Correlation Between Creative Tourism and Agrotourism Services Experiences: An Empirical Research in The Mexican Rural Tourism Environment

Alma Cristina Gomez Macfarland, Ph.D.,c, ITESM
Hector Gomez Macfarland, Ph.D., Huston Tillotson University, USA
Rohan R. Thompson, Ph.D., Huston Tillotson University, USA

ABSTRACT

There is an immediate need to promote rural areas, where the country's greatest poverty is concentrated in the development country as Mexico. The most relevant preferences of the new modern tourist are based mainly in living experiences. The creative experience as the basis of Creative Tourism can be adopted by agrotourism, a type of Rural Tourism, that consist in offers to the tourist activities which are based in nature contact through intangible process and living experiences sharing the main economic activities rural people do every day. Thirty tourists from 18 to 23 years of age participated in agrotourism workshops as ointment workshop, food workshop, pulque workshop, embroidery workshop, farming workshop and guide visit to the ecological reserve.

The most important results that the analysis of all narratives, experience maps and audiovisual material shows is that the essence of Creative Tourism “creative experience” understood as Experience: active participation, and creative :easy to use and novelty are variables that appears represented in the different written and graphic expressions shared by tourists, and at the same time they appeared as the good part of the experience or the opportunities to make the experience better, so agrotourism should include while designing agroturistic products these variables as part of a “creative experience”.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The UN recognizes that global tourism is a concept that is becoming increasingly important and is an effective instrument to participate in the global economy and fight against poverty and UNWTO emphasizes the importance of carrying out responsible practices seeking development of sustainable tourism that must make optimal use of resources, respect the socio-cultural authenticity of communities and ensure long-term economic activities (UNWTO, 2014. UN, 2013). One way to get a sustainable tourism, is by promoting creative tourism. According to Chang, Backman, and Huang (2014), creative tourism should be used as a method for countries to separate themselves from each other distinctively. In an industry that is very competitive, creative tourism offers developing countries the opportunity to be unique and showcase their natural beauty (Chen & Chen, 2015).

Having tourist directly submerged within the culture of the country creates a memorable experience because of the practical application (Cai, Lehto & Huang, 2010). Creative tourism is not meant to replace traditional tourism but rather enhance the experience. Developing countries can use creative tourism as means to bridge the gap with countries who possess more resources (Chen & Chen, 2010; Lo & Lee, 2010; Richards, 2011; Richards & Marques, 2012). Because of its purity, creative tourism provides the opportunity for developing countries to showcase its culture in an inexpensive manner (Prebensen, Woo, Chen & Uysal, 2012).
Developing countries are afforded the opportunity to create new services and industries and combine existing sectors that may not have been possible with traditional tourism (Stojanovic, Petkovic & Mitkovic, 2012). For example, tourism can now be paired with education by providing classes to tourist on different topics such as cookery, painting and other arts and crafts. With the combination of tourism and cultural activities, countries will be provided the chance to increase jobs across many sectors while sharing its norms and beliefs with the world (Tan, Kung & Luh, 2013).

In Mexico there is a great need to promote areas where the country's greatest poverty is concentrated and which at the same time have a rich cultural and natural wealth that is being wasted, the tourism sector may be a favorable response to this need, however, during the last decades, Mexico has promoted an agrarian policy that has increased poverty levels in the rural population, mainly among indigenous groups, and that is why rural tourism in marginalized spaces represents an alternative to promote rural territorial development (Juárez et al., 2007), understanding this type of tourism as an opportunity for rural areas threatened and at risk of their traditions disappearing (Saarinen, 2014).

In tourism, designing successful strategies, not forgetting that the preservation of cultural identity to avoid over commercial development (Ting et al., 2015), therefore, rural tourism turns out to be a viable solution to achieve these objectives. By understanding experience in agrotourism, this contemplates specific personality of those involved in the community, physical and mental to coexist with visitors and physical work agrotourism related to the participation / contact of tourists in agricultural activities, such as the cultivation of food, collection of them, gastronomic process (Daniloska et al., 2015).

There is an immediate need to promote rural areas in the country taking advantage of the benefits of the tourism sector, trends in it and the new demands of the new modern tourisms (Jakovie, 2015) while the tourism offer is based on resources natural and cultural resources that the community has with a particular focus on the promotion of the countryside and agriculture (main activity in rural areas) and this offer is designed creatively to meet tourist expectations and economic activity based on tourism is sustained in the community as a viable source of income and jobs. Under this panorama, creative tourism opens a door to a world of innovative strategies that revolutionize tourism in many ways.

Creative tourism is tourism that seeks the active participation of tourists, enhancing their creativity, while learning and achieving local connection (Richards, 2007). Creative tourism is a form of tourism that listens to today's tourist, who theoretically defines how to achieve differentiation from one destination to another in a sustainable way and much more attractive to the tourist market.

According to Kiralova et al., (2016) the expectations of visitors have changed and they are looking for interactive experiences and personalized approach. The concept of creative tourism is studied by Kiralova et al., (2016) as an advantage for agrotourism and the main purpose of their study is to contribute to the theory of agrotourism models by incorporating creative tourism, and to contribute to theory of designing agrotouristic services including new variables that are related to the preferences of the new modern tourist and at the same time support the goal of offer sustainable, interactive, more attractive agrotouristic services taking advantage of the main economic activities that local people do in rural areas while its cultural and natural resources are preserved.

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

This research main purpose is to bring the principles of creative tourism, specifically its essence embodied in the concept of creative experience to agrotourism, in order to design experiences in agrotourism services taking into account the demands of today's tourists. The construct of “Experience” is
defined under the subcategory of “active participation” from the perspective of involvement in the process of the workshops, and “creativity” under the categories of "Easy to use", defined as instructions, concrete steps, level of difficulty, and the level of “novelty”, defined as the differentiation between usual life and tourist experience. (Tan et al., 2013, Ting, 2015, Richards, 2011, Obridska-Olson et al., 2010, Chang et al., 2014, Luo et al., 2016). The main concepts of the research objective are defined in figure 1.

The methodology is a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques. The quantitative study was carried out in the city of Puebla and Cholula in State of Puebla, Mexico, specifically in tourist centers in the month of June of 2016 to a sample of 483 tourists through the application of a survey which its main objective was to explore how much tourists have consumed rural tourism, what kind of rural tourism and specifically about the tourist who consumed agrotourism the survey explore their perceptions about the experiences they lived. For the qualitative study the narrative interview was used. The narrative is a traditional way of communicating content with meaning that allows to transmit lived experiences (Horkheimer et al., 1975). Narratives can be gathered from different research sources such as observation, written documents, images, among others (Creswell JW, 2014). In the same of June 2016, 30 tourists from 18 to 23 years of age who reside in the State of Puebla, the city of Puebla and surroundings, particularly the La Preciosita community located in the state of Puebla where they were taken. Six women offer agrotourism services, ointment workshops, food, pulque, embroidery, field and visit to the ecological reserve.

Figure 1
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the qualitative study the following steps were followed: 1. The participants are previously explained the concept of agrotourism and experience. Tourists who have greater knowledge and awareness are more inclined to engage in the creative experience (Tan et al., 2013). 2. The participants will then experience the agrotourism services offered by the La Preciosita community such as: embroidery workshop, food workshop, pulque preparation workshop, field workshop, ointment preparation workshop and natural reserve workshop. 3. The participants are invited to narrate through texts, trajectory maps and materials such as photos and videos their experiences where they express steps of a lived process. All the participants were invited to narrate their experiences and / or represent them through the use of graphics that would allow them to map their experience and identify the negative and positive points of it from their perspective as tourist consumers. They managed to collect 20 graphics and their interpretations, which were sent in digital format via email or shared in the cloud and 260 videos, photos and audios of their experiences during the consumption of the workshops.

HYPOTHESES

H1: The inclusion of creative tourism in the design of agrotourism services can satisfied tourist experiences demand.

H2: The design of agrotourism services must include the "creative experience" to cover the demands of tourism experience in the agrotourism consumer.

H3: The variables "active participation" to define "experience" and "easy use" and "novelty" to define "creative" positively impact the satisfaction of the tourist who consumes agrotourism.

H4: The new modern tourist knows and has consumed rural tourism, specifically about agrotouristic services related to

MAIN RESULTS

Quantitative Study

With an average age of 35 years with 56% men and 44% women, just over 30% students and just over 50%, 64% national tourists and 37% foreign tourists, almost 80% traveled for leisure reasons and / or visit family and friends. 65% used land transportation, 40% self-owned and 25% bus or car rental. 75% travel accompanied and 88% do it with their family and friends, and they can sleep up to more than 6 nights, this stays longer tourists usually make more than 25 years and over 70% foreigners. 27% overnight for 1 to 2 nights, 50% for 3 to 8 nights and 23% for more than 8 nights, the latter group being able to extend their stay to months for studies or temporary work. The shorter stays are those that have to do with medical care or Health.

Only 33% of the sample said they had ever done rural tourism and although that leaves an important 67% never done, of which 59% would like to carry out activities of rural tourism at some time. The 33% that has carried out activities of rural tourism more than 85% said to have realized activities of observation, long walks or routes like the most mentioned, followed of extreme activities or outdoors and related with typical food, of this 33% only little more 50% was totally in agreement with the fact that the rural tourism activities he carried out were creative, fun and actively participated in them. Of the group that said it would like to try, 43.4% said that they would like to try agrotourism as a type of rural tourism,
21.70% nature tourism, 20.85% gastrotourism and little more than 10% food routes or other rural tourism activities. The most common ages of those who have done rural tourism are between 20 and 35 years old.

**Quantitative Main Conclusions**

The tourist has participated in rural tourism activities before and enjoyed doing it.

The tourist who has not participated in rural tourism would like to do it and the type of rural tourism more mentioned as the one they would like to do was agrotourism. This can be understood as an opportunity to support agrotourism development and to improve this tourism experience including important variables as: active participation, easy to use and novelty.

Half of The tourists that has participated in rural tourism evaluated the experience as fun, creative and active participation.

More than 70% of the tourists who has participated in rural tourism evaluated the experience as an experience that provide them cultural richness about the destiny. Interest is confirmed by the tourist for carrying out rural tourism activities. It is confirmed that the rural tourism activities that the tourist performs most are related to agrotourism.

**Qualitative Study**

For the analysis and reporting of results the technique of Discourse Analysis was used, this technique can be studied as text analysis, content analysis, conversation analysis. "The core of the study of all textual analysis does not refer to the text itself, but to something that is within it, what the text means, to its meaning" (Martínez, 2004).

The graphs that represent the trajectory of the lived experience have the following characteristics:

- Maps define 7 to 20 positive, negative and neutral points by experience.
- The experience lived in general by the national tourist can be encompassed in three stages according to the analysis of the 20 graphs received:
  - Path to the community and arrival at it.
  - Consumption process of workshop
  - Way of return and arrival to exit point.

In the stage "process of consumption of workshop" the texts and the graphs (experience journey maps) are analyzed, and it is determined that the tourist:

- Look for more participation and interaction in the workshops, looking for an efficient participation.
- Seeks clear communication and adequate equipment that reaches all the group's tourists
- The tourist enjoyed the community sharing their knowledge and experience in the theme of the workshops.
- The tourist enjoyed observing and interacting with the natural resources of the community.

**Qualitative Main Conclusions**

The tourist appreciates the culture of communities and their natural resources looking for learning, connection with the local people and contributing to the economic development of the same while living a different experience.

The tourist expectations in these agrotouristic workshops is to enjoy the experience knowing instructions and having useful and enough equipment to participate.

The tourist prefers interaction with the community as a the novelty part of the experience as well as learning as part of the expectations of the agrotouristic workshop. It can be said that the analyzed
variables of the concept of creative experience in agrotourism are tied with tourist preferences (according to previously defined categories and subcategories).

In the quantitative methodology it could be proved that new modern tourist consumes and would like to consume rural tourism and they prefer agrotouristic activities. Half of these rural tourism consumers considered their experiences as funny, creative and with active participation. In the qualitative methodology the proposed stage “Consumption process of workshop” as a stage to divide the experience, the tourist look for more active participation, clear communication to understand what to do in the workshop (easy to use) and enjoyed connecting to people as in something they don’t do frequently (novelty) Both methodology support the main objectives of this study, agrotourism has a potential to include creative experiences looking for the variables: experience “active participation” and creative “easy to use” and “novelty” in order to satisfy new modern tourist experiences.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is expected to contribute to the theory of agrotourism models by incorporating variables that are based on the concept of creative experience within creative tourism: experience “active participation” and creative “easy to use” and “novelty”.

It is expected to contribute to the theory of the design of agro-tourism services through retaking the negative points in the analysis of the text and graphs (consumer journey maps).

Reaffirming theories that propose models of rural tourism with a focus on agrotourism that includes the community / community participation factor as a key element for tourism to achieve preferences tourist while living the experience looking for novelty by connecting to local people.

Mexico has the opportunity to develop a different tourism with a sustainable and creative social impact, taking advantage of natural and cultural resources and generating differentiators in rural tourism and specifically in agrotourism.

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