



Direct service from Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW) to Caribbean/Latin America



Hodges University Hispanic Institute

Prepared by:

Carmen Rey-Gómez, M.S.W.
Director, Hispanic Institute

Research Assistants:

Abadis Ruiz
Yuri Castro

Hodges University
4501 Colonial Blvd., Fort Myers FL, 33966
hispanicinstitute@hodges.edu



PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

Southwest Florida has been experiencing a demographic shift for some time and there has long been interest in direct airline service to the Caribbean/Latin America. The purpose of this study was to quantify the interest for direct service from Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW) to Caribbean/Latin America.

This report is based on data collected by surveying one thousand and three (1003), Hispanics and Non-Hispanics in Lee and Collier County. The survey was adapted from the Caribbean and Latin American Survey conducted by the Lee County Port Authority in 2007. The surveys were conducted in English, face-to-face, by phone, email and placed in local newspapers with the help of collaborating partners, the Southwest Florida Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the Hispanic American Business Alliance (HABA).

Demographic information is provided by The Hispanic Institute secondary data foundation report on the *Demographic and Economic Indicators of the Hispanic Communities in Lee and Collier County*. This project was conducted in 2008-2009 and produced and funded by Hodges University. Using the data from the 1990 and 2000 Census and the 2005-2007 American Community survey, a comprehensive and comparative overview was provided on a variety of statistical indicators including population growth, national origin, age, gender, language, household composition, poverty, employment and education. Census estimates for 2009-2010 were also used.

Points to consider in the study are highlighted below:

- Over 46 million Hispanics reside in the United States. (*American Community Survey-2009*)
- Of all states, Florida has the 4th largest share of Hispanics in the United States.
- Although there was a recent slight decline, Florida's demographic composition continues to show increases in the Hispanic Population. In fact, 18.7% of Florida's population is foreign born, higher than the national average of 12.5% and 75% of those are from Latin America. (*American Community Survey-5 year estimates 2009*)
- Currently, over 40% of the population in Lee and Collier County is Hispanic with Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Cubans representing the largest groups. There has also been an increase among Central and South American Hispanic groups such as Guatemalans, Hondurans and Colombians. (*Demographic and Economic Indicators of the Hispanic Communities in Lee and Collier County 2009*)
- Most of the Hispanics living in the United States maintain close ties with family members in their native countries. This includes first and second generation Hispanics.
- Southwest Florida continues to be a desirable destination for family and leisure activities. With the expansion of the Southwest Florida International Airport, this area has increased its viability as a prime location for economic development and educational attainment.



SURVEY FINDINGS

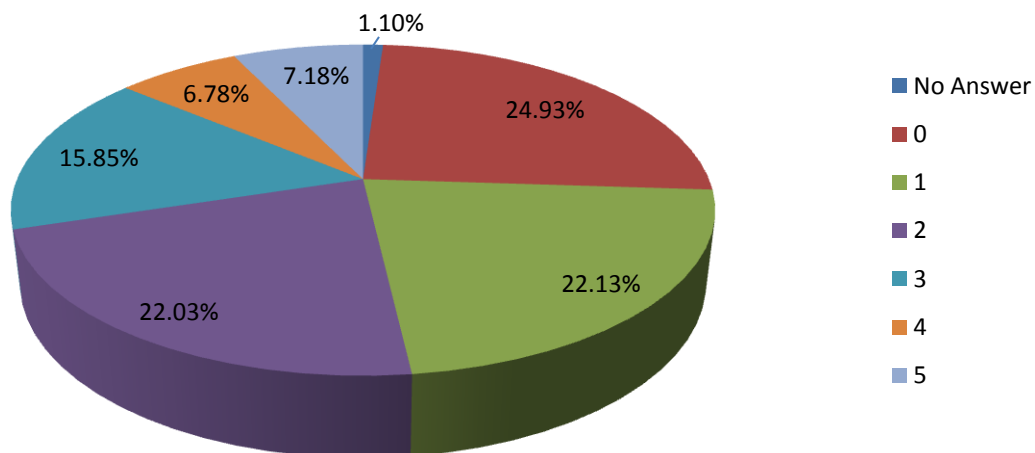
This section provides a written and graphic illustration of the survey findings by question.

Findings:

- According to the 2009 census estimates, 25.2% of Collier, 16.2% of Lee, 4.8% of Charlotte, 47.0% of Hendry and 17.5% Glades Counties are Hispanic. (*American Community Survey-5 year estimates 2009*)
- On average, respondents would pay \$392.00 for a roundtrip ticket from RSW to the Caribbean/Latin America from RSW.
- 46% of respondents would travel to Puerto Rico and 21% would travel to the Dominican Republic. Other travel destinations included: Cuba, Saint Thomas, Grand Cayman Islands, Jamaica, Bahamas, Mexico, Costa Rica, Honduras, Colombia, Brazil, Venezuela, Perú, Argentina, Anguilla, Bolivia and Nicaragua.
- Only 22.13% survey respondents travel at least once to the Caribbean/Latin America from RSW, while 24.93% originate their travel from other Airports.
- 38.68% of respondents originated their travel from Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (FLL), compared to 16.95% or 170 from RSW.
- 50.39% of respondents travel to Caribbean/Latin America for pleasure, 35% for personal reasons and 12.33% traveled there for business.
- An overwhelming 94.42% of respondents would travel more if direct service to the Caribbean/Latin America were offered through RSW.

Q-1

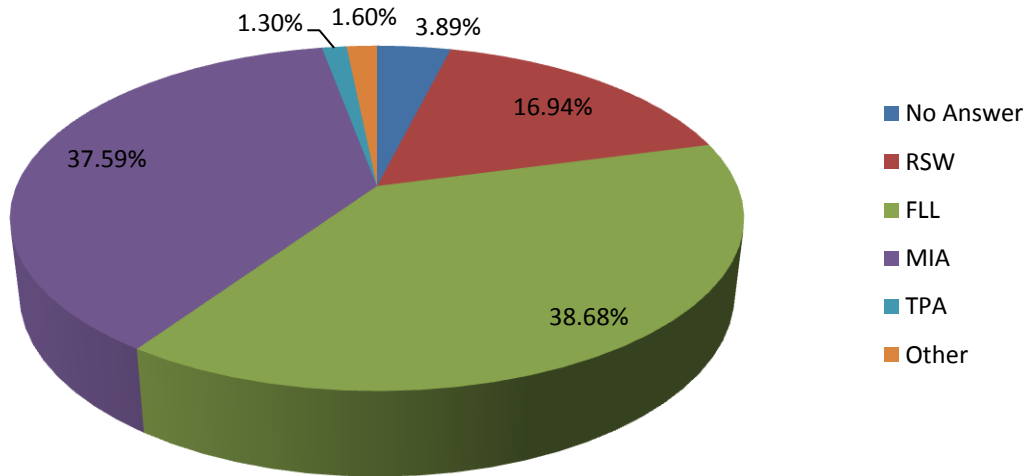
On average, how many times a year do you travel from Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW) to the Caribbean/Latin America?



SURVEY FINDINGS

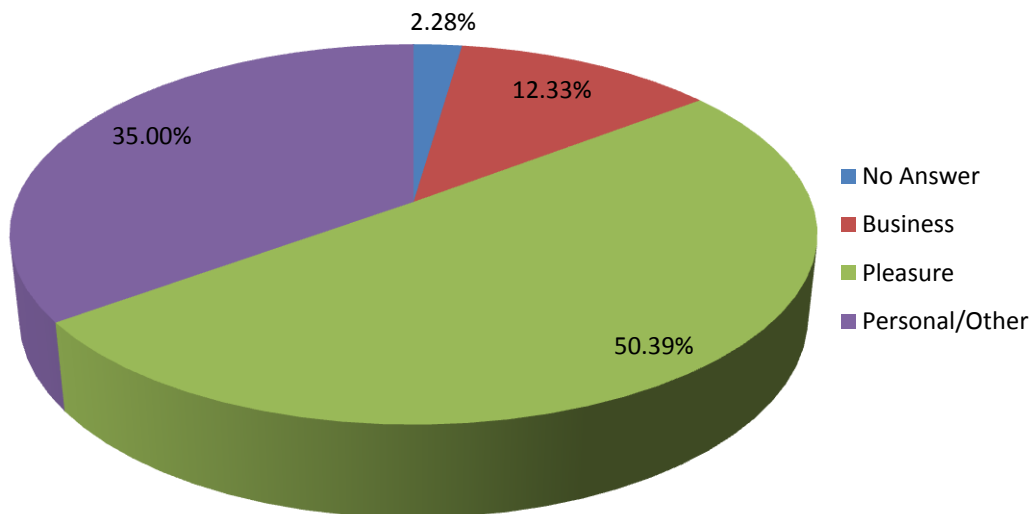
Q-3

Which airport do you primarily use when traveling to the Caribbean/Latin America?



Q-4

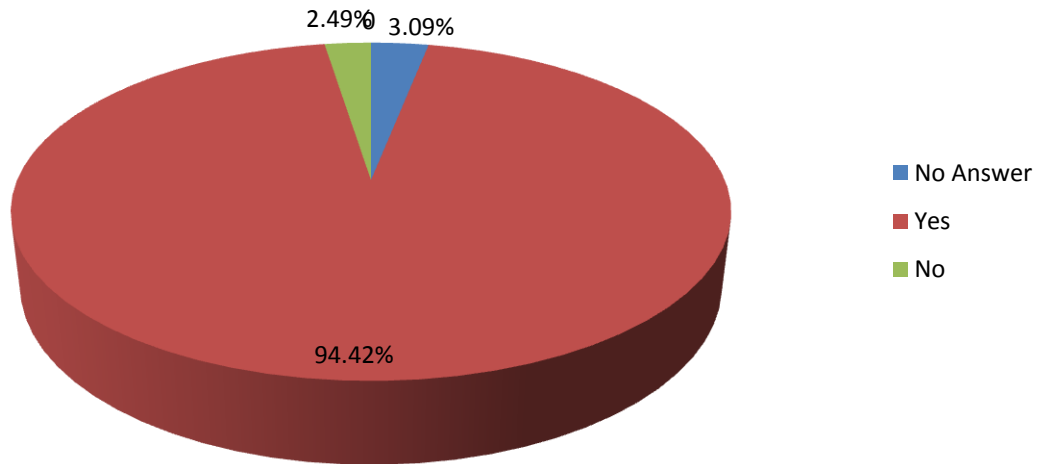
What is the purpose of the trip(s)?



SURVEY FINDINGS

Q-5

Would you travel more frequently if there were non-stop flights from Southwest Florida International Airport to the Caribbean/Latin America?



Acknowledgments

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APPENDIX

- Survey Questionnaire
- Survey Responses

