

MOTIVATION, SATISFACTION AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS OF NAUTICAL TOURISTS VISITING RUTA DEL SPONDYLUS (ECUADOR)

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To date, tourism activity is one of the most dynamic sectors of Ecuador. For this reason, the Public Administration has made a commitment to the sector, with public strategies already in place to renewing the destination positioning. At the same time, tourism diversification and seasonality are still remaining as challenges. In this context, nautical tourism stands as an opportunity for the country. The natural conditions it possess, together with the great potential for the socio-economic development of tourism the nautical activity has, are some of the reasons that reinforce this statement. In response to the scarcity of scientific knowledge concerning the nautical consumer behaviour, this research proposes to undertake a contrasted analysis of the nautical tourism demand in Ruta del Spondylus (Ecuador). As a result of surveying 201 nautical tourists visiting this region during 2015, the study analyses the main differences between national and foreign tourists' profile, travel motivations and satisfaction. It also reveals the relation that exists between satisfaction and future revisit intentions of these tourists. Although preliminary, the results provide the opportunity for developing practical recommendations for tourism practitioners and enterprises, aiming to contribute to a better design of destination promotional and positioning strategies, and to promote academic interest in the field.

KEY WORDS: *nautical tourism, nautical destination, satisfaction, behavioural intentions, Ecuador, Spondylus Route.*