

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

TOURISM FROM ARGENTINA IN URUGUAY: A QUANTITATIVE BEHAVIORAL ANALYSIS

Eva Martín Roda

Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia. UNED

emartin@geo.uned.es

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9333-4832>

Silvana Sassano Luiz

Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia. UNED

sfsassano@madrid.uned.es

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4030-3922>

1. INTRODUCTION

This article is a quantitative study about the importance and characteristics of the tourists coming from Argentina to Uruguay. Uruguay is one of the most important destinations for the Argentinians to spend their holidays. These flows of tourist have significant effects on the Uruguayan territory, economy and society. The coast of “El Río de la Plata” is the more dynamic economic and demographic space, in both countries.

The capital cities of these countries are both in the shore of “El Río de la Plata”, and there are a lot of common economic activities, encouraging the relationships between them. When studying the number of tourists arriving from any place of the world to Uruguay, the largest group came from Argentine, according to data offered by the Ministry of Tourism of Uruguay.

This is the reason why the objective of this article is to study the characteristics and behaviour of tourists arriving from Argentina to Uruguay. To carry out this study was used the information extracted out of the random surveys conducted by the Statistics Institute of Uruguay to abroad visitors entered the country. (INE 2018)

2. METHODOLOGY

Considering the great economic and social importance of tourism from Argentine in Uruguay, as evidenced by the work of Lanzilotta, Altmann and others, the objective of this study was to analyse the peculiarities of the behaviour of these tourists coming from Argentine. To carry out the quantitative study were used random surveys conducted at the border by the Uruguayan Institute of Statistics on tourists entering the country from abroad.

Since these are random surveys, the data represent only a percentage of total tourism received in Uruguay, however, it is considered that the exploitation of these data could

provide interesting explanatory details about the behaviour of global statistical data, which is very important when establishing patterns. The year of the case study is 2015, as this were the last data given by the Statistics Institute of Uruguay (SIU) at the time this study was started.

Data offered by the SIU were in SPSS format, which allow us to use IBM's statistical software and, at the same time, explore some of its possibilities applied to geographic science. Another key decision was to use row data, only personal information was deleted. Row data availability was a key factor to decide to use National Institute of Statistics of Uruguay source instead of the more processed data available from Argentina institutions.

Then we proceed to analyse the 223 variables contained in the surveys to determine which were the most significant to achieve the objectives of the study. Likewise, a frequency analysis was carried out for the people in each group surveyed, compared with the percentage of these frequencies on the whole sample, to discriminate the data that were of interest for the investigation. The software used to work with the data and perform the graphics was IBM SPSS.

3. GENERIC ANALYSIS

The number of surveys from the SIU was 9,135. All of them were valid. There were no data lost in the data preparation work. The first thing that was done, before carrying out a data segmentation, was to establish the number of tourists in each group surveyed. The surveys had 223 variables, of which we only studied those that were considered the most important for the work, for example: if the tourist travelled alone or in a group, where did they come from? what transportation did they use? the main destination into Uruguay, where was the location they used to enter? and some sociological things, among others. As for the mean of transport used to enter in the country, most people used their own car, followed by the ship, and in the third position, the plane. The data do not distinguish between the tourist arriving on a pleasure cruise or on a ferry from Argentina crossing the "Río de la Plata".

4. TOURISTS' GEOGRAPHIC ORIGIN

The percentage of tourists entering in Uruguay coming from Argentina out of the surveys analysed accounts for more than 68%. This percentage is adjusted to the real numbers considering the randomness of the surveys. The real number of tourists that entered Uruguay from Argentina was 57.6% of the total tourism that Uruguay received in 2015. So, it was thought that the analysis of these surveys was reliable to establish patterns of behaviour.

Another important variable to study the behaviour of tourism was to know the main destination chosen by travellers. The department of Montevideo was the favourite destination for Argentine tourists, with 34.5% of the total. The next favourite destination department was Maldonado, with 25.1% of the total. Tourist city of "Punta del Este" belongs to Maldonado department. This city is an important site for sun and beach tourism. Nowadays, "Punta del Este" is becoming also an important city for business tourism and

conventions with “Punta del Este Convention Centre” been granted with the certification UNWTO.QUEST by UNWTO.

To explain the results, it was hypothesized that, out of the total number of visitors arriving to the Department of Montevideo, travellers who went there for business or work activities reasons would have a great weight on the total tourism received in this city.

When the tourists displaced to Uruguay for work reasons were isolated in the sample, it was found that their weight was not significant in the analysis that was being carried out, so they were eliminated from the specific study on tourism from Argentina to Uruguay. It was considered that, neither for the expense incurred, nor for the place of entry or the means of transport used, the business tourists had a behaviour like that of the average tourist (people who travel mainly for pleasure), which was the fundamental objective of our study. The business tourist, in general, develops a job entrusted by his company.

5. TOURISM RECEIVED IN URUGUAY COMING FROM ARGENTINA: DATA

The next item/step of this study was to determine if the analysis would be about the total number of tourists surveyed, without considering the nationality or, on the contrary, the analysis would take into consideration place of residence in Argentina and/or nationality. To decide about this point two codifications of the data were made: the first by nationality of the travellers and the second by the place of residence of the tourists in Argentina. The missing data related to the nationality was very important. Therefore, was decided that the object of the study would be about the total of residents in Argentina, without considering the nationality, in the thought that they would have a similar behaviour to people born in Argentina. The result of the data cleansing was a data set of 14.919 people and 5.688 valid surveys. With this new data set we proceeded to conduct a study on the tourists’ behaviour coming from Argentina.

6. LOCATION OF ENTRY TO URUGUAY OF TOURISTS FROM ARGENTINA, TRANSPORTATION PREFERENCES AND REASONS FOR THE TRIP

The main locations of entry in Uruguay in 2015 for the tourists coming from Argentina, were: first “Fray Bentos” (international bridge called Libertador General San Martín), from this place arrived 32.9% of the total of surveyed tourists. Second from the city called “Colonia del Sacramento” (World Heritage City) came 26% of the total. Fray Bentos is the shortest way by road between Montevideo and Buenos Aires, and Colonia del Sacramento, also is the shortest way by the sea between Montevideo and Buenos Aires. This city is connected to Buenos Aires through regular ferry lines. Buenos Aires also is connected to Montevideo through regular ferry lines, but this path is the longest way by sea between both cities.

Travelers arriving in Uruguay prefer their own car, based on two main reasons: when there are several people in the group of tourists, it is cheaper to travel by car than by any other means of transport and, when they arrive at the destination, they will own car facilitates the internal displacement.

No relation was found between the place of entry in Uruguay and the place of destination, this allows us to affirm that the place of entry to the country has more relation with the means of transport chosen than with other things, it was verified by the correlations of Pearson and Spearman that were made at this point.

In summary: travellers who used their own car to enter from Buenos Aires to Uruguay came mainly by Fray Bentos, the International Customs Bridge closest to Buenos Aires, those who choose the regular ferry lines entered mainly through Colonia del Sacramento and to a lesser extend through Montevideo.

More than 58% of tourists who came to Uruguay from Argentina travelled for pleasure and vacations; another 25% travelled to visit friends or relatives. The following motivations are not representative.

Regarding the type of accommodation preferred by Argentinians tourists in Uruguay these are: in the homes of family or friends, in three-star hotels or in their own residences. 44.2% use the homes of friends or relatives residing in Uruguay, others use their own residence. If travellers who have a property in Uruguay, but that is not their usual residence, the data would go from 44,2% to more than 50%. This data show that the relationship between both countries is very strong and fluid, due to geographical proximity, either by vacations or business reasons.

The percentage of Argentinians who own a second property in Uruguay is what is called a captive market, since it generates a compulsory nature in the choice for tourist destination. Being the “Argentinians tourism” very important for the Uruguayan economy, at the present time, with the monetary devaluation of the Argentine currency, special offers and promotions are being implemented in Uruguay such as the refund of taxes on purchases, zero VAT in hotels, discounts on gas prices, return of 10.5% on the rental of houses, give away movie and theatre tickets, free day trips, all to attract and retain the Argentinian tourists.

7. SOCIOLOGICAL PECULIARITIES OF ARGENTINE TOURISTS IN URUGUAY

By age groups, people traveling to Uruguay from Argentina, the majority group is the people between 30 and 65 years (63% of the total), people over 65 and under 18 travel to Argentina in a smaller percentage. In relation to the work activity carried out by Argentinian tourists, 25.6% are public servants, cashiers, vendors, bank employees, followed by the liberal professions, technical workers, teachers, artists, journalists, customs officers. These occupational data suggest that the tourists who visits Uruguay, coming from Argentina, are in a significant number of middle class, middle / high class and upper-class people.

8. SEASONALITY IN THE ENTRANCE OF TOURISTS, WAY TO ORGANIZE THE TRIP AND TOTAL EXPENDITURE MADE

Around 50% of all tourists visiting Uruguay from Argentina throughout the year, do so during the so-called high season of tourism in the southern hemisphere. The month with

the highest influx is January. In the winter low season, in the southern hemisphere, tourist flows are virtually non-existent. In the spring the flow of tourists increases, although the distribution of travellers during this period is monthly more homogeneous than during the summer season.

About the money spent by tourists in Uruguay it was impossible to obtain any result because 80.3% of the data about currency of expenditure were not provided. Therefore, it is impossible to know how much tourists spent, event more knowing that most Argentinian tourists make the trip without any tourist package and, therefore, the main expense is made in cash.

As a conclusion, tourism is a very important activity for the Uruguayan economy. The largest number of tourists arriving in Uruguay come from Argentina and Brazil, bringing Argentina about 60% of this inflow. Uruguay's high economic dependence on Argentine tourism becomes more evident in times of economic crisis in Argentina. To avoid large fluctuations in tourist flows, both the government and companies take measures to attract Argentine tourists and avoid a significant drop in money coming into the country from tourism.

