

The Otomi culture in the Valle del Mezquital, Hidalgo, Mexico, as an alternative for development of rural tourism.

Cultura Otomí en el Valle del Mezquital, Hidalgo, México, como alternativa para el desarrollo del turismo rural

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Abstract:

Rural tourism has great potential to stimulate the local economy and culture of rural communities, this type of activity offers visitors products and activities. In addition to promoting the role of tourism in the assessment and safeguarding of rural peoples, in cynical terms with natural resources, biodiversity and cultural expressions. The state of Hidalgo in this regard has a rural tourist potential that has a great natural and cultural diversity, where indigenous communities offer unique expressions for the development of routes that will allow for the increase of visitors' flows and improvement of the quality of life of the Otomi communities. In this work, tourist routes are proposed to develop rural tourism in the state of Hidalgo, through an analysis of resources and identification of communities where attractive activities can be implemented for the development of rural tourism, in addition to teaching and valuate the importance of the otomí communities.

Keywords:

Rural tourism, otomí culture, Hidalgo.

Resumen:

El turismo rural tiene un gran potencial para estimular la economía local y la cultura de las comunidades rurales, este tipo de actividad ofrece a los visitantes productos y actividades. Además de fomentar el papel del turismo en la valoración y salvaguarda de los pueblos rurales, en conjunto con los medios naturales, diversidad biológica y expresiones culturales. El estado de Hidalgo al respecto, cuenta con un potencial turístico rural que tiene una gran diversidad natural y cultural, donde las comunidades indígenas ofrecen expresiones únicas para el desarrollo de rutas que permitan incrementar la afluencia de visitantes y el mejoramiento de la calidad de vida de las comunidades otomíes. En este trabajo se proponen rutas turísticas para desarrollar el turismo rural en el estado de Hidalgo, a través de una análisis de recursos e identificación de comunidades donde se pueden implementar actividades atractivas para el desarrollo del turismo rural, además de enseñar y valorar la importancia de las comunidades otomíes.

Palabras Clave:

Turismo rural, cultura otomí, Hidalgo

Introduction

Tourism is an activity that consists of the movement of people outside their place of residence, although not all travel for the same reasons, there are various classifications that provide specialized care for each activity. The various classifications that exist are alternative tourism, which in turn involves rural tourism,

where nine activities belonging to this branch are carried out.

In the world there are countries where rural tourism has the greatest development, mainly in Europe it is activity is very recurrent; Mexico has great potential to develop such activities, as it has the resources necessary for its implementation. Specifically in Hidalgo State has great

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potential to encourage this type of tourism that would only benefit the sector but would provide opportunities for improving quality of lives for rural communities.

The Valle del Mezquital is one of the geographical and cultural regions located in the Hidalgo state, in Mexico and has municipalities suitable for rural tourism routes that seek to assess indigenous peoples who mostly inhabit in the region, improving their quality of life, generating new jobs for the people of the community and preserving the diverse natural scenarios of this region for the development of tourism activities.

The objective of this research is to propose tourist routes that integrate the region's great natural diversity, monuments and value the cultural expressions of the otomíes communities.

The methodology for the implementation of this work is based on the proposal by Fernández and Guzmán (2003), based on cultural features, the interest of encouraging tourism development in vulnerable regions and the type of tourism suitable for the implementation in the region in this case by the characteristics identified is rural tourism. A diagramming of the area is performed by determining the attractions to include, location and activities to be performed on each route.

Conceptualization of rural tourism

Rural tourism according to the world tourism organization is a type of tourism activity where visitor experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to activities of nature, agriculture, life forms and rural cultures, cane fishing and visiting places of interest (UNWTO, 2010). I support the Tourism Secretariat (SECTUR, 2012) concrete that all the journeys are made to have a coexistence and interaction with rural communities which take place with social, cultural and productive expressions.

There are broad pictures of authors or organizations that define this segment, namely Garduño et, al (2009) that refer to an alternative to development for rural communities, which generates jobs for farmers, and also contributes to the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage of the regions, taking into account the need to be an unmassified tourism due to the artisanal condition required for its operation.

Authors such as Valdez and Ochoa (2015) make mention of a very important point, because within rural tourism, there is a need for sustainable development, carrying out activities within rural and natural areas, which will allow optimal progress in the resources that exist within these regions.

Background to rural tourism

The origin of rural tourism comes according to the European Postgraduate Centre (2023) of the need for farmers in Spain during the Second World War to find other sources of employment other than agricultural income, as these were in a state of decline, and this is how it emerges as a response to the situation that was being presented.

In Mexico, the beginning of this activity can still be manifested in full development, but it has its origins in the mid-1970s with the construction of the first ejidal hotels, where at the same time they began to generate trusts for the integration of ejidal lands to tourism, so it can be stressed that the peasants took a very important role.

According to De la Torre (1999) the charge of increasing rural tourism in Mexico in the 1990s was the National Fund for Support to Social Enterprises (FONAES) which directly supported 11 states of the republic, which were with high rates of indigenous population and rural poverty; all of this brought great benefits such as the generation of 769 permanent jobs, as well as 1,040 temporaries in just 30 projects.

In Mexico, tourism promotion is currently carried out from two different aspects, the first is carried out thanks to the investment made by the federal government, through programs focusing on tourism development; the second is more focused on restoring or maintaining the old buildings, which are intended to use as attractions, in this case focused on places belonging to ancient cultures, thus envisaging the preservation of culture and its traditions.

Activities in rural tourism

It is essential to note that rural tourism is geared towards the principles of sustainable development that seeks to harness natural and cultural resources without compromising or affecting the well-being of future generations. Under this assumption, the activities in rural tourism aim to enhance the life-style of communities, as well as to encourage visitors to learn.

The activities proposed for this type of tourism, according to SECTUR (2004) seek to preserve the cultures and traditions of indigenous peoples and these are:

Etnoturism: it consists of a journey to experience indigenous peoples and their living environment, and to learn about their culture and traditions.

Agrotourism: includes travel to agricultural areas with agricultural communities that share their own specificities and some cultivation techniques, natural environment conservation, cultural expression and social production. Farmers who benefit from economic activity through a combination of industry and tourism.

Gastronomic workshops: designed to learn, prepare and taste different dishes offered by the organizers of the places visited.

Mystical experiences: of knowing and participating in the many spiritual beliefs, legends and rituals of the people transmitted through their ancestors.

Learning Dialects: Learn the dialects, customs and social organization of places you visit.

Eco archaeology: visit archaeological sites containing knowledge from archaeological sites of man's past relations with the human environment and its current meaning as a form of cultural identity and conservation.

Preparation and use of traditional medicine: to help people know and participate economically in the preparation and use of traditional medicine.

Craftsman workshops: It covers craftsmanship through native scripts and procedures.

Rural photography: Photo of various cultural expressions and natural landscapes in rural environments.

This diversity of activities allows the understanding, valuation and acquisition of knowledge that enables visitors to understand the life forms of rural communities.

General information of the Valle del Mezquital

The Valle del Mezquital is one of the geocultural regions located in the state of Hidalgo, it covers 33.7% of the state of Hidalgo; within this area there is the Otomi people, where there are 10 municipalities that inhabit this indigenous population, covering a total of 165 square kilometers.

According to data obtained from the economic census by the National Institute of Geography and Information (INEGI, 2019) the main economic sectors are retail trade, temporary accommodation services for food preparation and drink and manufacturing industries; the economically active population by 2022 is 61.9%.

The main municipalities of the region are Ixmiquilpan, El Cardonal, Chilcuautla, Alfajayucan and Santiago de Anaya, which they have many natural and cultural attractions are home to ethnic groups such as Otomies.

Proposal for tourist routes in the Valle del Mezquital

The following proposal includes three tourist routes that were developed based on the methodology based on the theory by Fernández and Guzmán (2003), based on cultural features, the interest of encouraging tourism development in vulnerable regions and the type of tourism suitable for the implementation in the region in this case by the characteristics identified is rural tourism. A diagramming of the area is performed by determining the attractions to include, location and activities to be performed on each route.

1. Ixmiquilpan Route

According to SECTUR, (2023) is the municipality located in the heart of the Valle del Mosque, in turn being the center of Otomi culture.

Figure 1. Ixmiquilpan tourist route



Source: Self-development using Google Earth

- Eco touristic center "The inheritance"

This Eco touristic center has a completely natural environment; it has services such as hot water pools, parking, bathrooms, waterfalls, palapas, green areas and steam vapor, which is ideal for other tourism such as mystical experiences, as some rituals that are part of the culture and traditions of the Otomies.

- Church of St. Antonio

Built in the 1881 and 1884 years, it consists of a vault ship, the tower of the bell tower and the pilgrim portal. On June 13, the pilgrims arrive to visit this church. It is considered as the material heritage of the state of Hidalgo.

- Morelos Market

Considered as an intangible heritage of Hidalgo, based on information obtained by the Hidalgo State Culture Secretariat (2023) this site was built in 1969 in the San Antonio neighborhood. Within this market there are typical foods of the site, such as barbecue, ximbó, fritanga, pumpkin flower quesadillas, huitlacoche and quelites.

- The hunter Diana

It is a bronze sculpture that is 7 meters and weighs a total of 4 tons, was built by Juan Fernando Olaguibel in 1942; but because of its importance, it was replaced in 1968 with a replica and the original relocated to the main garden of Ixmiquilpan.

- Temple and ex convent of San Michael Archangel

Considered as a material heritage, it is a monument built in the years 150-1560. Here you can see a painting showing the struggle between indigenous and fantastic beings.

- The farm of Mariana

Ecotourism center, where you can carry out activities such as exploration, entertainment, as well as a tour to know the animals in the area, has palapas, green areas, sports courts, roasters, dance floor and internet.

2. El Cardonal Route

Municipality located on the borders of the Valle del Mezquital that is the otomí origin site. It is a municipality where activities such as agrotourism have been implemented in the area where it is located, and there is a boutique otomí hotel.

Figure 2. El Cardonal tourist route



Source: Self-development using Google Earth

- Mapethé Sanctuary

Mostly known as the church of the Christ of Mapethé, was built in the year of 1545, with the aim of safeguarding a valuable crucifix that was donated to Spain. Over the years, some modifications have been made to the place, thanks to valuable personalities.

- Colored milpa Apple Reyes

The suitable space for agrotourism, as it is an area where they are dedicated to planting seeds and caring for nurseries.

- Hotel Boutique Otomí

As its name says, it is a boutique hotel, which is named after being a community where most people are otomí people.

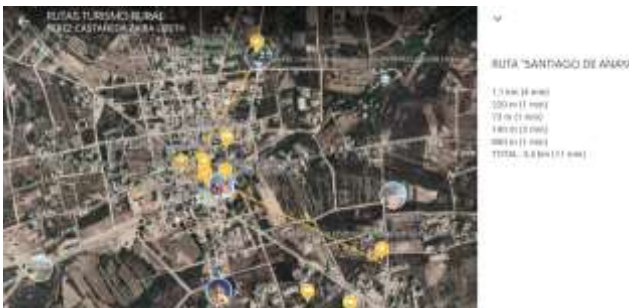
- Parish house

Parish of the Purísima Concepción: Considered as a material heritage, that Alonso de Villaseca commanded to build this parish, which has a structure that protects the atrial cross, with medieval taste which represents kings and bishops.

3. Santiago de Anaya Route

This route includes activities such as traditional cooking workshops, eco-archeology, etnoturismo, and agrotourism.

Figure 3. Santiago de Anaya tourist route



Source: Self-development using Google Earth

- Traditional cuisine Hñähñu by Porfiria Rodriguez Cadena.

Smoke cooking, where you can taste saucers made mainly by flowers and insects from the region, made from recipes that come from generation to generation.

- Parish of Santiago Apostle

This parish is located in the center of the municipality, the construction date is unknown, but it is said to have been built between 1540 and 1550. This is considered one of the oldest in the state of Hidalgo.

In this site, echo archaeology can be done, as it is a site that, since it exists many years ago, shows the cultural identity of the villagers (in this case, mostly the Otomies).

- Santiago de Anaya downtown

As the center of the municipality, this place is one of the most important festivities for the otomí population gastronomic fair of the Valle del Mezquital where the most emblematic saucers are made known.

In addition, it can add gastronomic workshops, mystical experiences, preparation and use of traditional medicine, crafts workshops and workshops for dialect learning.

- Johñe demonstrative center of permaculture

Within this site you find some fruit species, which are edible during your visit, and medicinal support species are also developed. The main visitors are tourists, volunteers or people looking for a job exchange. Agrotourism is practiced in this place, besides being a place dedicated to the preservation of culture, shows how the people cultivate and preserve the flora of the municipality.

4. Chilcuautila Route

In this municipality there is a wide presence of the otomí culture, within this route there are a large number of activities to be carried out, but only those belonging to rural tourism, such as rural photography, archaeological echo and dialect learning, an activity that is not given in many spaces.

Figure 4. Chilcuautila tourist route



Source: Self-development using Google Earth

- El Ganthe

According to Escapadas, (2023) means boxed water or stagnated water in ñhähñu, this is a suitable site for tourists who are interested in preserving cultures, also offering services such as itineraries, so that people can enjoy the attractions and food, at the same time they are aware of the ñhähñu, as well as the temescal, living in the same way a mystical experience, because here you can perform some spiritual rituals and beliefs this culture. According to

all its characteristics, this is a suitable place for the practice of rural photography.

- Centre for Support to rural development CADER 03

As its name says, this center is responsible for supporting people living in rural areas, in order to generate development in that population. Workshops can be adapted in which visitors can be seen as important to preserve cultures, as well as to implement dialect learning, so that more and more people can speak it or minimally know it.

- Eco touristic Park Xindho

It offers some services such as pools, roasters, tirolese, green areas, palapas, lifeguards, dressing rooms, typical food in the region, medical services and parking facilities.

- The spring

This place is suitable for practicing rural photography, with landscapes and spaces suitable for doing so.

Conclusions

As years have passed the way to see rural tourism has changed in a very significant way, since not all the people who investigate the subject are classified in the same branch, they often vary depending on the perspective that each of them is in their research.

Hidalgo is a state with great potential to carry out rural tourism, within the Valle del Mezquital there are municipalities where otomi culture still inhabits; creating tourist routes is a great opportunity to preserve culture, to make it known through tourists, and to generate an economic spill within the municipalities, which in turn will help improve the quality of life of the villagers.

Although there are already spaces that help conservation to implement routes will generate greater recognition of municipalities, as well as culture will bring new jobs for the local inhabitants and help to increase rural tourism in the state of Hidalgo.

Each route is focused on a different municipality, which, besides being inhabited mostly by Huñähñus, are an important part of the history of this culture. While each of us can find activities or places where there is already or part of the otomí customs and traditions, these were adapted to being activities that form part of rural tourism.

All these sites have great tourist potential and besides some of them are part of the Hidalgo corridors, have spaces which are suitable for other tourism, it should be noted that while there are many more attractive, the most important ones were taken into account and those who are closest to each other.

Finally, as tourism professionals, we have a responsibility to teach and value the Otomí culture of the state of Hidalgo, a trait of identity that must be detonating from tourism activity.

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