

RESEARCH / INVESTIGACIÓN

Analysis of the Tourist System of Casacay Parish, Passage, Ecuador

Análisis del Sistema Turístico de la Parroquia Casacay, Pasaje, Ecuador

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Resumen: La gestión turística del cantón Pasaje busca potenciar a nivel nacional los atractivos turísticos que dispone. Entre los que destacan balnearios de agua dulce, práctica de turismo de aventura y zonas con biodiversidad óptimos para promover el turismo. La actividad turística en las zonas rurales permite incrementar la economía y el desarrollo de proyectos enfocados al turismo en busca del aprovechamiento sostenible de los recursos naturales y culturales, a través del análisis del sistema turístico, el cual comprende el resultado de una serie de factores interrelacionados (internos y externos). El objetivo principal de la investigación es identificar el estado actual de la parroquia Casacay, y los indicadores que pueden potenciar la actividad turística en el territorio. La metodología empleada fue el método exploratorio descriptivo mediante la ficha de levantamiento y jerarquización de atractivos turísticos del MINTUR con un enfoque de observación directa. Los resultados plasmaron que existe recursos naturales potenciales para realizar actividades de recreación, además de datos estadísticos de los indicadores en beneficio de la comunidad para la gestión y desarrollo de estrategias.

Palabras clave: Sistema turístico, potencialidad, recursos turísticos, factores internos y externos, turismo.

Abstract: The tourist management of the canton Passage is aimed to strengthen the available tourist attractions it has at national level. Among these, freshwater spas, adventure tourism practice and areas with optimal biodiversity to promote tourism can be highlighted. The tourist activity in the rural areas allows increasing the economy and the development of projects focused on tourism in search of the sustainable use of natural and cultural resources, through the analysis of the tourism system that includes the result of a series of interrelated factors (internal and external). The main objective of the research is to identify the current status of the Casacay parish, and the indicators that can enhance tourism activity in the territory. The methodology used was the descriptive exploratory method through the survey and ranking of tourist attractions of MINTUR with a direct observation approach. Results reflected that there are potential natural resources to carry out recreation activities, in addition to statistical data of the indicators for the benefit of the community for the management and development of strategies.

Keywords: Tourism system, potential, tourism resources, internal and external factors, tourism.

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INTRODUCTION

According to the World Tourism Organization (UNTWO), tourism includes the activities carried out by people during their travels and stays in places different from their usual environment and for a period less than a year, with purposes of leisure, business and other reasons. Thus, as an activity performed by visitors, tourism does not correspond to a productive economic activity, but a consumption activity (UNWTO, 1994).

Tourism has been an activity of an increasing movement in recent years in Ecuador. However, the El Oro Province and especially the canton Passage are benefitted from the development and promotion of their tourist destinations. Las Nieves Passage, named after our ancestors is formed by its nature, which offers a great variety of tropical forests, exquisite biodiversity, mountains, rivers, etc., as well as its people and culture (Barriga & Soledispa, 2014). The tourist offer of rural communities is based on the development and sale of handicrafts, trekking, freshwater spas, agritourism, Creole gastronomy and local festivals.

In order to discern the importance of the tourist system as systematic model for the application in tourist attractions as to analyze the territorial tourist development, the present study encompasses three stages: stage 1 includes the subsystems that compose it, stage 2 the study of the dimensions, and stage 3 is composed by criteria in relation to development and politics.

The present work is directed to investigate in the Casacay Parish the tourist potential. Among its objectives the following can be mentioned: To analyze the components of the tourist system of the Casacay Parish, Passage. Thus, both weaknesses and strengths of the elements of the tourism systems are detected.

At present, it is possible to observe areas that seem excluded from the globalization process, being subcontinents, countries or other regions, even within the developed nations themselves. Hence, the need to analyze what happens in those local spaces, apparently without importance, and how these could achieve a socioeconomic development according to their resources and cultural values.

The reality of the canton Passage is located in the Coastal region of Ecuador and is one of the cantons of the El Oro Province, which limits with Azuay Province. It has a variety of tourist attractions, highlighting natural resources such as waterfalls, rock formations, river, flora and fauna, and cultural manifestations.

The tourist activity is the result of a complex process of interrelations between sets of elements that analyze tourism from an overview as a system. In order to achieve this, the characteristics of the tourist system of tourist attractions and external dimensions were identified. The parish includes the tourist potential by being surrounded by mountain systems, Western Foothill Forest and rivers such as Jubones, Huizho and Tobar. The same that have freshwater spas, besides having lagoons, petroglyphs and bowls in the Tobar river. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out an analysis of the conditions in which this tourist system is developed.

In this context, the tourist system is conceived as a process that implies the construction of an integrated system that studies elements such as superstructure, offer, receiving community, infrastructure and demand.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology to be used in the present work is the exploratory descriptive method, with a direct observation approach. Exploratory is referred to an in situ visit to the attractions of the Casacay Parish study population. This allows obtaining visual information of the current status of the site, and descriptive because with the instrument used, the survey sheet and ranking of tourist attractions of the Ministry of Tourism, information about the intrinsic characteristics was obtained. In addition, reports were also obtained from previous works, in order to know the current situation of the tourist system based on internal study factors and to determine the tourism potential.

The research and review of bibliographic material in primary and secondary sources such as books, scientific articles, official documents will be used for the technical sustenance of research work.

RESULTS

In this stage, the aspects proposed in the survey sheet and ranking of tourism attractions will be analyzed, based on a set of criteria designed to determine the conditions presented by the attraction and its assessment based on a hierarchy.

Table 1: Weighting criteria.

Weighting of natural and cultural attractions		
	Assessment criteria	Weighting
1	Accessibility and connectivity	18
2	Tourist plant/complementary	18
3	Conservation status and site/ environment integration	14
4	Hygiene and tourist security	14
5	Policies and regulations	10
6	Activities that are practiced in the attraction	9
7	Dissemination, means of promotion and marketing of the attractiveness	7
8	Visitor registration and influx	5
9	Human resources	5
	TOTAL	100

Source: own. Methodology manual for hierarchy of attractions and generation of tourist spaces.

Once the information of the attraction has been raised, this is placed in the same numerical value that represents the score reached over 100 that is framed within a hierarchy level that ranges in a scale of I to IV (Ministerio de Turismo, 2018), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Hierarchy.

Ranges	Hierarchy	Description
86-100	HIERARCHY IV	It presents optimal conditions for the development of tourism products.
61-85	HIERARCHY III	It presents the appropriate conditions for the development of tourism products.
36-60	HIERARCHY II	Attractive with some striking feature that presents the basic conditions for the generation of tourism products. con para la
11-35	HIERARCHY I	Attraction that presents the minimum conditions to generate products.
0-10	RESOURCE	It is a natural or cultural element that can motivate displacement

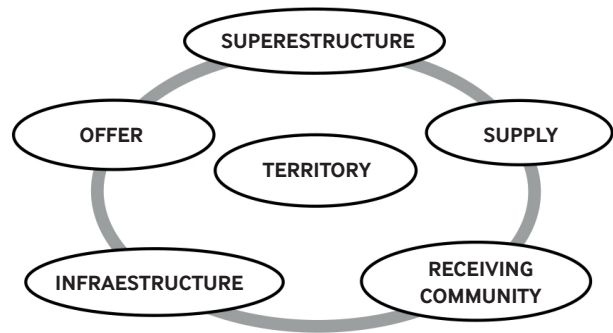
Source: own. Methodology manual for hierarchy of attractions and generation of tourist spaces.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The information obtained from the application of the survey sheet and hierarchy of attractions, allowed knowing the status of the internal and external dimensions of the tourism system to delimitate the contribution to the growth of the territory. Likewise, it will allow to specify the tourist viability and peculiarly, it depends on the activities developed in the site. For this, a diagnosis is carried out.

Tourism system: Internal factors

Figure 1: Internal factors-tourism system.



Source: own

The tourism system is composed of a set of external elements that are the political, social, cultural and economic dimensions; an internal such as superstructure, offer, supply, infrastructure and receiving community. They are linked to each other as a solid structure based on the local development in the different sectors that integrate it. In the case of Casacay Parish, the factors that include the tourism system were identified, taking as reference the information of the survey and hierarchy sheets. The results obtained were used to establish the flaws of the internal dimensions of the system as structure.

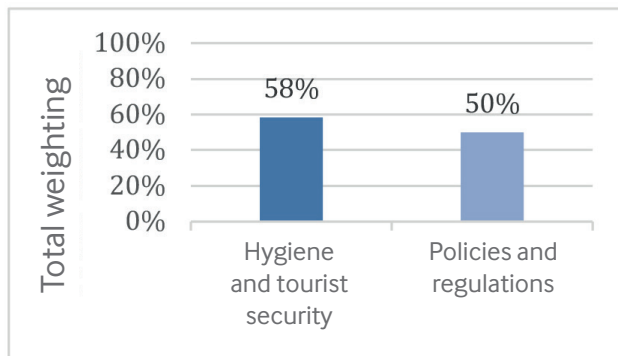
Superstructure

Composed of all those organizations of public or private nature, which represent the providers of services in tourism-related sectors. They are in charge of optimizing, according to the needs, the functioning of each of the parts that make up the system. The results of the evaluation in-

dicating the institutions that are available for the population in the different areas. Among those that stand out in the Casacay Parish, the following can be mentioned:

Passage Decentralized Autonomous Government, National Police of Ecuador, Passage Fire Department, hospital or clinic, Civil Defense. In the governance management of tourism attractions, the following results are reflected.

Figure 2: Governance management in tourist attractions

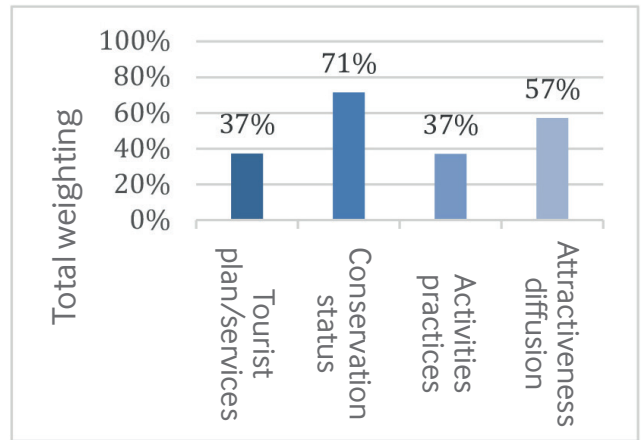


Because of hygiene and tourist safety of the attractions of Casacay Parish, the limitations of basic services were detected in the case of Amor Lagoon, and Tobar River bowls. These, being natural resources and being outside the urban sector have no benefits of the public companies of drinking water, lighting and sewerage among others. On the other hand, La Cocha attraction is located in the urban area and has basic services. When discussing tourism security and the agents involved in the fulfillment of this task, this must be accompanied with the necessary infrastructure not to violate the ontological security of the subject (Korstanje, 2016, p. 77).

The policy and regulations indicator are referred to the tourism attraction and whether it is included in the local tourism development plans. Results indicate that there are development plans (50%) aimed to the development of potential tourism resources registered by the Gad Municipal Passage and the compliance with the planning carried out regularly.

Offer

Figure 3: offer



This is formed by goods and services, tourism plant and complementary aspects that present a given tourism destination.

For a tourist service to become part of the offer, it is necessary for the consumer knows its existence. Otherwise, the product fails to comply with its requirement. In other words, the tourist-host relationship has created a current and already "consolidated offer for tourists in continuous expansion" (Fernández Fernández & Fernández Portela, 2019). Among the characteristics of the tourism offer, products or services carried out in a given territory cannot be transported. That is, tourists must move to a destination point where these services are offered.

The tourist plan existing in the Casacay Parish consists of accommodations, travel agencies, tourist guides, and food and beverage establishments. The result indicates the weighed value of 37%, reflecting a weakness for the estimation of the demand, as there are no available services and the technical capacity to meet the requirements of tourists. Like the activities that are practiced in the attractive (37%) should seek the means to "use the strengths, which is a fundamental requirement to achieve the success in development, management and administration of the activity at national, international or local scale" (Serrano & Villafuerte Pucha, 2017, p. 60). Among its strengths, biodiversity of flora and fauna can be mentioned as Casacay stands out for having water tributaries for tourist activities.

The diffusion of attractiveness (57%) indicate the means used to disseminate, promote and commercialize the attractiveness. According to the results, this activity is carried out by virtual means and in high season. For this reason, GAD Municipal Passage includes this in its canton tourist promotion plan. The conservation status (71%) is related to the environment of attractiveness and how the actions of the community influence to keep protective actions. The current state of attractions outside the urban sector remains preserved, that is, it retains its physical features in good condition. La Chocha as public spa evidenced a state of alteration and the man intervened in making changes in the natural environment with the construction of buildings such as food and beverage establishments, in the boardwalk on the banks of the river.

Tourist attractions are all natural, cultural, sport or any other elements that are capable of generating enough interest to attract the tourist. In the territory there is a variety of tourist attractions, and for a better study and evaluation there is the tourist inventory. The tourist inventory is the registration process by which the attractions are registered according to certain cultural and physical factors that can be used for the elaboration of tourist attractions of a region (Tourism & Leisure, 2007).

The parish has a variety of tourist attractions distributed as follows:

Table 3: Tourist attractions.

Attraction: Del Amor lagoon			
Province: El Oro		Hierarchy: II	Distance from the populated center: 10.72 km.
Canton: Passage	Natural	Type: Rivers	Subtype: River
Category: attractions			
Attraction: Tobar River bowl			
Province: El Oro		Hierarchy: II	Distance from the populated Center: 13.74 km.
Canton: Passage	Natural	Type: Rivers	Subtype: River
Category: attractions			
Attraction: Cocha			
Province: El Oro		Hierarchy: II	Distance from the populated center: 11.11 km.
Cantón: Pasaje	Natural	Type: Rivers	Subtype: River
Category: attractions			

Source: own. Survey sheets and hierarchy of tourist attractions.

Receiving community

Figure 4: Human resources

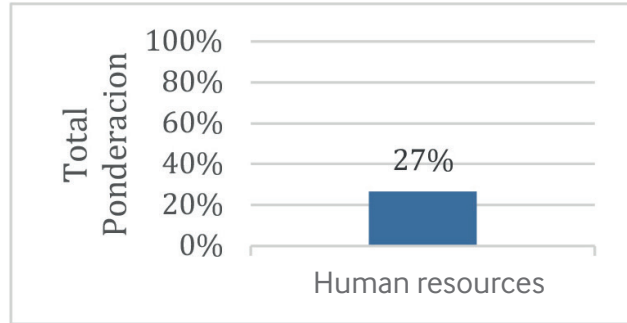


Table 4: Receiving community.

Data sheet		
Province		El Oro
Canton		Passage
Parish		Casacay (Rural)
	Latitude	1.8312
Geographic location	Longitude	78.1834
Administration		Parish GAD

Source: own.

It is recognized as a fundamental element in the tourist development, as it is composed of democratically elected representatives of the associations or ethnic organizations and/or communes that geographically inhabit in the tourist system under analysis. In the same way, they will be responsible of transmitting the information of the demand. "The local community is simple and complexly, an essential element in the existence of tourism" (Monte-rrubio, 2009, pág. 106). Although the link in planning and tourist management is minimal, the members of the community participate in the supply and demand of services, that is, they are responsible for "creating" and managing their own services.

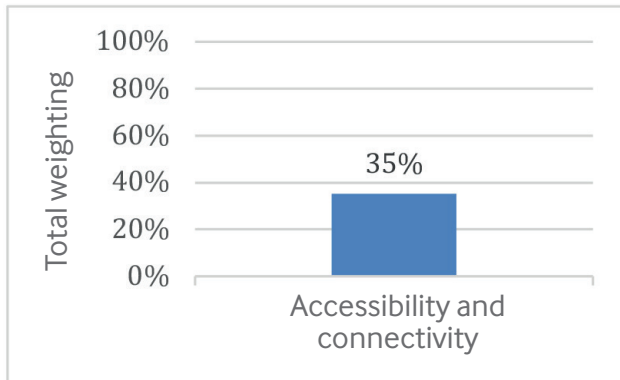
Casacay Parish, together with the authorities works in improving the qualities that condition the community in terms of accessibility indices, infrastructure and connectivity.

Of the total population, 27% represents the professional or qualified human talent present in the administration of the Casacay parish in terms of tourist activity. Given this situation, the options to be considered for a strategic planning of the human resource that "it establishes the number and type of appropriate people who are available to perform the actions that will be of maximum advan-

tage for the organization” (Mendoza Fernandez, López Juvinao & Salas Solano, 2016, p. 63. In this case, the administrative management of the parish for a subsequent selective process of trained personnel.

Infrastructure

Figura N° 5. Infrastructure

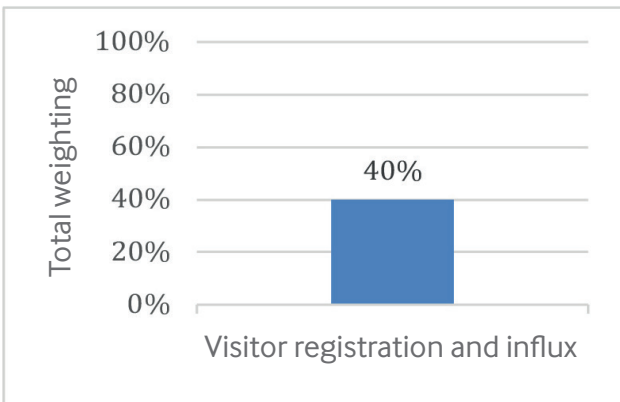


The infrastructure is visible to the inhabitants, and its main ways of access are paved and are in perfect condition. Throughout the road there are traffic signs in order to reach it easily. “The tourist facilities determined by the offer of accommodations and restaurants play a key role in promoting tourism” (Rengifo Gallego & Sánchez Martín, 2016, p. 915).

The presence of infrastructure in the communities represents an increase in the economy, the existence of an influx of tourists, in addition to an efficient accessibility and connectivity. This allows to satisfy the basic needs, accommodation, food and beverages, being fundamental for the destination to develop touristically.

Demand

Figure 6: Demand



Of the above elements, none could subsist without tourists (demand). They constitute the equivalent to the law of supply and demand, that is, they are those who consume, use and acquire tourism products.

Local

National

The demand of the attraction has a seasonal appeal and the influx of tourists is not very high, since they usually visit it during weekends. However, on holidays the demand for tourists increases. In fact, “the demand requires an availability of leisure time, an economic capacity and motivation (Fernández Fernández & Fernández Portela, 2019, p. 133). This reaffirms the importance of the offer of attractions in Casacay Parish, highlighting among them its freshwater spas, flora and fauna among its most relevant characteristics.

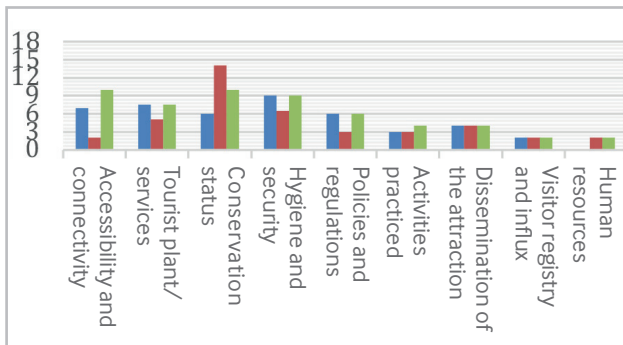
The negative aspects in the demand correspond to the registration of visitors and influx, For a better understanding of the current situation of a resource it is necessary to “consider various statistical data to access a precise understanding of tourism activity” (Catalano, 2013, p. 206), the attractions in general lack of a visit registration system which would lead to a deficit in generating information for decision-making focused on tourism development.

Tourist potential of Casacay Parish

In order to measure the scope of the potential of a territory, it is feasible to know that “the potential can be understood as an adjective that is referred to what may exist in the territory (Mikery Guriérrez & Pérez Vásquez, 2014, p. 1732). Here, the main idea is based on the adaptation or activation function to achieve the potential that a territory can obtain. Within the context of potentiality, it is stated that not only depends on the resource factor, but of a set of factors, as mentioned by Neus et al. (2005): “the main factors involved in the knowledge of the tourist potential are, in addition to the resources, the accessibility factor, equipment and infrastructure. It is the factors of accessibility and equipment and infrastructure together with resources as components of the tourist system that will determine the potentiality (p. 83).

Tourist attractions that play a significant role in measuring the potentiality of a territory are three tourist attractions of Hierarchy II that has the Casacay Parish (See Figure 7). These “are attractions with some striking feature, capable to interest visitors at long distance, either from the domestic and receptive market” (Delgado Campuzano et al., 2017, p. 43). Tourist resources, accessibility and tourist plant are the three indicators that determine obtaining a high percentage respect to the tourist value of the parish. “Evaluation and inventory of tourist services will allow the design of proposals for development of tourist products, aimed at generating the minimum impact on the community and maximizing the tourist experience” (Cartuche et al., 2018, p. 113). This is in order to highlight the characteristics of the attractions in function of the conservation status and the activities that are practiced.

Figure 7: Tourist potentiality, Casacay Parish



CONCLUSIONS

A tourism system is made up by the integral participation between actors (public, private and community) of the development of that community. The complexity of the tourism industry lies on being capable to relate the act and proceed in the performance, construction and control of the strategies focused on the tourism development. Casacay Parish presents the physical, natural and cultural characteristics that through a diagnosis, its importance on the tourism development is confirmed. Therefore, the local community is a fundamental element in tourism

planning and management. Due to its importance, it is necessary that its participation is active in decision making.

Based on the potential assessment of the “tourist experience” tourist attractions of Casacay Parish. The results are evident in contrasting that there is a potential with basic characteristics for the generation of tourism products. The strengths it maintains are based on the tourist recreation activities; the conservation status of natural attractions reflects the fact of being exempt of the intervention of external factors that bursts into the resource. Regarding the offer, the site lacks a tourist product that can be marketed. Although there are tourist providers that offer different services, the parish lacks a tourism product developed to market. Therefore, if there is an intention to develop or improve the offer, it is indispensable to strengthen the development of projects in the indicators of accessibility and connectivity, tourism plant and human resources, in order to create added value in the provision of tourism services provided by the population to increase the demand of attractions in numbers.

Therefore, it is required the existence of a re-assessment of the importance of tourism, but not only as an economic activity, but a complex activity whose dimensions have repercussions on the life of local residents.

Recognizing the elements of the various dimensions and with it, the importance of tourism will allow providing equitable attention to each of these elements, including the tourism receiving community.

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