

# Perceived value in a UNESCO World Heritage Site: the case of Quito, Ecuador

Perceived  
value in Quito,  
World Heritage  
Site

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The city of Quito is a World Heritage Site (WHS) in Ecuador and the city owns one of the best-preserved and extensive historic centers in Latin America for cultural tourism. This study aims to identify the factors that constitute perceived value construct at the WHS of Quito.

**Design/methodology/approach** – This research collects data from tourists who have visited the city of Quito, Ecuador. A total of 381 on-site questionnaires are used. Data have been analyzed using exploratory factorial analysis.

**Findings** – Results regarding the dimensional structural framework of perceived value indicate that perceived value at the WHS of Quito has five factors: (1) monetary and non-monetary costs (MNC), (2) staff service quality (SSQ), (3) tourist offer accessibility (TOA), (4) destination attractiveness (DA) and (5) information accessibility (IA).

**Originality/value** – Two new factors of accessibility have been proposed in this study for measuring consumer value at a WHS. Perceived value and accessibility have been treated as two separate subjects in academic literature before. However, this article contributes to the understanding of perceived value at WHS, including factors linked to accessibility. Both managerial and theoretical implications for WHS are discussed.

**Keywords** Heritage, Monetary and non-monetary costs, Service quality, Accessibility, Factor analysis, Value

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

The World Heritage Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) publishes an annual list of World Heritage Site (WHS) and classifies WHS into natural, cultural mixed elements. The inclusion of a place in the World Heritage List implies the recognition of an outstanding universal value and meets the standard of at least one selection criterion. Ecuador is a multiethnic and pluricultural country and it has three cultural heritage sites and two natural heritage sites (UNESCO, 2021). Even though the main objective of these listings is to conserve and preserve these sites, it also leads to an increase in the number of visitors and an increase in awareness of the site. Thus, there is a direct cause-and-effect link between the granting of WHS status and tourism activity (Muñoz-Fernández *et al.*, 2018).

Recognizing these opportunities, since the city of Quito was declared WHS in 1978, its rehabilitation process has brought benefits to the city and the country from a cultural

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perspective and preservation of identity. The support of public investment has also influenced the rehabilitation process over the past 20 years, and there are economic, social, institutional and urban benefits. Nevertheless, the lack of more private investment has caused hotel guests do not spend money in the city center because of the absence of high-end restaurants and artisan markets (Jaramillo, 2011). Therefore, it is important to foster both public and private collaboration during this rehabilitation process, promoting and recovering the center for activities of interest to the city, such as tourism, to offer valuable experiences. This appears to be the key to continue attracting tourists. Hence, it is essential to recognize the importance of perceived value and to improve products and services to offer values that are perceived by consumers (Zhang *et al.*, 2022).

First, perceived value has been studied by many scholars in tourism literature because it is important to attract tourists (Carvache-Franco *et al.*, 2021; El-Adly, 2019; Gallarza and Saura, 2006; Jamal and Sharifuddin, 2015; Lo and Lee, 2011; Mencarelli and Lombart, 2017; Sweeney *et al.*, 1999). Second, it has been analyzed in the context of WHSs because those are specific destinations that include tangible and intangible elements that are part of perceived value (Chen and Chen, 2010; Gallarza *et al.*, 2021; Lee *et al.*, 2016; Pandža Bajs, 2015; See and Goh, 2019; Wu and Li, 2017; Zhang *et al.*, 2022). Third, there are important aspects in the perceived value that can be analyzed as the perceived value of accessibility that can be very important to a WHS where, by nature, and because of the site's history, it may be more difficult to make adaptations (Bi *et al.*, 2007; Gassiot Melian *et al.*, 2016).

Previous studies have focused on identifying a list of factors of perceived value in tourism services, tourism products, tourist destinations, heritage sites and WHS (Chen and Chen, 2010; Gallarza *et al.*, 2021; Gallarza and Saura, 2006; Isa *et al.*, 2018; Mencarelli and Lombart, 2017; Pandža Bajs, 2015; Sánchez *et al.*, 2006; Zhang *et al.*, 2022), as yet there has not been any study on the construct of perceived value at a WHS that includes accessibility factors as it is proposed in this study. UNESCO defines a WHS as a place that has an outstanding universal value transcending national borders (UNESCO, 2019). The city of Quito has been declared National Heritage of Ecuador and Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO for having the largest, least altered and best-preserved historic center in Latin America (UNESCO, 2021). Although cultural heritage tourism is a maturing field (Timothy, 2018), there are still some gaps to address, such as how accessibility has a role in the perceived value at WHS. Hence, the objective of this study is to identify the factors that constitute the construct of perceived value at the city of Quito WHS. This study is structured as follows: literature review, methodology, results, conclusion and theoretical and managerial implications.

### **Literature review**

This section focuses on three main concepts: WHS, perceived value and perceived value at heritage sites. First, the definition and importance of being listed as a WHS are given. Second, a review of the concept of perceived value in the academic literature is provided and the dimensional structure of perceived value that has been used and adapted in tourism literature is explained. Third, specific reference to the conceptualization and the multidimensional approach of perceived value at heritage sites and WHSs are addressed.

#### *World Heritage Site*

WHSs are defined by UNESCO as those places that have exceptional universal value, and these places are inscribed on the World Heritage List to be protected (UNESCO, 2019). According to Saipradist and Staiff (2008), the World Heritage Listing and the World Heritage Convention strengthen the conservation, identification and transmission to future generations of monuments or places from exceptional places from the point of view of art,

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history, science, conservation and aesthetics. Likewise, the recognition is an indication of the importance and objective authenticity of the heritage (Poria *et al.*, 2013). The advantages of being part of the World Heritage List are (Yang *et al.*, 2010): first, it attracts a large number of international tourists through marketing campaigns, because WHSs are broadly used in marketing campaigns to promote national tourism; second, it helps to maintain and protect those heritage sites through the financial and technological aid from UNESCO. According to Breakey (2012) and Kim *et al.* (2007), this recognition, in many cases, results in increased visitation, especially by international tourists. Nevertheless, this designation has not always led to international tourists increase as this is frequently influenced by other factors, such as accessibility and marketing factors (Boyd and Timothy, 2001). Furthermore, WHSs should not be perceived as a product in the traditional sense but as products with tangible, commercial components and intangible elements. The tangible and commercial components at WHSs are core products and services with their features. In contrast, intangible elements are linked to the accessibility of services, helpfulness and interpretation of staff by means of orientating visitors (Vong, 2013).

Heritage is one of the attributes that constitute a site's identity (Bell, 2010), and heritage's definition is related to tourists' behavior and social behavior (Poria *et al.*, 2001). Thus, it is important to comprehend and recognize the types of heritage tourists, their perceptions, experiences and behavior for the sake of better management of the destinations and to determine the accurate strategies, pursuing mainly the protection of the heritage. In the end, a better knowledge of tourists will involve an improvement in destination management (Santa-cruz and López-guzmán, 2017).

*Perceived value.* Perceived value can be assessed in very different ways. The definition of customer perceived value starts with the work of Zeithaml (1988) which is based on the evaluation of the utility of a product. Other more traditional ones are based on benefits and costs, which, according to Zhang *et al.* (2022), confirmed that perceived value is the evaluation of the service or product's utility based on their benefits and losses.

Perceived value has obtained growing attention in tourism research and marketing as an empirical and theoretical construct in the last three decades (Prebensen and Xie, 2017). This construct guides producer as to how to make the product or service to satisfy consumers' needs and expectations in compensation between benefits and costs (Carvache-Franco *et al.*, 2021). Perceive value is an antecedent of satisfaction (Jamal and Sharifuddin, 2015; Lo and Lee, 2011; Mencarelli and Lombart, 2017), providing a direct and positive indicator of customer satisfaction (Isa *et al.*, 2018); likewise, it has been reported that when customer perceived high value in consumption, they are also more likely to repurchase and transmit positive comments (Gallarza and Saura, 2006).

Perceived value can be evaluated from two perspectives: one-dimensional and multidimensional (Yi *et al.*, 2014). Nevertheless, the validity of a unidimensional measure is criticized owing to its statement that customers have a shared denotation of value; in contrast, the multidimensional can surpass this validity issue by operationalizing the construct of perceived value (Chen and Chen, 2010). In tourism, there has been used many measurement scales for perceived value (Mencarelli and Lombart, 2017; Sánchez *et al.*, 2006; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). Considering that the tourism sector has been more relevant, thus will the experiential nature of these experiences, likewise, perceived value certainly correlates to personally gratifying experiences (Spielmann *et al.*, 2018). Accordingly, Gallarza *et al.* (2021) asserted that the perceived value scales such as perceived value scale (PERVAL) and experiential value scale (EVS) concede researchers to examine the multidimensional nature and suggest the scales' appropriateness to measure consumer value in cultural heritage experiences and geographical areas – non-English speaking countries. Beyond the value scales replication in tourism, each method for measuring value has its own benefits and costs and should be applied on its appropriateness for a specific application (Leroi-Werelds *et al.*, 2014).

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Accordingly, there are several factors of perceived value that have been used in previous studies in the tourism literature and related to the measurement scales mentioned before, as explained in this section. As regards, the (functional value) price/value for money used under the research of [Sweeney and Soutar \(2001\)](#) mentioned that it is the utility derived from the product and service owing to the reduction of its costs. Regarding the perceived sacrifice, which are the non-monetary factors – what the client gives up to obtain and consume the product and service – it includes time, effort and energy; likewise, there are factors such as non-monetary that may also be examined as an influential variable in tourist's satisfaction and recommendation ([Lee et al., 2007](#)). According to [Gallarza and Saura \(2006\)](#) in the research about the value dimension, the perceived value of the student's travel behavior in Spain, they asserted that the importance of time and effort as cost of consuming is a very significant outcome; therefore, even if there are the best value offers, if the price discount comes along with time increases, it might no longer be attractive for actual tourists. About the quality value, it is defined as the overall excellence of products and services in the investigation made by [Sato et al. \(2018\)](#). In effect, the destination needs to have good quality because tourists who have enjoyed tourist products of good quality are proven to react positively to the same destination in the future ([Dedeoğlu, 2019](#)); likewise, [Sweeney and Soutar \(2001\)](#) pointed out quality has a significant influence on perceived value; likewise, [Oriade and Schofield \(2019\)](#) asserted quality directly affects perceived value, and [Cronin et al. \(2000\)](#) stated that quality affects perception of value.

Perceived value is a subjective construct and it varies between cultures, times and customers ([Sánchez et al., 2006](#)). The accessibility issue has been included in exploring the specific process of assessing tourist sites, and its importance resided as mentioned by [Boyd and Timothy \(2001\)](#); the increase in the number of international tourists in a WHS is also influenced by the factor of accessibility. Previous studies focus on factors of accessibility by sector such as accommodation, transportation, attractions, eating and drinking ([Bi et al., 2007](#)), and in another study, it has been studied the perceived value of accessibility including the items of accessibility of destination, transport, accommodation, hospitality services, religious sites and religious activities, correspondingly, perceived value of accessibility is demonstrated to impact on satisfaction in non-disable and disable groups ([Gassiot Melian et al., 2016](#)). Other studies talk about accessibility but with people with disabilities ([Burnett and Baker, 2001](#)). Furthermore, there is another study about the perceived accessibility of public transportation systems ([Cheng and Chen, 2015](#)).

*Perceived value at heritage sites.* We have seen that the perceived value factors that evaluate tourism destinations, in general, are the same as those used in WHSs and heritage sites, while other factors are specific to this type of site.

The perceived value factors in WHS and heritage sites also have been studied by previous scholars, as is explained in this section. The perceived price, according to [See and Goh \(2019\)](#) in their study on tourist intention at George Town WHS, is described as the assessment of price based on the monetary value and if the price is appropriate, reasonable and affordable for the customer, then the price is considered as a sacrifice when booking the deal, but the evaluation of price depends on a low-perceived price that points to a low-perceived sacrifice. About the study on perceived value at Chambord, France, a UNESCO WHS, [Gallarza et al. \(2021\)](#) used the price value and economic value. With regard to [Lee et al. \(2016\)](#) in their study about perceived value in Singapore Chinatown heritage precinct, their findings indicate that perceived monetary value is one of the main contributors to perceived value. Furthermore, [Pandža Bajcs \(2015\)](#) in her study on perceived value in the city of Dubrovnik – a UNESCO WHS – asserted that visitors' perceived value depends mostly on destination appearance, emotional experience and service quality; whereas, costs are not that significant; furthermore, her study defined the factor of destination appearance as the historical and cultural monuments, the layout and amount of beaches, the weather, the precise and unique

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appearance of destination, the beauty and attraction of the natural environment. Regarding service quality, value is defined as the service performance, which involves quality performance in all activities assumed by managers and employees (Chen and Chen, 2010; Wu and Li, 2017). According to Zhang *et al.* (2022), in their study on perceived value at a WHS in China they found that the functional value is one of the factors of perceived value that affected travel experience; this factor contains the items that assess: quality service, signages and instructions; information; if facilities meet tourists' needs; the information provided by the tour guide and if service provided is of great value.

## Methodology

### *Destination study*

The city's location originated when the Indigenous people established in this equatorial area before 2000 BC; after that, it was conquered by the Inca Empire because of its tactical geographical position in the 14th century; furthermore, its location was also attractive to the Spanish conquistadors who founded the city of San Francisco de Quito in 1534; these successive conquests led to a city with an architectural and cultural integration of the Indigenous and Spanish cultures (Muñoz-Barriga and Maldonado Pérez, 2020). This cultural fusion is represented by the art of the Baroque School of Quito; likewise, the height of this art is shown by the spiritual citadels, to name just the principal ones which represent this art: Santo Domingo, San Francisco, La Compañía, San Agustín, La Merced, the Sanctuary of Guápulo and the Convent of San Diego (UNESCO, 2021). The city of Quito is located in Ecuador, as seen in Figure 1.

Although Quito was the first city to be awarded as Cultural Heritage of Humanity along with Krakow in 1978 (Burgos-Vigna, 2017), the city still owns one of the best-preserved and extensive historic centers in Latin America for cultural tourism, receiving the World Travel Awards South America's Leading Cultural City Destination award in 2018 (Muñoz-Barriga and Maldonado Pérez, 2020). The city of Quito has the 15.8% of the population of Ecuador.

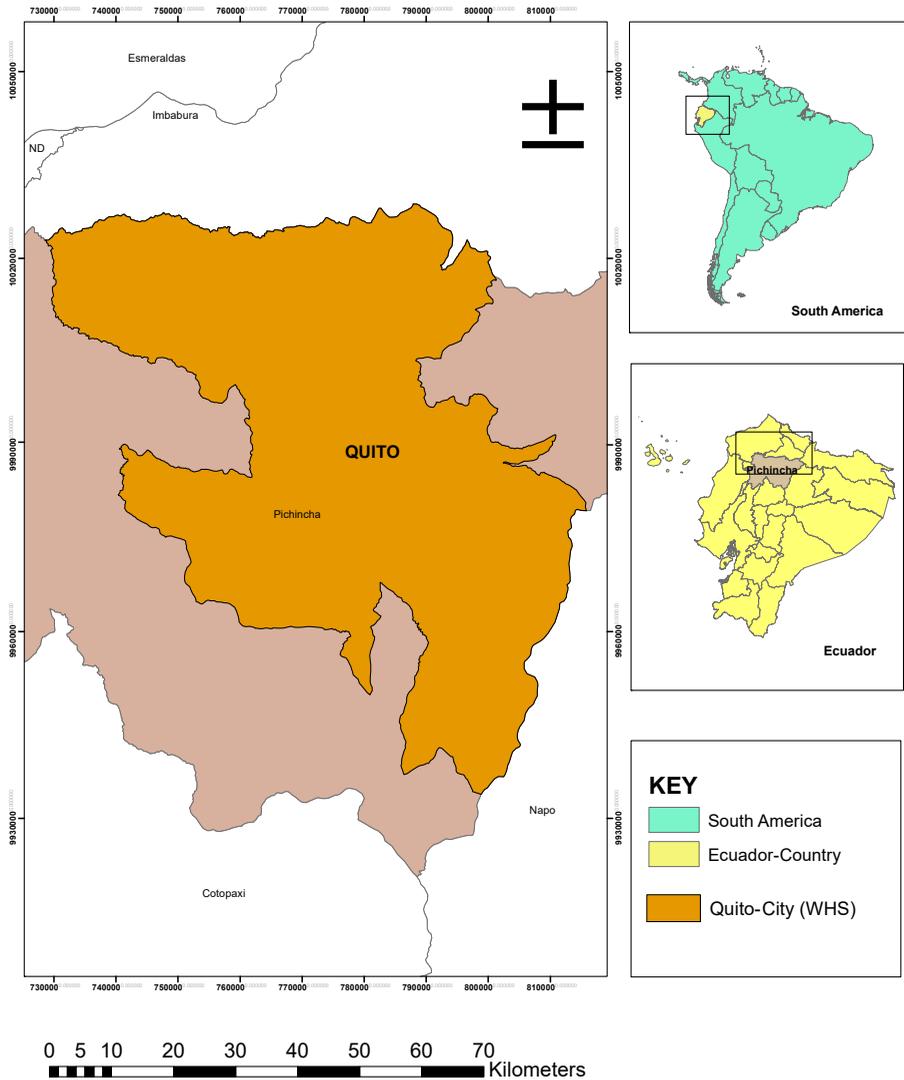
The influence of the Baroque School of Quito on the art (architecture, sculpture and painting) was recognized as cultural interest, along with, the singularity that characterizes Quito where the nature and the action of the man work together to create inspiring work; as a result, the city of Quito was awarded as UNESCO WHS (UNESCO, 2021).

The most visited places in Quito in 2019 were Mitad del Mundo park, the historic center (i.e. churches, El Panecillo, La Ronda), la Mariscal and viewpoints (Quito Turismo, 2020). According to registered non-resident tourist arrivals and average per capita spending in the city, the annual foreign exchange estimated income of the city was 520m US\$ in 2019; additionally, the number of international non-resident tourists visiting the city of Quito in 2019 was 684,390 visitors (Quito Turismo, 2020).

### *Questionnaire design, data collection and data analysis*

This study aims to identify the factors that constitute the construct of perceived value at the city of Quito WHS to reach the stated objective a quantitative methodology has been used. First, a questionnaire was designed to collect the information in the field study. This instrument was elaborated based on previous studies linked to perceived value. The questionnaire was composed of a specific set of questions about perceived value. In total, there are 18 items of perceived value (see Table 1) and other questions about behavioral components and demographic features and characteristics of heritage visitors' trips. The questions associated with perceived value were measured using 18 items taken from some studies (Table 1).

These questions were measured on a seven-point Likert scale (1 being strongly disagreed and 7 is strongly agreed). To improve the survey, an online focus group was developed



**Figure 1.**  
The geographic location of the city of Quito (Ecuador)

with 11 Ecuadorian tourism researchers in March 2020. To develop a final questionnaire, the experts described the factors they believed were necessary for perceived value for the WHS of Quito and analyzed which perceived value factors of the initial questionnaire should be removed or kept. After the focus group was concluded, the researchers identified two factors of perceived value (tourist offer accessibility (TOA) and information accessibility (IA)); two subdimensions of TOA (the accessibility of shopping centers and accessibility in cultural tourist sites); two subdimensions of destination appearance (the historic center of Quito is an interesting place to visit and there are interesting cultural places in Quito (museums, exhibitions, art galleries, etc.) and one subdimension of monetary costs (entrance fees to cultural sites were reasonable (for example San Francisco Church, Quito cathedral, etc.), that were not identified in previous studies (see [Table 1](#)).

Factors	Items	References
Staff service quality	Generally, the employees listen to me and we understood each other	Adapted from Cronin <i>et al.</i> (2000) + focus group
	Generally, the employees make the effort to understand my needs	Cronin <i>et al.</i> (2000)
	Generally, the foodservice provided was at the right time	Adapted from Gallarza and Saura (2006) + focus group
Destination appearance	The city of Quito has natural attractions	Adapted from Pandža Bajs (2015) + focus group
	The city of Quito has urban attractions	Focus group
	The historic center of Quito is an interesting place to visit	Focus group
Monetary costs	There are interesting cultural places in Quito (museums, exhibitions, art galleries, etc.)	Focus group
	Prices for transportation within the destination were reasonable	Adapted from Zhang <i>et al.</i> (2022) + focus group
	The cost associated with the full payment was reasonable	Adapted from Gallarza and Saura (2006) + focus group
Non-monetary costs	Entrance fees to cultural sites were reasonable (for example San Francisco Church, Quito cathedral, Quito's historic center, etc.)	Focus group
	The time cost in planning the trip was reasonable	Adapted from Pandža Bajs (2015) and Wu and Li (2017) + focus group
Information accessibility	The physical effort invested in the trip was reasonable	
	The availability of tourist information	Adapted from Zhang <i>et al.</i> (2022) + focus group
Tourist offer accessibility	Accessibility of tourist information	Adapted from Burnett and Baker (2001) + focus group
	The accessibility of restaurants, cafes, bars	Adapted from Gassiot Melian <i>et al.</i> (2016) + focus group
	The availability of shopping centers	Adapted from Gallarza and Saura (2006) + focus group
	The accessibility of shopping centers	Focus group
	Accessibility in cultural tourist sites	Focus group

**Table 1.**  
Factors of perceived value and literature sources used in the questionnaire construction

The study sample includes both national and international tourists older than 18 years old. Data were collected *in situ* by an interviewer on weekdays and weekends of October and November 2020 at the main tourist attractions of the city. Visitors (residents were not surveyed) were approached when they left the most relevant tourist attractions of the cultural heritage city of Quito or when they were resting in between tourist activities; therefore, the sampling method used in this study was a non-probability convenience sample; this technique was chosen because of its accessibility and ease of the data collection.

The questionnaire in this study used self-reporting to collect data; particular attention was taken to its design to diminish or avoid the potential effects and the inflation of correlations by common method variance (CMV) on the findings of the study (Lindell and Whitney, 2001); furthermore, according to Podsakoff *et al.* (2003) the CMV is usually affected by the ambiguous questions, the type of scale, the complexity of the measurement context of the variables about the position, time and location in the questionnaire. Accordingly, the construction of the items of this questionnaire was calculated to avoid double-barreled questions, ambiguous, unknown and vague terms; additionally, the measures of the predictor and criterion variables were separated in the questionnaire and used different scale endpoints (Chang *et al.*, 2010; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003).

Before analyzing the results, Harman's single factor test was implemented which is an ex-post statistical technique to address the issue of CMV, including all the items of the

construct in the exploratory factor analysis. The results demonstrated a multifactorial solution, where the first factor explained 27.83% of the total variance, which is lower than the threshold of the 50% (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003); hence, CMV is not a predominant issue in this study, and the data collected are ready for the analysis due to the methodological bias is acceptable.

In addition, we estimated the minimum sample size in Soper's statistic calculator (Soper, 2022). Taking into account the number of latent variables (05) and the number of observed variables (18), the anticipated effect size (medium = 3), the statistical power level (0.8) and the probability level (0.05), the recommended sample was deemed to be 150. The final sample consisted of a total of 381 valid questionnaires from 384 that were used for the final analysis after checking the missing data, outliers and invalid questionnaires. The infinite population was used for the estimation of the sample with a margin of error of  $\pm 5\%$ , a confidence level of 95% and a variance of 50%. Previously, a pilot test was conducted with 15 participants that served to make small changes.

Descriptive analysis was used to describe the demographic profile of the sample; the demographic aspects and characteristics of the trip were included in the survey with open-ended and closed-ended questions and were adapted from the studies by Kastenholz *et al.* (2015); Kim and Thapa (2018) and Md Khairi *et al.* (2019). The exploratory factor analysis was used to identify variables in different factors and group them. Reliability analysis was applied to rate the internal consistency reliability of the items through Cronbach's alpha. The statistical software IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), version 25 was used to analyze the data.

## Results

First, the demographic profile of the sample is described. Second, the exploratory factor analysis to identify the different factors of perceived value is conducted and analyzed.

### *Demographic profile*

Demographic characteristics are described in Table 2. Slightly more males than females are included in the sample. Regarding the age, 28.9% of the sample are between 20 and 29 years old, followed by people 60 years old or over (24.7%). Most of the respondents have completed high school at least (48.6%) together with college degrees (27.3%), and more than half of the sample are employees. Regarding nationality, 81.4% are Ecuadorian tourists while 18.6% are international tourists. As for their origins, 14% are from South America, 1.5% from North America and 2.2% from Europe.

### *Factor analysis*

Exploratory factor analysis was carried out, maximum likelihood estimation was used as a factor extraction technique and the Promax rotation method was applied.

Table 3 provides the fit results. Factors loadings vary from 0.610 to 0.950, so the results of this study show that all the factor loadings exceed the value of 0.5 suggested by Hair *et al.* (2014). To look for the adequate number of factors, the Kaiser criterion was used, where just those factors with eigenvalues greater than one are selected. Five factors are obtained that characterize 61.32% of the total variance, sustaining the cut-off value of 50% and therefore deemed satisfactory. The Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) of the factors ranges from 0.80 to 0.94, demonstrating a high internal consistency in each of the factors. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) index is 0.78, indicating that sampling is adequate. Moreover, Bartlett's sphericity test is significant ( $p$ -value < 0.05). Hence, the five factors obtained in Table 3 are justified and adequate.

Variables	Frequency	%	Perceived value in Quito, World Heritage Site
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	206	54.1	
Female	175	45.9	
<i>Age Group</i>			
<20	21	5.5	
20–29	110	28.9	
30–39	71	18.6	
40–49	54	14.2	
50–59	31	8.1	
>60	94	24.7	
<i>Level of education</i>			
No studies	14	3.7	
Primary school	74	19.4	
High school	185	48.6	
College degree	104	27.3	
Master	4	1.0	
<i>Professional activity</i>			
Unemployed	58	15.2	
Student	33	8.7	
Retired	49	12.9	
Employee	201	52.8	
Other	40	10.5	

**Table 2.**  
Demographic characteristics of respondents ( $n = 381$ )

Thus, the identified five factors of perceived value regarding the WHS are as follows: (1) monetary and non-monetary costs (MNC), (2) staff service quality (SSQ), (3) TOA, (4) destination attractiveness (DA) and (5) IA.

As seen in [Table 3](#), the first factor is “Monetary and non-monetary costs” and this is the main factor with the highest explanatory capacity of the total variance (27.25%); this result is supported by [Lee et al. \(2016\)](#). This factor is associated with the following variables of perceived value: price and time and effort value and it is defined as the utility derived from the product and service owing to the reduction of its costs and the physical effort and cost of time when consuming the product. The second fundamental factor is “Staff service quality”, which corresponds to 13.69% of the total variance; this second one is related to variables of the employee service performance and it is defined as the overall excellence of products and services, this finding is supported by [Sweeney and Soutar \(2001\)](#). The third factor is “Tourist offer accessibility” that is related to the findings of [Gassiot-Melian et al. \(2016\)](#); this factor represents 13.11% of the total variance, and it is defined as the perception of availability and accessibility of several tourism sectors (food and beverage, shopping center and cultural sites). The fourth factor is “Destination attractiveness” as used in the findings of ([Pandža Bajcs, 2015](#)), which corresponds to 8.91% and is described as the existence of cultural, natural and urban sites and the tourist appreciation of these places. The last factor is “Information accessibility” and represents 7.96% of the total variance; this factor is related to the quantity and quality of accessible and available information about services and tourist products, and this finding is related to the results of [Zhang et al. \(2022\)](#) and [Burnett and Baker \(2001\)](#).

In summary, these results revealed 18 items and its 5 factors for the construct of perceived value, which are related not just to price, time and energy spent, quality and the

Factors and variables	Loading	$E^*$	$V^{**}$	$\alpha$	$\bar{x}$	SD
<i>Factor 1: Monetary and non-monetary costs (MNC)</i>						
MNC 1: Physical effort invested in the trip was reasonable	0.887	4.90	27.69	0.85	6.44	0.952
MNC 2: The time cost in planning the trip was reasonable	0.827				6.51	0.822
MNC 3: The cost associated with the full payment was reasonable	0.648				6.41	1.008
MNC 4: Entrance fees to cultural sites were reasonable	0.635				6.34	1.094
MNC 5: Prices for transportation within the destination were reasonable	0.610				6.49	0.853
<i>Factor 2: Staff service quality (SSQ)</i>						
SSQ 1: Generally, the employees of the tourist sites visited make an effort to understand my needs	0.948	2.46	13.76	0.91	6.48	1.001
SSQ 2: Generally, the employees of the tourist sites visited listen to me and we understand each other	0.917				6.44	1.046
SSQ 3: Generally, the foodservice provided was at the right time	0.749				6.48	1.051
<i>Factor 3: Tourist offer accessibility (TOA)</i>						
TOA 1: The accessibility of restaurants, cafes, bars	0.759	2.36	13.08	0.80	6.54	0.944
TOA 2: The accessibility of shopping centers	0.708				6.55	0.858
TOA 3: The availability of shopping centers	0.700				6.62	0.746
TOA 4: Accessibility in cultural tourist sites	0.674				6.58	0.873
<i>Factor 4: Destination attractiveness (DA)</i>						
DA 1: The city of Quito has urban attractions	0.762	1.60	8.85	0.80	6.53	0.794
DA 2: There are interesting cultural places in Quito (museums, exhibitions, art galleries, etc.)	0.756				6.55	0.768
DA 3: The historic center of Quito is an interesting place to visit	0.687				6.59	0.762
DA 4: The city of Quito has natural attractions	0.642				6.56	0.790
<i>Factor 5: Information accessibility (IA)</i>						
IA 1: The availability of tourist information	0.950	1.43	7.90	0.94	6.44	1.175
IA 2: Accessibility to tourist information	0.930				6.43	1.191
<b>Note(s):</b> $E^*$ = Eigenvalues; $V^{**}$ = % of variance explained; $\alpha$ = Cronbach's alpha; $\bar{x}$ = mean and $SD$ = standard deviation						

**Table 3.**  
Factor analysis of  
perceived  
value ( $n = 381$ )

attractiveness of a destination, but also including other aspects considered important according to [Vong \(2013\)](#) and [Boyd and Timothy \(2001\)](#), such as the accessibility of a site.

### Conclusion

The study aimed to find the factors that constitute the construct of perceived value in a WHS, the city of Quito. Our findings revealed 5 factors and 18 items regard to the outcomes, the monetary and non-monetary price is the factor with the greatest total amount of variance of the construct of perceived value, which is the most important factor followed by the SSQ as the second important factor and the TOA as the third important factor; the fourth factor is DA and the last factor is the IA. Hence, the perception of value for tourists can be seen as a determinant to enhance the touristic offer and the marketing strategies; the perceived value of the city of Quito is mostly affected by the monetary and non-monetary value, the SSQ and the TOA, which means that marketing activities and destination management should attend to those factors. As the analysis has shown those results, the destination management can increase the perceived value of Quito by providing tourists the benefits of not only reducing costs, reducing energy and effort and improve the quality of the service but also emphasizing the accessibility in terms of assuring the standard of accessibility in cultural tourist sites, shopping centers, and restaurants, cafes, bars etc.

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## Discussion

The results of this research revealed that tourists give more importance to the factors: MNC, SSQ and TOA. Therefore, the largest contributing factor to perceived value at WHS is the MNC; this finding is supported by the results and conclusions of the study of [Lee et al. \(2016\)](#) concerning monetary value is one of the main contributors to perceived value; on the other hand, findings are opposite to the results of [Pandža Bajs \(2015\)](#), which stated that visitors' perceived value depends mostly on destination appearance, emotional experience and service quality but not on costs. The second contributing factor is SSQ; the importance of this factor is consistent with the results and conclusions of [Sweeney and Soutar \(2001\)](#) whose investigation confirmed that quality value was important in explaining perceptions. This is also consistent with the research by [Dedeoğlu \(2019\)](#), who asserted that tourists who has appreciated good quality of products are demonstrated to respond positively to the same destination in the future; moreover, [Sweeney and Soutar \(2001\)](#) and [Oriade and Schofield \(2019\)](#) both asserted that quality has a significant influence on perceived value and also consistent with [Cronin et al. \(2000\)](#). Finding also revealed that the two most important variables of the factor MNC are "physical effort invested in the trip was reasonable" and "the time cost in planning the trip was reasonable"; this result is consistent with the conclusions of [Gallarza and Saura \(2006\)](#) as regards to time and effort is an important cost of consuming and that not only best value offers are attractive for actual tourists if price discount comes along with time increases. Regarding the TOA factor, the importance of the accessibility factor has also been revealed in the findings of [Gassiot Melian et al. \(2016\)](#). Concerning the DA, in this study, DA is one of the last factors that explain the perceived value construct; opposite to this statement, in the findings and conclusion of [Pandža Bajs \(2015\)](#), the perceived value is strongly influenced by the destination appearance. A better understanding of these factors helps to develop appropriate marketing strategies and to adjust tourism products and services to meet tourists' needs and expectations. This research will contribute to the academic literature, the stakeholders of the tourism industry and destinations related to cultural heritage experience.

## Implications

### *Theoretical implications*

First, this study identifies the dimensional structure of perceived value in the context of the city of Quito being declared a WHS. There are no previous studies that have investigated and identified the factors that constitute the perceived value in the city of Quito, even though earlier studies in other destinations have proposed different dimensional structures of perceived value and have used and adapted different measurement scales for perceived value in tourism, heritage sites, WHS, for example ([Gallarza et al., 2021](#); [Gallarza and Saura, 2006](#); [Pandža Bajs, 2015](#); [Wu and Li, 2017](#)). The results of this study suggested a five-dimensional structural framework of perceived value including these factors as follows: MNC, SSQ, TOA, DA and IA; this further confirmed that multidimensional can surpass this validity issue by operationalizing the construct of perceived value ([Chen and Chen, 2010](#)) and conceded researcher to know the multidimensional nature of perceived value. This finding also suggested that in the city of Quito (WHS), monetary and non-monetary value, SSQ and TOA affected to travel to experience the most; and those factors are more valued for tourists. Nonetheless, the perceived value factors of DA and IA exert less influence over tourists' perceived value of the travel experience.

Second, this work suggested for the first time two factors of accessibility to be aggregated as part of the construct of perceived value in a WHS. This new inclusion of accessibility to the construct of perceived value specifically in a WHS respond to the statement of the study of [Boyd and Timothy \(2001\)](#) that there are other factors that play an important role in the WHS

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such as the accessibility, supporting previous studies of [Vong \(2013\)](#) that WHS should be perceived as tangible and intangible elements and the former includes the accessibility of services. Although previous studies have investigated the perceived value of accessibility in tourism ([Gassiot Melian et al., 2016](#)) and perceived accessibility of public transportation system ([Cheng and Chen, 2015](#)) and factors of accessibility of a tourist destination or as travel criteria for disabled tourists ([Burnett and Baker, 2001](#)), none of them were in the context of a WHS or in a heritage experience.

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### *Managerial implications*

This study suggested that WHS managers should entirely recognize the relevance of perceived value to improve their products and services to offer values that are according to the customers' needs and expectations. Nevertheless, several factors influence the construct of perceived value differently; then in the case of this study, MNC, SSQ and TOA factors have the strongest influence on the construct of perceived value. Hence, the stakeholders of the WHS should create their products and services to offer attractive MNC, SSQ and considering the accessibility standards. For instance, this work confirmed that the most prominent subdimension of MNC are the variables related to time and effort followed by price; therefore, this work suggests developing strategies that involve customers' less physical effort and less time acquiring a product or service, along with price policies. More research into the variable of physical effort and time is required to interpret the internal assessment of costs. SSQ is another important determining factor of perceived value; therefore, stakeholders should develop training programs to improve the staff's service attitude, skills and knowledge for all the sectors of tourism to guarantee satisfactory customer service. TOA is another relevant factor of perceived value and it is indispensable to attend to the conservation and restoration of both heritage and non-heritage infrastructures and assure their accessibility standards.

This study is not without limitations. The limitations are the use of the non-probability convenience sampling and that the fieldwork was carried out during low season in Ecuador, because the demand may vary. Furthermore, the collection of the data was during the global coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, which affected the number of tourist arrivals.

This study is the first approach to examine accessibility in WHS as a whole. Therefore, accessibility is studied using attributes of various services and products offered at the destination related to cultural sites, food and beverage, shopping center and information about the destination. Further research should focus on other sectors like accommodation, transportation and souvenir stores or focus just on one sector and give more attributes items about the accessibility-related to that single sector, which can contribute to a better perception of accessibility for each sector of tourism. For instance, the impact of social and emotional factors on perceived value cannot be appreciated in this study. For future research, we leave scope for the inclusion of these factors. Additionally, the different factors of perceived value in this study can also be applied to other cultural heritage experiences.

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Perceived  
value in Quito,  
World Heritage  
Site

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6. Generally, the employees of the tourist sites visited make an effort to understand my needs								
7. Generally, the food service provided was at the right time.								
8. Prices for transportation within the destination were reasonable								
9. The cost associated with the full payment was reasonable								
10. Entrance fees to cultural sites were reasonable (for example: San Francisco church, Quito Cathedral, Quito's historic center, etc.)								
11. The time cost in planning the trip was reasonable								
12. Physical effort invested in the trip was reasonable								

**Part 2: Perceived value construct**

7. Please rate from 1 to 7, (where 1 is “very bad” and 7 “very good”) the following aspects of your visit (Mark with an X each item)

Perceived value in aspects of Quito	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
1. The availability of tourist information								
2. Accessibility of tourist Information								
3. The accessibility of restaurants, cafes, bars								
4. The availability of shopping centers								
5. The accessibility of shopping centers								
6. Accessibility in cultural tourist sites								

**Part 3: Other constructs**

8. Please rate from 1 to 7, (where 1 is “very disagree” and 7 is “strongly agree”) your general satisfaction in the city of Quito. (Mark each item with an X).

General satisfaction in the city of Quito	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Overall, I am satisfied with my visit to the heritage city of Quito							
2. I am satisfied with my visit to Quito considering the time and effort dedicated							
3. My expectations of the heritage city have been fulfilled							

9. Value from 1 to 7 (where 1 is “very disagree” and 7 is “strongly agree”) your general satisfaction in the city of Quito. (Mark each item with an X).

Variables de volver y recomendar la ciudad de Quito	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. I would return to the same tourist destination in the future							
2. I will say positive things about the city of Quito as a city accessible to my acquaintances							
3. I would recommend the tourist destination as accessible to family and friends							

**Part 4: Visitors’ demographic profile**

10. Nationality: Ecuadorian Foreign

11. Country and city of origin: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Gender: Female Male Others

13. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ years

14. What is your marital status?  
 Single  Divorced  Others \_\_\_\_\_  
 Married  Widower

15. What is your level of completed studies?

- He has no studies                       College degree  
 Primary school  
 High school

16. What is your main job status? Mark only ONE answer

- Unemployed                       Employee  
 Student                       Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 Retired

17a. What is your income level or net monthly income (Dollars/ month)?

- Less than \$500             From \$501 to \$1,000             From \$1,001 to \$1,500  
 From 1,501 to \$2,000             From \$2,001 to \$2,500             From 2,501 to \$3000  
 More than \$3000

17b. What is your income level or net monthly income (Euros/month)?

- Less than €500     From €501 to €1,000     From €1,001 to €1,500  
 From €1,501 to €2,000             From €2,001 to €2,500  
 From €2,501 to €3000             From €3,001 to €4000  
 From €4,001 to €5000     More than €5000

18. Do you have any type of permanent, chronic or temporary disability or illness? If your answer is NO, the survey ends here.

- Yes                       Not

19. If your answer was YES, what type of disability do you have? You can mark more than one answer.

- Hearing impairment                       Motor disability  
 Visual                       Mental impairment  
 Vocal (speaks)                       Others \_\_\_\_\_

20. What is your level of disability?

- Low                       Moderate                       Serious

21. Do you need an assistant/caregiver?     Yes                       Not

22. Do you need assistive devices (wheelchair, etc.)?     Yes                       Not

23. If your answer was YES, which of the following devices do you need?

- Crutch                       Wheelchair  
 Walking stick/cane                       Others \_\_\_\_\_
-