who by affective or cognitive elements makes the decision of purchase, repurchase or abandonment of the tourist product.

In addition to the above, another aspect that should be taken into account is quality, defined as “the difference between the real perceptions by consumers of the service and the expectations that have been previously formed about it” (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1993, p. 26). So, when you have a valuation of the target and its potential effects with respect to the retention of the number of tourists, it can be measured.

In short, cultural consumption developed due to cultural offer reveals its importance both for tourists and for the destination itself. But its analysis requires deeper elaborations not only linked to interpretations according to sciences or disciplines, but to scientific and methodological aspects (Mantecón, 2002 & Sunkel, 2002). Almanza (2005) states that in studies on cultural consumption, descriptive analysis takes precedence and are rarely the causal variables explored. This shows the need to conduct studies that lead to an explanation of the association

between different variables involved in said consumption.

Based on the above considerations, the estimations that international tourists assigned to three dimensions, were taken into account: 1) perception of the image of the cultural destination, 2) perceived quality of the destination, and 3) levels of satisfaction based on cultural consumption. These dimensions allow the approach of the following hypotheses:

**H1.** The perception that the international tourist has about Villavicencio as a tourist destination directly and positively influences the evaluation of the quality obtained during their stay.

**H2.** The perception that the international tourist has about Villavicencio as a tourist destination directly and positively influences the evaluation of the satisfaction obtained during their stay.

**H3.** The quality found at the moment in which the international tourist remains in Villavicencio directly and positively influences the evaluation of the satisfaction obtained at the end of their stay

**H4.** The satisfaction obtained by the international tourist when they finish their stay in Villavicencio directly and positively influences the probability to recommend the destination to other touristic consumers.

## 2. Methodology

The research was developed in the city of Villavicencio - Colombia. The data was obtained from a diverse group of people from different parts of the world who were chosen randomly but comply with the tourist condition. This research fits into the definition of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to refer to tourists as “a person who travels to a main destination other than their usual environment, lasting less than a year, with any main purpose (leisure, business or other personal reasons) that is not being an employee of an entity resident in the country or place visited” (2007).

### *Sources of Information*

This research was developed by applying a quantitative methodology, which enables, through the use of statistics, carrying out sampling designs which subsequently facilitate the realization of population-based inferences for the segment studied by following, to that end, the inductive method.

Primary information through surveys applied to 193 international tourists was collected. A total of 156 were considered eligible due to bias showed by some in their assessments resulting in the influence of any resident of the destination, or because they were not recorded in their entirety.

The survey was designed with questions from the Likert scale and was subjected to a validation process in-field which ensured the reliability of the instrument. The validation process had an indicator of 0.9 in Cronbach's Alpha.

Of the total eligible surveys, for the elaboration of this article, only people who made use of tourist products associated to the Llanera culture were taken into account. In accordance with the dates provided by the Colombian Office of Migration, some polls were done on-site during 2015 and 2016, throughout the development of the following events: Livestock Herding World Championship, Joropo International Tournament, World

Encounter of Coleo, Llanero Festival of Villavicencio, and Malocas Fair. Other surveys were applied during the periods in which mass events were not performed. Online surveys were also sent out by selecting people who were exposed to the cultural consumption during the 2014. Thus, for this analysis, the sample size corresponds to 121 individuals equivalent to 77.6% of 156 international tourists.

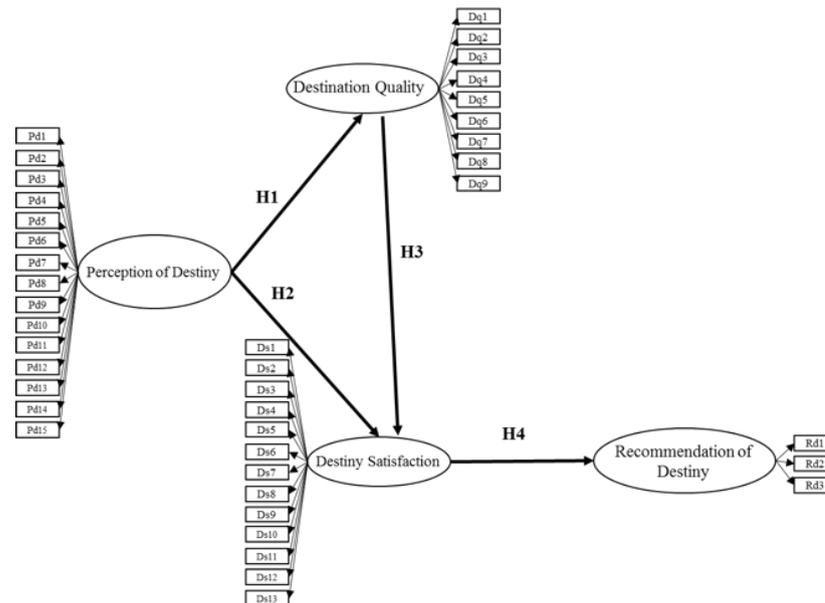
Due to the difficulty of having access to these visitors, coupled with the language barrier between interviewer and the person surveyed, the study relied upon the support from the YEAH Community College, responsible for the translation of the tool and the implementation of

surveys to people who did not speak Spanish.

### Information Analysis

The processing of this data was done with the software SPSS V.18 for the descriptive and inferential analyses. In the latter, the correlations of Spearman were carried out, which allowed to identify associations between the variables describing the levels of satisfaction of tourists relative to the supply of cultural products, and the subsequent likelihood of recommendation of the destination to other tourism consumers. Figure 1 presents the variables of study together with the assumptions made.

Figure 1. Investigation model



Source: Own elaboration, 2016.

### 3. Results

#### *International tourist profile*

Table 2 describes the profile of the sample which shows that the highest percentage of interviewees is young and unmarried men. These people spend little time planning their trip and on average spend up to USD \$1000 for an average stay of 7 days.

When evaluating the perception of international tourists over the cultural offer of Villavicencio, it is found that for 65% of those surveyed it is good, and that 31% evaluate it as very good; percentage that, accumulated, exceeds 95%. Thus, it could be interpreted that efforts until 2015, when it comes to target

**Table 2.** Main demographic characteristics of the sample

Variable	Distribution %
Age	18 – 35 years old = 67.4%
Sex	Men = 67.4%
Family structure	Single w/o children = 52.20%
5-day average spending	Up to USD \$1000 = 80%
Time planning trip	Less than 1 month = 59%

Source: Own elaboration, 2016

positioning, have yielded positive results as shown in table 3.

There, it can be inferred that the words that best describe the city are: pleasant, friendly, and beautiful; and the perception of what it is not, described in one word, corresponds to “boring.”

The percentage of favorability of 95% means a high valuation in the qualification, which represents an also high commitment from the offer in relation to the tourists.

The perception of the target is not necessarily built from cultural tourist products as such, but it is also

Table 3. Perception of Villavicencio in one word.

	Absolutely Disagree	Disagree	Moderately Agree	Absolutely Agree	Total
Pleasant	0.0%	6.5%	47.7%	45.8%	100%
Friendly	4.0%	12.0%	38.4%	45.6%	100%
Pretty	1.1%	14.3%	44.4%	40.2%	100%
Relaxing	2.6%	17.1%	42.2%	38.1%	100%
Interesting	4.0%	18.8%	45.6%	31.6%	100%
Familiar	3.6%	24.4%	45.3%	26.7%	100%
Easy to access	13.1%	29.0%	31.5%	26.4%	100%
Safe	8.0%	25.3%	43.3%	23.4%	100%
Clean	7.1%	28.0%	41.5%	23.4%	100%
Expensive	16.5%	30.1%	35.6%	17.8%	100%
Quiet	28.0%	31.3%	25.1%	15.6%	100%
Remote	35.4%	31.5%	29.2%	13.9%	100%
Halted	41.7%	26.0%	22.0%	10.3%	100%
Boring	49.4%	20.8%	21.5%	8.3%	100%
Overpopulated	43.0%	32.9%	19.0%	5.1%	100%

Source: Own elaboration, 2016.

determined from the assessment given to other elements that complement this offer. Table 4 contains the

results of the general qualification of Villavicencio as a tourist destination. In it, it is evident that the aspects

with the best quality evaluations are “friendliness of the inhabitants” and “natural areas within the city”.

**Table 4.** Evaluation of the quality of the destination

	Insufficient	Standard	Acceptable	Adequate	Total
Friendliness of the inhabitants	2,6%	12,3%	39,6%	45,5%	100,0%
Natural areas	6,0%	19,0%	35,5%	39,5%	100,0%
Quality and availability of transportation to reach the destination	4,6%	24,0%	41,3%	30,1%	100,0%
Customer service	5,2%	16,2%	50,7%	27,9%	100,0%
Electronic payments	13,4%	19,7%	44,4%	22,5%	100,0%
Lodging price/quality ratio	4,0%	23,7%	50,7%	21,6%	100,0%
Complementary health, banking and Internet services	10,7%	24,8%	44,7%	19,8%	100,0%
Internal public transport	15,5%	23,6%	44,6%	16,3%	100,0%
Tourism infrastructure	12,1%	30,2%	46,3%	11,4%	100,0%

Source: Own elaboration, 2016.

In contrast to the favorable results, “tourism infrastructure” reaches a percentage of 42.3% between regular and inadequate; the same is for “public transport” which had 39% on the sum of unfavorable ratings. However, when inquiring international tourists on their judgements cast, they

responded that despite the lack of honesty in the collection of rates for taxi service, in addition to the initial stage in the tourism infrastructure, these shortcomings were offset by the warmth of the residents and the feeling of nature thanks to the green areas that the city has.

Once tourists evaluated the destination, they proceeded to specifically evaluate the products that are part of the cultural consumption. Table 5 provides a list of cultural tourist products that are both promoted by public and private organizations.

**Table 5.** Satisfaction levels obtained based on cultural consumption

	Doesn't know	Absolutely unsatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Moderately satisfied	Absolutely satisfied	Total
Llanera meat	12.4%	1.0%	1.7%	24.4%	60.5%	100.0%
Bioparque Los Ocarros	23.1%	1.0%	8.4%	19.8%	47.7%	100.0%
Las Malocas theme park	23.1%	1.7%	8.3%	20.7%	46.2%	100.0%
Having contact with the residents	0.0%	9.6%	16.5%	37.4%	36.5%	100.0%
Nuestra Señora del Carmen Cathedral	42.1%	3.3%	11.6%	14.9%	28.1%	100.0%
Joropo shows	48.8%	1.0%	5.0%	18.2%	27.0%	100.0%
Ecological fields	46.3%	1.0%	5.0%	20.7%	27.0%	100.0%
Fundadores park	38.0%	3.3%	14.9%	19.8%	24.0%	100.0%
Craftwork	40.5%	3.3%	17.4%	19.0%	19.8%	100.0%

**Table 5.** Satisfaction levels obtained based on cultural consumption

	Doesn't know	Absolutely unsatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Moderately satisfied	Absolutely satisfied	Total
Coleo	37.2%	1.0%	11.5%	32.2%	18.1%	100.0%
Learning the language	0.0%	42.1%	20.5%	21.5%	15.9%	100.0%
El Redentor hill	66.9%	4.1%	6.6%	10.7%	11.7%	100.0%
House of culture	67.8%	1.0%	11.6%	12.4%	7.2%	100.0%

Source: Own elaboration, 2016.

The above table shows that the product in which greater satisfaction was found, was the dish called “Llanera-style meat” or “mamona.” This assessment was due, according to the tourists, to always finding available offer in restaurants. In addition to this, they had the opportunity to see the cooking process, enabling them to approach the cultural symbolism that represents this food for the native people.

### ***Contrast of hypothesis***

To compare these results and check the assumptions made, a correlation was conducted. It aimed to explain if perceptions of the destination and the quality of their attributes (in addition to the levels of satisfaction with the cultural offer) influenced directly by generating a positive attitude to recommend cultural consumption to other potential tourists. Table 6 presents bivariate correlations between the evaluated dimensions.

The four correlations studied demonstrate the positive direction

**Table 6.** Spearman correlations

		Perception	Quality	Satisfaction	Probability to recommend destination
Perception	Correlation	1	0,492	0,557	
	P value	.	0,000	0,000	
Quality	Correlation		1	0,490	
	P value		.	0,000	
Satisfaction	Correlation			1	0,501
	P value			.	0,000

Source: Own elaboration, 2016.

and the force between 0.49 and 0.55, proving all the above hypotheses. In this way, by correlating the perception of quality, 0,492 is obtained, which means that the perception of a tourist based on their own experience must be taken into account to improve the quality of the destination. Furthermore, the correlation of the perception of satisfaction is the highest data obtained, with a 0,557, which means that the destination is not far off from what the consumer was initially looking for. The results show that Villavicencio fulfilled their expectations in terms of cultural consumption. Additionally, the correlation between quality and

satisfaction is 0,490 which allows to establish that, in a hypothetical way, if the quality of service improved, it would promote satisfaction levels. Similarly, the correlation between satisfaction and recommendation is 0,501 where word of mouth plays an important role for the disclosure of a pleasant experience in the destination.

To complete the descriptive analysis, table 7 shows three large segments of international tourists divided by budget availability for the trip. There are those who have a budget of less than USD \$500, those who have a budget between USD \$501 and \$1000, and those who have a budget of more than USD

\$1000. The first segment represents 40%, equal in terms of percentage to the second group, and, finally, the group with the highest availability for investment which represents 20% of the total number of tourists visiting the city with an intention to make a cultural consumption. This destination of money corresponds to an average stay of 5 days.

**Table 7.** Segmentation of budget availability for the trip

Budget for the Trip%	
Up to 500 USD	40,0%
Between 501 and 900 USD	40,0%
More than 1001 USD	20,0%
Total	100,0%

Source: Own elaboration, 2016.

This result is quite significant because it shows that 80% of foreign visitors belong to what could be called tourism's *low-strata*, so that supply must take into consideration this finding in order to design programs that are consistent with this segment. Occasionally, it is about people who are foreign nationals by adoption, but many are actually Colombians who migrated and obtained a foreign citizenship, nevertheless their level of income is limited judging by the availability of resources declared in the survey. Also, it should be delved into whether the city can project itself as an elite tourist destination, given that a non-negligible percentage has sufficient resources for leisure in the city.

## 4. Discussion

As shown, in general terms, the profile of the international tourist corresponds to people with a moderate income, so it does not represent a threat to the “commercialization” of traditions, without implying that in the future that may not be the case. Indeed, when presenting said traditions to the tourist market, they run the risk of becoming what Gallego (2011) considered: “strictly commercial attractions that take precedence over social and cultural aspects of their societies” (p.134). On the contrary, something that does stand out in the findings, in the case of Villavicencio, is that long-term cultural events do not generate significant effects due to the “transient” effect mentioned by Ejarque (2005).

To emphasize the contribution of cultural consumption to the development of the destination, Joropo performances, which include music, dance, songs and traditional costumes of the Llanera culture, come to attention because they are unknown to 48.8% of the international tourists. This is because these performances are only presented during some, not all, months of the year, and in an isolated fashion since only a handful of restaurants include it as part of the folk spectacle. The above means that 1 of every 2 tourists arriving to the destination can do so in periods in

which said activity isn't offered and, due to this, the referred percentage of the lack of awareness on behalf of the respondents is so high. However, it is necessary to recognize that local governments have made efforts to strengthen this tourism product, which is considered one of the most precious elements within the cultural heritage and its value is inculcated from childhood. Hence, in the city is celebrated “The day of the Llaneridad”, backed by Decree 015 of the 2008 Council of Villavicencio, which stipulates that every last Friday of each month, officials or public employees of the municipality wear costumes allusive to “llanera” culture; public education establishments impart classes of dancing, singing and music with autochthonous instruments.



Photograph: Cesar Herrera Morales, from the series “Los niños y el joropo”, Villavicencio, March 2015.

Although private establishments make efforts to cater to tourists, it falls upon local authorities to adapt public spaces to encourage the presentation of free cultural activities, which must not be oriented exclusively to tourists because promoting these spaces becomes an obligation for its settlers, since the latter, as members of a community, are responsible for making traditions last and for avoiding their cultural identity to become a mere element of entertainment. This ideal is part of what Vargas Llosa (2012) considers the difference between culture of the past and today's entertainment when referring to the fact that the former transcends the present time and that the latter is consumed at the moment and later disappears.

When it comes to making decisions, and supported with what is provided for by the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI), cultural policies must be formulated and executed based on the connection of different agencies, according to the following statement:

A cultural policy which is to be formulated by a sole agent, will end up being sterile and unilateral, for example, when it is exclusively the State, it ends with the "statesperson's patrimonialism" or "state interventionism," or if the agent is the market, it culminates in "cultural commercialism" or "privatization" of cultural life

(OEI, 1998, see <http://campus-oei.org/cult004.htm>).

This agency refers to the participation of the State, community groups, private companies, non-governmental organizations, and individuals, among others. In fact, there must be a balance between the expectations of tourists and the preservation of heritage.

Measurements of dimensions, perception, quality, and satisfaction based on cultural consumption are reflected in the calculation of indicators of the Spearman correlation. Results were obtained from them with a positive direction; this means that an increase in the qualification obtained by the independent variable generates an increase in the dependent, with an average force, represented in all indicators close to 0.5.

With reference to the partnership between the variables "perception of destination" and "quality," the indicator of correlation is 0,492 with a value of significance ( $\alpha = 0.000$ ), that is to say that tourists find the destination pleasant and friendly due to the friendliness of its inhabitants. At this point, it is worth mentioning the work done by Rivera (2013) in which he reveals the importance of direct contact with the residents as a way to have a responsible and intercultural tourism.

The obtained indicator for the quality and satisfaction correlation was 0,490 with a value of significance of 0.000, indicating that the evaluation that on-site tourists make of the tourist infrastructure as a whole, is acceptable and appropriate for the majority of them, and the concrete cultural product which they feel the most satisfaction with is gastronomy. This result is compatible with Castro (2005) who states that "cultural heritage is a fragile and irreplaceable resource, to which certain quality criteria should be applied in order to ensure its sustainability and enjoyment" (p. 145), benefitting both the offeror and the service claimant.

Lastly, when analyzing the results of the satisfaction that international tourists get when they carry out cultural consumption in the destination, and the likelihood of recommending it to their group of referrals, it is evidenced that a positive correlation exists and with an average strength that gets to 0,501 with a value of significance of 0.000. This sets up an important relationship for these variables at the subsequent stage of purchase in which tourist ends up not only satisfied, but also recommending the destination.

## 5. Conclusions

The findings obtained suggest that cultural events are not the most representative attractions to develop an international segment-oriented cultural consumption and do not constitute a determining factor in the revitalization of the destination. This is because the events have their own target audience, which most of the time correspond largely to, in most cases, regional tourists. However, they can be considered a balance point to promote other cultural events and help the destination in its international consolidation.

Also, whether the city can be projected as an elite tourist destination should be deepened, given that a non-negligible percentage offer sufficient resources for leisure in the city.

Finally, the correlation between the likelihood of recommending the destination and the perception that it could bring in potential consumers was measured. The basis literature for the research does contemplate this measurement of associativity, but results show, hypothetically, that against an increase in the favorable recommendation made by a tourist who already knows the destination, can improve the perception about Villavicencio as a cultural destination among potential consumers. These variables reach a correlation of 0,608. This configures a new element

in marketing communications, supported on the credibility of the source that sends the message, making word of mouth important for potential consumers. Since it is only a hypothesis, it can be constituted as a future line of research.

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