

Analysis of the sociocultural impact of tourism in central jungle of Peru

Analisis del impacto sociocultural del turismo en la selva central del Perú

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the tourism growth in the Satipo district, a prominent destination in the central jungle of Peru, and sought to understand its sociocultural influence through a qualitative approach. The objective was to analyze the sociocultural impact of tourism in Satipo and determine its influence on the economy, society, culture, and environment. The methodology consisted of basic and descriptive research using inductive and deductive methods. A non-probabilistic sample of 50 individuals was analyzed through structured interviews with 12 questions.

The results showed that Satipo has experienced a positive economic impact with an increase in jobs in the social sector due to tourism. However, despite improvements in the quality of life, social conflicts still exist. From an ecological perspective, the community has been promoting environmental awareness to protect its natural heritage. The conclusion reached was that tourism in Satipo has generated economic benefits and raised environmental awareness, but sociocultural challenges still persist.

Keywords: *tourism, sociocultural impact, peruvian jungle, cultural identity, transculturation.*

RESUMEN

Este estudio se centró en el crecimiento turístico en el distrito de Satipo, un destino destacado en la selva central del Perú, y buscó comprender su influencia sociocultural mediante un enfoque cualitativo. El objetivo fue analizar el impacto socio-cultural del turismo en Satipo y determinar su influencia en la economía, la sociedad, la cultura y el medio ambiente. La metodología consistió en una investigación básica y descriptiva utilizando métodos inductivos y deductivos. Se analizó una muestra no probabilística de 50 individuos a través de entrevistas estructuradas con 12 preguntas.

Los resultados mostraron que Satipo ha experimentado un impacto económico positivo con un aumento en los empleos en el sector social debido al turismo. Sin embargo, a pesar de las mejoras en la calidad de vida, aún existen conflictos sociales. Desde una perspectiva ecológica, la comunidad ha impulsado la conciencia ambiental para proteger su patrimonio natural. La conclusión a la que se llegó fue que el turismo en Satipo ha generado beneficios económicos y ha promovido la conciencia ambiental, pero aún persisten desafíos socioculturales.

Palabras clave: turismo, impacto sociocultural, selva peruana, identidad cultural, transculturación

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, travel has been a constant in humanity, although it has not always been considered tourism, since its original purpose was not leisure, culture or business. Tourism activity, currently consumed by national and international tourists, is materialized in tourist destinations (UNWTO, 2003). As society evolved, leisure time became a motive for tourism, driving the creation of specialized businesses and accommodations (Acerenza, 2006).

In sociocultural contexts such as the Satipo district, tourism can have ambivalent perceptions. Although some see it as negative, its economic impact is evident in the promotion of tourism at the national level (Tinoco, 2003). In addition to its cultural aspect, tourism has a tangible economic impact, generating employment, improving the local economy, and creating new businesses (Nguyen & Long, 2018). However, this economic improvement is often associated with increased cost of living and loss of cultural and social values, as well as pressure on natural resources (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Andereck et al., 2005; Monterrubio & Garcia, 2011). This study aims to analyze the sociocultural impact of tourism in the district of Satipo, exploring how this activity has influenced the lives of residents and the cultural and social gap between visitors and locals. Through a literature review, it is evident that tourism has brought about changes in indigenous communities and their occupations, while at the same time presenting challenges in terms of infrastructure and conservation. Despite this, sustainable tourism could improve the quality of life of local inhabitants.

METHODOLOGY

Interpretive Paradigm and Qualitative Approach

The study is grounded in the interpretive paradigm, emphasizing its relevance in comprehending the sociocultural impact within a territory where sociocultural categories interact. A qualitative approach is adopted, utilizing diverse materials such as interviews, personal experiences, observations, and historical texts to describe everyday problems and meanings (Rodríguez et al., 1996; Pérez, 2004).

Descriptive-Observational and Phenomenological Study Type

The study is descriptive-observational, depicting phenome-

na and situations within the population without researcher intervention (Hernández et al., 2014). It is a phenomenological study analyzing sensations, skills, perceptions, and arguments, capturing the complexity of observed phenomena in everyday and anomalous life (Williams & Lawson, 2001; Kuvan & Akan, 2005).

Population and Sample

The population comprises workers from tourism-related businesses in the Satipo district. The non-probabilistic sample consists of 30 individuals from different categories: hotel owners, municipal workers, and owners of transportation companies or travel agencies

Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

Qualitative techniques such as literature review, direct and participatory observation, and interviews are employed. The exploration guide and interview sheet with 12 questions serve as instruments to collect information on the "Sociocultural Impact of Tourism in the Satipo district."

Data Processing and Analysis

Data processing is planned while adhering to ethical and organizational aspects. Collected data from interviews and observations will be analyzed and interpreted to validate hypotheses, present findings, discuss them, and ultimately arrive at conclusions and proposals

RESULTS AND DISCUSION

According to the results of the interviews: In the Satipo district, the majority considers that tourism has a social and cultural impact. Therefore, each variable is divided into specific dimensions such as Social Impact (Quality of Life, Education, Health & Safety) and Cultural Impact (Language, Customs, Religion, Values, and Attitudes). Extracts from interviews have been cited to support the claims made. The content aims to represent the opinions of the respondents.

Quality of Life: According to Heredia (2020), there's information about the basic needs satisfied by local inhabitants due to the flow of national and international tourism. *"I remember some time ago, while I was working in my small craft business, there were many national and some foreign visitors. Most of them came from the capital. Now*

it's not as common to see many visitors arriving; this happened after the pandemic. However, it's good to know that even though not a large number visit, the people who do always leave with the best impression of the Satipo district." (Sara, 38 years old, craft vendor).

Another interviewee mentioned: *"A while back, I used to work on a coffee plantation, and one day I had the idea to go to Satipo. At that time, a tourism fair was taking place where I noticed a good number of visitors. My relatives who had been living in that area for a while told me it would be a good idea to rent rooms to tourists who arrived. It would be another source of income for the family apart from my work on the field."* (Pedro, 52 years old, hostel owner).

Tourism has provided an increasing variety of job positions, creating more employment opportunities and improving the quality of life for residents due to increased income generated by each business and tourism-related service offered. In the **Social Impact** factor the dimension report:

Education: According to Heredia's studies, there's a population of school-age children who do not attend school due to the low income of the general inhabitants. *"Many people live in remote areas of the district and are so poor that they don't have access to proper education. I remember one day a child came to my food stall asking for some alms. I offered him a plate of food since he seemed tired; I also offered some candies and sweets."* (Fanny, 45 years old, seller).

According to another interviewee: *"It's true that there are many visitors and tourists; I currently work in a restaurant, a new business that is becoming more well-known every day. But I've also noticed that in remote areas where there's no recognition from local authorities, these far-off areas have low economic status. Some children who should be studying come to offer candies to customers in the restaurant."* (Carlos, 27 years old, waiter).

Tourism has helped increase and improve the quality of life for residents in tourist areas. However, there are still remote areas that haven't been recognized by local authorities. In the case of education for some school-age children in these areas, it's practically non-existent as residents lack the necessary finances, and children are forced to work and help at home when they should be studying and receiving quality education.

Health and Safety: As mentioned by Heredia in his research regarding health and safety, it's essential for any population to have good health and safety measures. *"I've witnessed here in this square where I display my products for sale that when many people gather in one place, the likelihood of disease transmission and theft increases. Especially in open tourist areas where there's a lot of economic activity. Visitors should follow the sanitary protocols disseminated by the media and take precautions to safeguard their belongings."* (Mayte, 35 years old, street vendor).

Another interviewee said: *"I remember when some tourists came to buy my handmade souvenirs; I noticed that one of them had a respiratory condition, but he was wearing a mask and was tired due to the long walk he had taken with a group of people. I offered to carry his luggage and keep an eye on his belongings while he was in my craft shop."* (Arturo, 42 years old, artisan).

Tourism plays an important role in a country's economy, improving the quality of life for residents in tourist areas. However, in terms of health and safety, there's still a lot of room for improvement. Service providers in the tourism sector must be more creative and innovative in catering to the needs and requirements of visitors and tourists, ensuring their well-being and safety.

For the **Cultural Impact** factor, the study report:

Language: According to Baca-Villarreal and Flores (2018), knowing the language is crucial for interacting with another culture as it's a means of communication among people. *"It's important to understand and comprehend the needs of visitors and tourists. There was an occasion when an American tourist approached my traditional clothing store, but he had a friend who was explaining and translating what I was saying, at least informal expressions that only Peruvians understand. The tourist knew some Spanish, but he was very kind and left with the best impression of my store's staff. That's why I emphasize once again that all workers in the tourism sector should take the opportunity to learn a new language. This way, we offer better direct customer service to both national and international clients and learn new expressions from a different culture."* (Martha, 47 years old, merchant).

According to another interviewee: *"It's true that there are many visitors and tourists who speak a different language.*

That's why in this tourism development center, one of the prerequisites before getting a job is knowing another language besides Spanish. As it's known, English is the language I've learned, and since then, I've had more job opportunities in the tourism industry."(Nick, 30 years old, supervisor)

Tourism is a dynamic industry that facilitates intercultural interactions and getting to know different cultures while adapting and coexisting with people from different countries. When foreign tourists come to the country, we can observe the different customs and habits they display in their interactions with local inhabitants. Especially when sharing ideas and communicating with foreign visitors, it's important to have communication codes and gestures in place, both when conveying a message and when receiving messages from clients, including national and international tourists.

Customs: This variable is related to behaviors that nations often perform and consider natural. Every country has its customs, and each has a meaning and essence. *"I remember that one time I received some foreign visitors who were staying at my restaurant. They arrived with a dog that was very obedient and clean. One of the visitors offered a piece of meat to his pet, and the dog immediately left and brought a ball. It was amusing to see the dog perform such a trick. When I asked them where they were from, they answered that they were from France. I concluded that in France, pets are very well trained."*(Carlos, 27 years old, restaurant owner).

Another interviewee mentioned: *"I've had the opportunity to welcome some visitors to my hostel. They were national tourists from the capital. They booked a room for a day, but due to unforeseen circumstances, they had to extend their stay for another day. They were very kind and even invited me to their country. They told me that in their city, they received many tourists and always tried to offer the best care and quality. In their case, one of the customs is to offer a free walking tour for national tourists so that they can appreciate the beauty of their city."*(Luis, 35 years old, hostel owner).

In the case of international tourists, they generally have some information about the local customs of the country they are visiting. It's known that each country has its traditions, and it's good to know that national and international tourists are curious to experience and learn more about these customs during their stay. Many of the tourists and

visitors are eager to learn, understand, and appreciate the local customs of the destination they are visiting.

Religion: This dimension refers to the belief and devotion that people profess. In the case of the Satipo district, visitors and tourists have the opportunity to observe the different religions of the residents. *"It's good to see how people practice their religion. I've seen in different areas of the district how people gather to pray and sing hymns in gratitude to their God. I remember one day I met some missionaries who were spreading the word of God in the area, and they also taught children to read and write. They were from another country and had learned our language."*(Gloria, 55 years old, local resident).

Another interviewee mentioned: *"I remember some time ago; a group of tourists arrived and was visiting the church. They had a guide who was explaining in English about the customs and religious practices of the people in the area. I felt very proud to hear how they were interested in our customs and traditions, even those related to religion."*(Isabel, 50 years old, local resident).

In the context of tourism, understanding and knowing different religions and beliefs contributes to respecting and valuing the practices and rituals performed by local inhabitants. Some people feel proud to learn about and share their religious practices with tourists, enhancing mutual respect and understanding.

CONCLUSIONS

The Satipo district has experienced significant changes in its local economy and social structure due to tourism. Visitors and tourists have brought economic benefits by creating new job opportunities and improving the overall quality of life for the residents. However, there are challenges that need to be addressed, such as the lack of proper education for children in remote areas, the need for better health and safety measures, and the importance of preserving cultural values and customs while adapting to the demands of the tourism industry.

It's evident that there is a positive impact on the social and cultural aspects of the Satipo district due to the presence of tourists and visitors. However, there's room for improvement in terms of education, health and safety measures, and intercultural communication skills. Local authorities and stakeholders should work together to develop

strategies that balance the economic benefits of tourism with the preservation of local culture and the well-being of the residents..

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