



Research Article

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Quality and Tourism Supply: A Study of Enterprises Linked to Rural Community-Based Tourism in the Canton of Riobamba

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Abstract

This article focuses on the quality and supply of community-based tourism in the rural parishes of Calpi, Cacha and San Juan in the canton of Riobamba, Ecuador. The objective was to study the quality of the supply of community tourism services in the rural parishes of the canton of Riobamba and to determine the characteristics of the supply, services and tourism products. The methodology used was interpretative, documentary and descriptive. The results obtained show that there is a lack of tourism organisation in the rural parishes of the canton of Riobamba. Therefore, standards should be determined to regulate the practices of service providers in order to boost their productivity and promote actions that contribute to the social, economic and environmental development of the canton of Riobamba. State organizations should promote solidarity-based tourism activities to strengthen the active participation of the community from an intercultural perspective.

Keywords: Rural Tourism, Quality of Services, Tourism Offer, Entrepreneurship, Riobamba

1. Introduction

The World Tourism Organization (2017) has for decades emphasized on considering tourism as the fastest growing economic sector, generating within its scope and purposes a dynamism to generate development in countries, thus responding to the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (2001), when it refers to Article 5 which states "the community will be directly associated with tourism activity, in order to obtain economic, social and cultural benefits, especially with regard to sources of employment; giving priority to local personnel, who expect to improve their standard of living", therefore, tourism does not only imply transport services, accommodation and maintenance of one or several people, it also involves

social, cultural, environmental and economic activities; at the same time, it focuses its efforts on the receiving community, which allows for the dynamization of its commercial sector.

Thus, community-based tourism is "Any activity that links the community with visitors from an intercultural perspective, with the consensual participation of its members, ensuring the proper management of natural and cultural resources and the equitable distribution of the benefits generated" (WTO, 2017). Similarly, tourism is conceived as the foundation of local development managed from the community bases and associated with programmed to combat poverty, with the advantages for these communities being socio-economic improvements, cultural appreciation and an increase in the quality of life of the communities involved.

It is necessary to highlight that community-based tourism is a fundamental pillar for local economic development, and there are various international organizations that have intervened to strengthen this type of alternative tourism, such as the Community Tourism Network in Latin America (2020); WTO (2017); World Wide Fund for Nature (2020), among others, with their main interest being to work on strategies that contribute positively to local development. Hence, the contributions of community-based tourism to generate sustainable and long-term development respond to four fundamental axes: organization, heritage and culture, natural resources and economy.

In this way, and considering Manyara & Jones (2007), community-based tourism has a direct economic impact on the families of the community itself, the socio-economic development of the geographical area and the sustainable diversification of lifestyles, given that community-based tourism includes the dynamization of the local economy, diversification, access to and promotion of local products, job creation and the generation of direct economic resources. Therefore, for Pawson et al. (2017), community-based tourism has contributed positively to community development, but there is still a need to improve financial sustainability, business practices and community support.

Likewise, community-based tourism groups a set of tourism modalities that are developed in the rural/natural environment to satisfy the motivations of visitors, mainly of urban origin, and contribute to the local development of rural areas, under the principles of sustainability (Toribio & Vilardell, 2007).

1.1 Theoretical foundation

The Plurinational Federation of Community Tourism of Ecuador (FEPTCE, 2010) emphasizes the community-visitor relationship from an intercultural perspective, in addition to the development of organized trips, the appropriate management of natural resources, the valuation of their heritage, and the cultural and territorial rights of nationalities and peoples for the equitable distribution of the benefits generated. In the same vein, it is worth noting what is stated in Article 21 of the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador (CRE, 2008), which refers to the right of people to build and maintain their own cultural identity, to decide on their belonging to one or several cultural communities and to express these choices; to aesthetic freedom; to know the historical memory of their cultures and to have access to their cultural heritage; to disseminate their own cultural expressions and to have access to diverse cultural expressions. Similarly, the CRE, (2008) in Article 74 indicates that "individuals, communities, peoples and nationalities shall have the right to benefit from the environment and natural wealth that allow them to live well". In CRE, (2008), Article 275, states that "good living will require that individuals, communities, peoples and nationalities effectively enjoy their rights and exercise responsibilities within the framework of interculturality, respect for their diversities, and harmonious coexistence with nature".

These regulatory frameworks that protect the constitutional precepts of tourism denote two relevant aspects for the understanding of the aforementioned articles, the first corresponding to the rights of nature and the second to environmental rights in the framework of Good Living, which is therefore a recognition of natural processes, their dynamics, life cycles, resilience capacities and their right to restoration.

Within the framework of interest of this research, it is worth highlighting the province of Chimborazo, a province located in the south-central part of the country, in the geographical area

known as the inter-Andean region or highlands. To this end, in 2009 the Ministry of Tourism (MINTUR, 2010) issued the "Instructions for the Registration of Community Tourism Centres (CTC, 2010), the Regulations for Community Tourism Centres with the purpose of supporting communities seeking to develop tourism as a tool to fight poverty" (RCTC, 2010). By virtue of being a new alternative for generating employment for these vulnerable sectors, as well as improving the quality of life, preserving cultural identity and the environment.

Community-based tourism is a management model in which the local community takes advantage of the natural and/or cultural heritage of the region in which it is located to develop and offer a tourism service characterized by active community participation in the planning and execution of actions aimed at promoting the sustainable development of the population through the reinvestment of the benefits derived from tourism activity (RCTC, 2010).

In view of the above, it should be noted that the province of Chimborazo, in terms of community-based tourism, is characterized by services, indeterminate products and undefined processes that require a significant margin of quality that go hand in hand with the needs and desires of the tourism market. However, the populations of the province that offer community tourism services have been identified with an offer that is not directed to a specific target market, and the internal organizations of the service providers lack resources and appropriate structures in accordance with the particularities they possess. On this basis, it is considered imperative to determine the quality standards that regulate the practices of tourism service providers in the communities in the rural parishes of Riobamba to boost productivity within the growing market, such as tourism, which constitutes an economic alternative and integral development for the direct and indirect beneficiaries (providers and suppliers) of the related localities.

Tourism cannot be considered as an object of enquiry and isolated from the context, whose characteristics are self-explanatory (Ledhesma, 2017). Therefore, each locality has a tourist characteristic or identity, which synthesizes the entire social, cultural, economic and political context, i.e., it is the reflection of the life of a population. This reflection of life is constituted by characteristic resources of each place, which in the tourist market represent a potential, this is known as the tourist resource, referring to the natural or cultural element that can motivate displacement, but is not yet incorporated in the tourist dynamics, nor does it have any type of support infrastructure (MTE, 2020).

In order to determine the potential in a technical way, it is essential to evaluate the infrastructure, services and activities that the resources can generate, for this, it is essential to apply the methodology of tourist attractions, which is in force in the national territory, and has the purpose of ranking the tourist attractions defined as well as, as a valued record that, due to its natural and cultural attributes and opportunities for the operation, constitutes part of the tourist heritage (MTE, 2020). It is a base element for tourism management, planning, execution and evaluation of the territory (MTE, 2014).

2. Methodology

This research was oriented according to the qualitative-interpretative method, understood as one that identifies the deep nature of the realities, its system of relationships, its dynamic structure, the objective of this study was to study the quality of the supply of community tourism services in the rural parishes of the canton Riobamba and determine the characteristics of the services, and community tourism products; for this, a descriptive type of research is developed, which consists of evaluating certain characteristics of a particular situation at one or more points in time (Cejas, 2017).

The focus of this research involved the collection of information through theoretical views and positions, concepts, definitions and contributions, defining those trends, situations and conclusions that allow for a deeper understanding of the interpretation process (Bernal, et al., 2015).

The research responds to the documentary design, which is characterized by its methodological rigor, guiding the path to follow in the research process, as well as constituting a process where it is necessary to review background information, making inferences and relationships, to account for this accumulated knowledge and extend beyond what is known (Bernal et al., 2015). To this end, in the

documentary process it was possible to explore the register of service providers, current regulations; a diagnosis of the current situation of the supply, the identification of rural parishes that offer community tourism and the determination of the tourism services and products offered by the parishes. Subsequently, the methodology was developed and instruments for the collection of information were reviewed, such as technical diagnostic sheets to determine the characteristics of community tourism services, such as accommodation, food and beverages, tourism operations, and community tourism centers.

Finally, a descriptive and explanatory analysis was carried out to determine the characteristics of the products and services offered in the parishes. For the collection of information on attractions, the MINTUR methodology (2017) was used. Additionally, the technical sheets validated by the Ministry of Tourism will be used to determine the characteristics of community tourism services. The methodology and instruments will then be shared with the participants, the tourism facilities will be identified, the resources and/or attractions will be determined and the tourism activities for the rural parishes will be defined.

Table 1: Content analysis phases

Phase	Activity
Theoretical Pre-analysis	In which information is organized through a superficial review of documents in scientific journals and specialized websites, allowing the emergence of the first hypothetical approaches to work. In this regard, a review of documents was developed through the identification, selection and organization of information to expand and deepen the topic addressed with the support of websites and scientific journals.
Descriptive - analytics	Where the articles are described and analyzed. At this stage, according to the conceptual descriptions addressed in content analysis, central and priority elements emerge, therefore an array of analysis was applied as an information recording tool.
Interpretive	Step in which content analysis is interpreted according to the emerging categories of academic production published in the journal. Once the information was analyzed, the theoretical foundations of the research were drafted interpreting and supporting according to the theoretical inputs of the different authors

Source: Arbeláez y Onrubia (2014)

Table 2 describes the central and priority elements of the study represented in categories and subcategories for better understanding (Loor et al., 2018).

Table 2: Content analysis matrix

Objective	Category	Subcategories	Analysis units
Study the quality of the offer of community tourism services in rural parishes in the canton of Riobamba and determine the characteristics of services, and community tourism products	Quality of Tourism	- Improving and increasing technological advances - Promoting social transformation, shaping behaviour and customs in general. - Diversification of demand in the global tourism market.	Lópezo & Palomino (2014)
	Tourist Service Offer	- Need for correction or improvement measures that are implemented in each and every area of management and operation of tourism companies. Improving product quality - Ensuring sustainability by producing the least possible impact - Search for management in business development and therefore its socioeconomic performance. - The existence of a limited and dispersed tourist system, which depends mainly on the regions where its community rural attractions (accommodation and food services) meet, and while are mainly linked to an offer of activities in the forest and based on local culture.	Fernández, (2011) Ledhesma, (2017).
	Community Tourism	- Need to expand entrepreneurship plans. - Encourage self-management and entrepreneurship of communities, - Partnerships with international cooperation agencies, non-governmental agencies, non-profit foundations and the public sector.	World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2017).

Therefore, the desire to travel is a characteristic feature of developed and developing societies, which generates a diversification of demand in the global tourism market, since its particularity lies in the fact that the tourism product does not move but the tourist travels to a specific product (MINTUR, 2014). This is identified as an international commercial service that represents 30% of exports of commercial services or 6% of goods and services, which constitutes for many countries one of the main sources of income, creating sources of employment and development for the localities involved (WTO, 2016). On the other hand, in 2016, 1.237 billion international arrivals were recorded, a 3.9% increase over the previous year, which represents a significantly positive projection for world tourism (WTO, 2016).

These data reveal the importance of tourism for the development of several countries and their destinations. However, traditionally, the possibility of tourism development has been something that was a lucky draw. A sort of lottery for those places that had been blessed by nature (beach, climate, mountains, etc.) or by history (great monuments, museums, etc.), and which would therefore sooner or later, and in a somewhat mechanistic way, end up becoming places of welcome and development linked to leisure and tourism. Consequently, the negative view of this argument was that, on the contrary, those areas that had not been favored by certain circumstances had no possibility of developing in terms of tourism (Ávila & Barrado, 2005). This suggests the need to develop strategies to promote the development of tourist destinations and attractions.

The participation of the different actors converges in commercial activities that characterize local communities, cities, countries, etc., to the point of generating economic autonomy, with various business alternatives, which the inhabitants begin to consider as the first alternatives, such as the following statement: "Tourism happens beyond the limits of any tourist destination, it is found before and after, outside and inside; in environments where there are non-tourist interactions that contextualize it, complement it, influence it and are influenced by it. Where there is a subject thinking about tourism, there is tourism" (Ledhesma, 2017). Therefore, we can add that tourism is not only the consumption of services, but lies in a particular form of experience that the human being wishes to live, in a specific place, either in their own locality or outside it, all this is possible because tourism is a decision made by an individual, therefore, this cannot be defined perpetually, and that is why we have several modalities or types of tourism that try to fit with the different environments in which it develops (Cejas et al., 2021).

The diversity and particularities of tourism are executed with the interaction of the visitor and the local when consuming a service, sharing a geographical place or in the action of exchanging information. According to studies, even when contact between visitors and residents is not profound, the simple observation of visitors provokes attitudinal changes, perceptions of the scale of values on the part of the receiving community, called the demonstration effect. This effect is present in the interaction of the locality together with national and international visitors. Based on these criteria, the impact of tourism must be managed from different spheres, both positive and negative, for the cultural and natural conservation of the resources.

In this sense, it is confirmed that the development of tourism is directly involved in social, economic, political and other changes, based on the need for a constant search for the singularization and diversification of products that can respond to personalized consumption (López & Palomino, 2014). This diversification must consider the current valuation by a tourist who appreciates more the complete experience, including the trip along with the consumption of services and activities in the specific destination, i.e., each element counts more and more, and therefore it is essential to work considering the individual perception, and this is only possible when the supply (host community) knows the details of its demand.

It should be noted that currently the perception of tourism reflects a constant dynamic that because of connectivity and current accessibility has drawn a prosperous path for local communities, which have been mentioned, and in this vast diversity at a global level, it is essential to identify differentiating factors such as cultural or tourist identity that are naturally unique to each community.

This environment is easily perceptible in the rural sector, where the essence is preserved

differently from the growing urbanity (Fernández, 2011; Anzaldúa, 2020; López and Palomino 2014), also highlighting that the inhabitants of rural communities such as in Mexico and Argentina have been diversifying their offer through Community Tourism; defined as the different forms of collective use of their natural resources, generating enterprises managed by the actors themselves and contributing, along with other activities, to their social and economic reproduction (Villavicencio et al., 2016).

This background reflects a condition that has been developing since the 1980s in Latin American countries, Africa and Asia in rural localities. For Anzaldúa et al. (2020) and Buades et al. (2012), the conditions that have favored rural tourism have generated alternatives to an increasingly complex situation in agriculture and livestock farming, which are the main livelihood activities in these sectors. However, despite having several strategies and policies, they are affected by other factors that generate a sub-optimal environment for the development of rural tourism and consequently for the endogenous economy (Villavicencio et al., 2016).

Thus, the situation drives the emerging innovation of the activities and productive units of the sector through this tourism modality, such as Community Tourism. The benefits of the rural sector, specifically the lands under community jurisdiction are provided with many natural resources, which are the object of investments by the State, companies and private organizations. This involves service projects and tourism activities also at considerable levels of investment by hotel chains and real estate companies that have been proposed by various specialists in the thematic area (Román et al., 2017). This scenario is currently identified as Alternative Tourism which, when linked to the participation of indigenous communities, commonly marginalized, interact in this dynamic.

In the case of Ecuador, Community-based Tourism is considered "a management model in which the local community takes advantage of the natural and/or cultural heritage of the region in which it is located to develop and offer a tourism service characterized by active community participation in the planning and execution of actions aimed at enhancing the sustainable development of the population through the reinvestment of the benefits derived from tourism activity" (MTE, 2020). In this sense, the governing body of the Ecuadorian tourism activity MINTUR, (2010) has sought to strengthen these activities and services, however, there are other agencies, which based on the uniqueness of indigenous peoples and their historical and cultural context, requires knowledge of their own roots that have been represented since time immemorial with Dolores Cacoango and Transito Amaguaña, who have historically contributed to the country and indigenous rights, and of course, speaking today of Community Tourism in Ecuador this background is a fundamental pillar. In relation to this argument the approach of this form of tourism is also defined as (FEPTCE, 2010) which expresses, "All solidarity tourism activity that allows the active participation of the community from the intercultural perspective, proper management of natural heritage and valuation of cultural heritage, based on a principle of equity in the distribution of local benefits" (Procasur, 2018). These definitions cited above emphasize the participation of local communities in the direct management and operation of tourism activity in their jurisdictions, which leads to a condition or predisposition capable of satisfying the conditions of the current tourism market. Thus, FEPTCE has identified the axes of community-based tourism as: organizational strengthening, cultural revitalization, territorial management and solidarity economy.

3. Discussion and Results

In the rural parishes of the canton of Riobamba, various activities have been developed in the field of tourism at the rural level which have led to the creation of a deficient community offer, causing the offer of resources, tourist attractions, services and activities without technical, regulatory and administrative knowledge that would allow for a structure with adequate procedures, functions and standards, which has led to limited quality, unknown services, undefined products, undefined processes, causing a lack of knowledge of good practices and dissatisfaction among clients. The strength of rural tourism lies in the aspects related to the capacities of the rural inhabitant to relate to tourists through words, attitudes, the environment and the activities of the rural environment. However, without good organization, tourism

development processes will be inefficient (Anzaldúa et al., 2020).

The lack of organization on the part of tourism agents, as well as the limited management by the governing bodies of tourism activity, has also influenced the lack of commitment to the socio-economic development of rural parishes, a poor corporate image, incipient competitive advantages and poor accessibility to new markets. As described by Cejas et al. (2020), the organizational assessment of attractions allows for the design of tourist routes. Considering their optimisation, location, socio-cultural homogeneity and aspects indicated by the centre-periphery model.

A large part of the community service providers and their workers are not specialized in the tourism sector, which results in a deficient management and administration of resources. Similarly, for Pawson et al., (2017) in the absence of specialized tourism management in rural areas, growth levels will be limited. The rural tourism enterprise is relative in terms of the knowledge and professional training of the staff. In this way, the tourism offer can generate interest on the part of the state and the communities that would potentially benefit from it. Faced with this problem, it is imperative to determine standards that regulate the practices of service providers to boost their productivity and promote actions that contribute to social, economic and environmental development, generating satisfaction among the actors involved in tourism (Latin American Community Tourism Network, 2020).

Table 3: Community rural tourism ventures of the Riobamba canton

Entrepreneurship	Description	Reaches	Observations
CALERA SHOBOLPAMBA	Location: Parish: Organization: Services: Attractions: Products:	Riobamba San Juan Private Accommodation: 0% Food: 0% Operation: N/A Transportation: N/A Guianza: N/A Natural: 01 Cultural: 01 Products: 0 Markets: 0	
	Human Talent:	Women: 10 Men: -	
	Observations	The internal - organizational structure must be consolidated to define which tourist services to offer.	
CHAKANA MONTANA TEMPLE	Location: Parish: Organization: Services: Attractions: Products:	Riobamba San Juan Private- Mashi Inn Food 49% Operation: N/A Transportation: N/A Guianza: N/A	
	Attractions	Natural: 1 Cultural: 0	
	Products	Products/A Markets: N/A	
	Human Talent	Women: 2 Men: 1	
	Observations	The provision of the service is limited by a weak organization.	
MOYA	Location Parish Organization Services	Riobamba Capli Commentary Organization La Moya Accommodation: 46% Food: 49% Operation: N/A Transportation: N/A Guianza: 25%	
	Attractions	Natural: 0 Cultural: 0	
	Products	Products: 3 International Market	
	Talento Humano	Women Men	
	Observations	Accommodation facilities should consider an organizational structure of care and own adaptations for optimal service.	

PUCARATAMBO	Location Parish Organization	Riobamba Hid Community Organization- FECAIPAC	
	Services	Accommodation: 58% Power supply: 64% Operation: N/A Transportation: N/A Guianza: N/A	
	Attractions	Natural: 1 Cultural: 1	
	Products	Products: Markets: N/A	
	Human Talent	Women: 8 Men: 7	
	Observations	Marketing is dependent and there is conflict over the management and organization that allows the legality of the service.	
QUILLA PACARI	Location Parish Organization	Riobamba Calpe San Francisco de Cunuhuachay Community Organization	
	Services	Accommodation: 56% Food: 49% Operation: N/A Transportation: N/A Guianza: 25%	
	Attractions	Natural :1 Cultural: 0 Products:1 International Markets	
	Human Talent	Men :0 Women: 60	
	Observations	The human talent described does not correspond to a specific organizational structure for services but a community collaboration does not specify	
	Observations	The entrepreneurship is focused on textile production and is intended to generate services. However, what is necessary is clarity in the activities that you want to perform to generate a specific organic structure.	
TAMBOHUASHA	Location Parish	Riobamba San Juan	
	Attractions	Natural:0 Cultural: 0	
	Products	Products: 0 Markets: N/A	
	Human talent	Women: 18 Men 10	
	Observations	The food service is suspended and not operational, and the interpretation center does not have the right conditions. collaborators are focused on Textile Production	
Home CONDOR	Human Talent:	Riobamba San Juan Private- Pulingui Association San Pablo Accommodation: 43% Power supply: 43% Operation: N/A Transportation: N/A Guianza: N/A Natural: 01 Cultural: 01 Products: 0 Markets: 0	The venture has commercial dependence on external and has not innovated according to current conditions.
	Human Talent:	Women: 1 Men: 1	
	Observations	The entrepreneurship is focused on textile production and is intended to generate services. However, what is necessary is clarity in the activities that you want to perform to generate a specific organic structure.	
WAMANHUAY	Location: Parish: Organization:	Riobamba San Juan Community Organization - Mirador Alto Chorrera Community	
	Services:	Accommodation: N/A Power supply: N/A Operation: N/A Transportation: N/A Guianza: N/A	
	Attractions:	Natural: 0 Cultural: 0	
	Products:	Products: 0 Markets: N/A	
	Human Talent:	Women: 18 Men: 06	
	Observations:	The entrepreneurship is focused on textile production and is intended to generate a&b services. However, what is necessary is the clarity in the activities that you want to carry out to generate a specific organic structure.	
	Observations	The entrepreneurship is focused on textile production and is intended to generate a&b services. However, what is necessary is the clarity in the activities that you want to carry out to generate a specific organic structure.	

Source: Own Elaboration (2021)

Organized community-based rural tourism is an opportunity for communities to integrate tourism activities into the productive system (Procasur, 2018). For this to happen, the unification of both public and private organizations is necessary. The union and professionalization of communities and sectors improve rural tourism development (Fernández, 2011). The tourism enterprises reflected in Table 3 show the basic record of the structure of establishments in the province of Riobamba. The data show that there is no comprehensive representation of adequate service provision. An optimal service provision contributes to the revaluation of the territory (Loor, et al., 2018). Similarly, the results show that these are enterprises that have been developed by the community itself. These enterprises do not have government support. Which means that the enterprises do not have the expected development by the community. Compared to other studies, rural tourism requires government support (López & Palomino, 2014). These models are imposed as a complementary economic activity to agriculture (Ledhesma, 2017). This allows small producers to diversify and expand their source of income. Therefore, decreasing their dependence on monoculture.

4. Conclusions

Ecuador does not have experiences of community-based tourism that have generated an impact within the framework of the expected quality and tourist offer. This sector is characterized by being highly heterogeneous, and presents different degrees of consolidation that are fundamentally due to endogenous conditions that are specific to the locality, i.e. the canton of Riobamba, Province of Chimborazo; however, the effort made within the framework of rural community development shows an activity that requires more consistent mechanisms for the generation of a rational use of tourist and environmental resources and the direct and proper involvement of the population.

Nevertheless, the undertakings reflected in Table 3 represent a great effort, valuing and taking advantage of all the potentialities that rural communities have and that reflect several plans to develop their socio-organizational capacities. However, it is evident that there are countless conditions whose circumstances depend on institutional policies and government systems in Ecuador that allow for the consolidation of a real supply and demand in this sector, which is so important for the sustainable development of countries, and which in turn allow for the consolidation of productive enterprises, the participation of the rural/community in decision-making and the promotion of the development of the compendiums within the framework of tourism growth.

In this way, tourism enterprises in the rural community sector represent a great challenge that allows for the consolidation of structures adapted to the new demands of tourists, internal organization, organizational processes, management of tourism activities, among others, in order to offer a better service, maintenance of indigenous spaces and tourist attractions, development of professionalization plans that could favor activities with a greater projection in the markets and, finally, the search for forms of productive social organization that allow for the generation of a large demand through the supply of their own attractions.

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