Tourist Competitiveness, an interpretation for the Pueblo Mágico of Salvatierra, Guanajuato, Mexico

Competitividad Turística, una interpretación para el Pueblo Mágico de Salvatierra, Guanajuato, México

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Abstract

The objective of the research is to make an interpretation of the analytical tourist tourism competition The 2017 Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report of the World Economic Forum, the guide for the execution of Magical Towns and the Model of Tourism Excellence of the state of Guanjuato. The research approach is qualitative, qualitative research seeks subjectivity and explaining and understanding individual and group subjective interactions and meanings. (Álvarez- Gayou, 2012). Interpretive referential framework Hermeneutical Phenomenology, which seeks to discover non-multiple meanings, analyze and describe them (Álvarez-Gayou, 2012). Proposing to establish indicators of tourism competitiveness for the Magical Towns of the State of Guanajuato by means of which the form of the tourism situation can be evaluated in order to detect areas of improvement and generate strategies that increase the tourism competitiveness of said tourist destinations and It translates into a benefit for the Magic Town of Salvatierra and the State of Guanajuato.

Tourism competitiveness, Magic Villages, Tourism competitiveness indicators

Resumen

El objetivo de la investigación es realizar una interpretación de la competitivdiad turística analicidando The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017 del World Economic Forum, la guía de incorporación de Pueblos Mágicos y el Modelo de Excelencia Turística del estado de Guanjuato. El enfoque de la investigación es cualitativo, la investigación cualitativa busca la subjetividad y explicar y comprender las interacciones y los significados subjetivos individuales o grupales. (Álvarez- Gayou, 2012). Marco referencial interpretativo Fenomenología Hermenéutica, la cual busca descubrir los significados no manifiestos, analizarlos y describirlos (Álvarez- Gayou, 2012). Proponiendo establecer indicadores de competitividad turística para los Pueblos Mágicos del Estado de Guanajuato mediante los cuales se pueda evaluar de forma certera la situación del turismo y así poder detectar áreas de mejoras y se generen estrategias que logren incrementar la competitividad turística de dichos destinos turísticos y se traduzca en un beneficio para Pueblo Mágico de Salvatierra y el Estado de Guanajuato.

Competitividad turística, Pueblos Mágicos, indicadores de competitividad Turística

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Introduction

The state of Guanajuato is one of the states with great historical and cultural richness, it has great architectural attractions that have been an important part of the history not only of the state but also of the country.

It also has important recreational and natural areas that diversify the tourist offer by attracting different profiles of tourists.

The tourist activity represents one of its main economic activities, contributing an important percentage to the State's GDP.

The municipality of Salvatierra is in the southwest of the state of Guanajuato. It was named Pueblo Mágico (Magical Town) in December 2012.

The concept of Pueblo Mágico refers to a town that through time and in the face of modernity, has preserved, valued and defended its historical, cultural and natural heritage; and manifests it in diverse expressions through its tangible and intangible heritage. A Pueblo Mágico is a place that has unique, symbolic attributes, authentic stories, transcendental events, and everyday life, which means a great opportunity for tourism development in response to the motivations and needs of travelers (Sectur, 2014).

The Tourism Competitiveness Index has been developed by the World Economic Forum since 2006, in order to measure the development of the tourism capacity of countries.

However, an interpretation of the competitiveness issued by the World Economic Forum is necessary due to the characteristics of a pueblo mágico and the policies that the state of Guanajuato promotes regarding the competitiveness of its tourist destinations.

Development of Sections and Subsections of the Article with subsequent numbering

In the field of tourism research, the competitiveness of tourism destinations can be defined as "the ability of a destination to create and integrate value-added products to sustain local resources and maintain its market position vis-à-vis its competitors" (Hassan, 2000).

It can also be defined, following Crouch (2000), as "the capacity of a country to create added value and thus increase national welfare by managing advantages and processes, attractiveness, aggressiveness and proximity, integrating the relations between them in an economic and social model".

There are indicators proposed by the World Economic Forum to measure tourism competitiveness. These indicators measure a set of factors and policies that enable sustainable development of the travel and tourism sector, which in turn contributes to the development and competitiveness of a country by providing detailed assessments of the travel and tourism environment and the results can be used to improve the competitiveness of the industry in national economies. (WEF, 2018).

The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report comprises four sub-indices, 14 pillars and 90 individual indicators (WEF, 2018). The environment sub-index considers: business environment, safety and security, health and hygiene, human resources and labor market, ICT readiness.

The sub-index travel and tourism and empowerment policy analyses: prioritization of travel and tourism, international openness, competitive prices and environmental sustainability.

Within infrastructure we find: air transport infrastructure, floor and port infrastructure, tourism service infrastructure. In the sub-index of natural and cultural resources we find: natural resources and cultural resources.
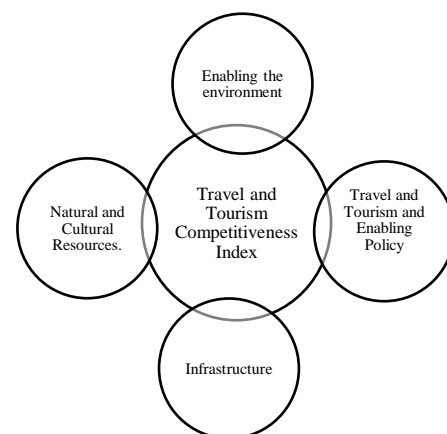

Figure 1 Sub-indexes of the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index 2017. Source: Prepared by the authors with information of the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index 2017

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Pueblos Mágicos is a tourism policy program that acts directly on the localities as a distinctive mark of tourism in Mexico, so the Federal Ministry of Tourism seeks to maintain a level of respect and compliance with its rules of operation, to achieve development objectives and make tourism in the localities an activity that contributes to raising the levels of welfare, maintaining and increasing employment, promoting and making profitable investments (Sectur, 2014).

For its part, several aspects are evaluated for a town to be appointed as a Pueblo Mágico. There is a documentary evaluation that includes a committee of pueblos mágicos, an inventory of service providers, an inventory of tourist resources and attractions, connectivity, communication and proximity to urban centers, and a municipal tourist development plan or program.
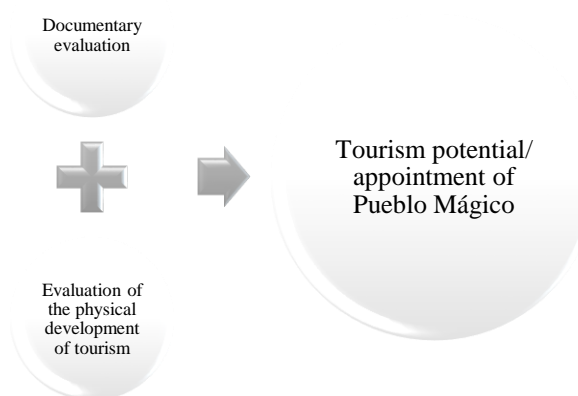

Figure 2 Incorporation evaluation. Source: Prepared by the authors with information from the technical evaluation sheet of incorporation to the Pueblos Mágicos 2017 program (Ministry of Tourism, 2017)

For its part, the state of Guanajuato has a model of tourism excellence that aims to promote and increase the competitiveness of the tourism sector through a quality management system with three support areas: 1. Business management, 2. Training and certification and 3. Tourist culture.

There is also a guide for the development of tourist destinations in the state of Guanajuato 2020 that seeks to contribute to strengthening the competitive advantages of the offers in tourist destinations and regions.

Hassan (2000) states that "tourism competitiveness is the ability of a destination to create and integrate value-added products that sustain local resources and maintain its market position with respect to its competitors".

Competitiveness in the tourism sector is defined as the ability of tourism enterprises - foreign or domestic- to make an expenditure in the destination that serves to offset the costs of developing that activity, as well as to remunerate the capital invested above its opportunity cost. (Rodríguez and Guisado, 2003)

Bañuls, Rodríguez and Sevilla (2007) state that "the competitiveness of a tourist destination will depend on the combination and synergies of a set of factors such as the competitiveness of companies, the provision of infrastructure, the availability of human capital, and the macroeconomic and institutional environment".

Tourism competitiveness is the capacity of the agents that intervene in the tourism activity of a country, region or area to achieve their objectives above the average of the sector, in a sustainable manner; which can be accomplished by achieving financial returns above the average of the business areas, and social and environmental returns as a consequence of the actions of public bodies and institutions, as well as achieving maximum satisfaction for tourists (Secael, 2003).

In the current dynamic with changing and globalized environment of tourist markets, destinations are immersed in a competitive vortex of all-against-all, even if they are in distant places.

Therefore, the Tourist Destinations (DT) face a process of difficult survival where the competitive strategy marks its trajectory, this way, to reach optimal levels of competitiveness becomes an absolutely strategic factor for the tourist destinations (Sancho y García).

Competitiveness is a complex and multidimensional concept that depends on a wide network of causal factors that can be applied to a very wide range of entities or subjects and, therefore, also to tourist destinations. In this context, and within a perspective of strategic direction and management of tourist destinations, the Evaluation of Competitiveness (EC) is considered a core aspect. The EC allows control and judgment, facilitating decisions in the search for continuous improvement and competitive advantages for a destination (Alonso, 2010).

Methodology to be developed

The focus of research is qualitative; qualitative research seeks to explain and understand individual or group interactions and subjective meanings. (Álvarez- Gayou, 2012).

Interpretive referential framework Hermeneutic Phenomenology, which seeks to discover the unmanifest meanings, as well as to analyze and describe them (Álvarez- Gayou, 2012).

Therefore, the aspects considered by the World Economic Forum for the measurement of tourism competitiveness, the guidelines for incorporation into the Federal Program of Pueblos Mágicos and the programs of tourism competitiveness of the State of Guanajuato will be analyzed.

Results

Mexico is within the ten most visited countries in the world; thus, tourism represents an important opportunity for the pueblos mágicos of the state of Guanajuato; however, the WEF's indicators evaluate aspects that do not stick to the characteristics of these tourist destinations, since the Pueblos Mágicos have very specific characteristics.

In this way, by establishing the local indicators for the tourism competitiveness of the Pueblos Mágicos of the State of Guanajuato, it is possible to evaluate the tourism situation and thus be able to detect areas of improvement that can increase the tourism competitiveness of these destinations.

Since the state of Guanajuato was reviewed, it does not have tourism competitiveness indicators that would allow for an accurate diagnosis of its main destinations.

There are coincidences between the pillars of the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index 2017 and the requirements for the incorporation of the Pueblos Mágicos, however it should be noted that the competitiveness of the Pueblo Mágico of Salvatierra cannot be analyzed due to the nature of the programme.

Acknowledgements

Conclusions

Due to the importance of tourism in the State of Guanajuato and the importance of the Federal Pueblos Mágicos program, it is necessary to analyze the tourism competitiveness of these destinations by generating indicators according to the characteristics of the program and the plans to promote tourism in the State of Guanajuato, since the indicators used by the World Economic Forum for the analysis of competitiveness are not applicable to the municipality of Salvatierra, for they measure aspects that do not fit with what was requested for incorporation into the program.

This will allow a better analysis of the competitiveness of these destinations by knowing the current situation and, in turn, it will generate strategies to increase their competitiveness and benefit the State of Guanajuato.

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