

ALTERNATIVE TOURISM BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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Abstract: *Due to the emergence of new forms of tourism that are seen as an alternative to unwanted forms of tourism, we identify three sub-types that we believe can be seen as business opportunities in alternative tourism, namely ecotourism, cultural tourism and creative tourism. Increasing their role in tourism due to their attractiveness and creativity can lead to increased consumption of tourism products specific to these forms, which determines that alternative tourism reveals great opportunities in providing alternative sources of income for different regions of the world. This can be enhanced by paying attention to technical and functional quality, the role of contact staff and general staff in delivering total quality, to enable the customer to live a unique experience so as to build customer loyalty for alternative tourism.*

Key words: *alternative tourism, sub-types, business*

INTRODUCTION

Starting with the years 1970-1980, in developed countries began to appear, as alternatives to unwanted forms of tourism - commercial tourism, conventional tourism, mass tourism or traditional tourism - new forms of tourism that give priority to natural and cultural resources but only three forms of tourism seem to be the heart of alternative tourism - ecotourism, cultural tourism and creative tourism - forms of tourism that have acquired, in the last half century, new values [1,2,12,19].

The ecological movement led, by recognizing nature as essential for human well-being and survival, to the development, in the 1970s and 1980s, of ecotourism in response to the negative impact of mass tourism and of tourism in general [4,5,20,24].

If, at the beginning, ecotourism respects only three principles:

- creating an ecological awareness;
 - protecting resources for and through tourists by minimizing the impact on the environment and people;
 - respect for eco-centric values and ethics in relation to nature;
- today the number of these principles is much higher:
- building the foundations of ecological, cultural awareness and respect;
 - providing direct financial benefits for conservation;
 - providing memorable interpretive experiences for visitors, helping to raise awareness of the political, ecological and social climate of host countries;
 - good experiences for visitors / hosts;
 - generating financial benefits for both locals and private industry;
 - minimizing the physical, social, behavioral and psychological impact;
 - design, construction and operation of low impact facilities;
 - recognizing the spiritual rights and beliefs of the indigenous people, from the community, and collaborating with them so as to empower them [3,8,10,11,15].

Traditional cultural tourism (which attracted a large number of tourists, degrading the quality of the experience and removing genuine cultural tourists) was more like mass tourism than alternative tourism. Moreover, in order to build a unique image, many tourist destinations followed similar strategies that made them look the same [6,7,9,18,23].

Thus we can emphasize the advantages of creative tourism over cultural tourism [13,16,17,25]:

- creativity (an attribute of a relatively small number of individuals) can add value more easily than culture (an attribute of a relatively large number of individuals);
- creativity allows destinations to introduce new products relatively quickly, giving them a competitive advantage over other destinations;
- creativity is a process and, as such, has creative resources (for example festivals) that are generally more sustainable than tangible cultural products (for example monuments and museums that degrade over time);
- creativity is generally more mobile (for example, the performing arts or the visual arts can be produced practically anywhere) than tangible cultural products (which need a specific infrastructure);
- creativity involves not only value creation (economic wealth), but also faster value creation compared to museums.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

We believe that many tourism consumers, tired of mass tourism and serial reproduction of culture evident in the development of many tourism products in different destinations are looking for leisure alternatives by practicing other forms of tourism that have gained, in the last half century, new valences. For this reason, this scientific approach aims to argue and highlight the fact that alternative tourism and the main niche market can be considered and seen as business opportunities in the field of tourism.

RESEARCH RESULTS

New alternative forms of tourism as business opportunities often appear during the consumption process of the tourism product/service (Table 1). There are two models of buyer behavior that include the alternative parameter (Figure 1 and Figure 2).

Initial framework → Conceptual alternatives → Collection of facts → Definition of assumptions → Stimulus design → Forecast of consequences → Benefits of the cost of alternatives → Purchasing decision → Result

Figure 1. Linear model of the purchasing decision making process

Table 1.

Problems that occur during the consumption process of the tourist product/service

The type of problem	Consumer perspective	The marketer's perspective	Consumer perspective	The marketer's perspective
<i>Pre-purchase issues</i>	How does a consumer decide that he needs a product/service? What are the best sources of information to learn more about alternative choices?		How is the consumer's attitude towards products/services formed and/or changed? What clues do consumers use to deduce which products/services are superior to others?	
<i>Problems at buying</i>	Is acquiring a product a stressful or enjoyable experience? What does the purchase say about the consumer?		How do situational factors (for example, time pressure or exposure to products/services in stores) affect the consumer's purchasing decision?	
<i>Post-purchase issues</i>	Does the product/service offer pleasure or fulfill its intended function? How is the product/service eventually disposed of and what are the environmental consequences of this act?		What determines if a consumer is satisfied with a product/service and will buy it again? Does this person tell others about their experiences with the product /service and affect their purchasing decisions?	

Source: [21]

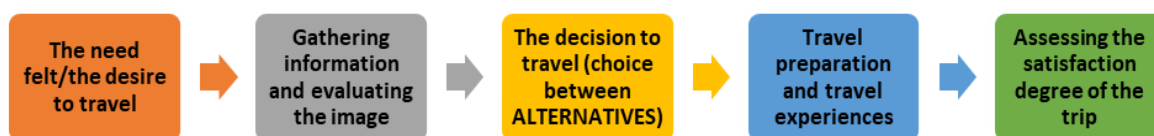


Figure 2. Purchasing behavior of the journey

Ecotourism should be differentiated from other forms of tourism that focus on the natural environment if we consider that there are three categories of activities/experiences related to nature: activities/experiences dependent on nature; incidental activities/experiences spent in nature; activities/experiences stimulated by nature. From this perspective, ecotourism includes four forms of tourism: low-impact tourism, nature tourism, wildlife tourism, sustainable tourism.

Cultural tourism is a complex forms of tourism and with an exponential growth in the tourism market. A conceptual approach that seeks to describe the motives and meanings of cultural tourism - and in which the tourist learns about the cultural products and processes of other peoples by experiencing everyday lifestyle, culture and customs - is composed of attractions and events. In recent years, tourism has seen a shift from tangible tourism resources (associated with global culture) to intangible tourism resources (associated with local culture). Among them we highlight: Atmosphere, Creativity, Identity, Image, Media, Stories and Lifestyle.

We consider that what has led, among other things, to increasing the role of creativity in tourism have been the key trends in tourism consumption:

- the attractiveness of creativity as a form of expression;
- creating biographies, identities and stories;
- increasing the desire for self-development and approved consumption;
- the hunger for experiences of postmodern consumers;
- unclear boundaries between work and leisure (serious leisure, lifestyle entrepreneurship, work seen as a game);
- dissatisfaction with contemporary modes of consumption.

As cultural tourism becomes more interactive and creative, cultural tourism is repositioning itself and becoming more creative, a form of tourism that reveals great opportunities in providing alternative sources of income for different regions of the world. We can talk even about the interactive relationship between the tourist company and the tourist, emphasizing that it is important to stimulate mutual learning through:

- attention to technical and functional quality, recalling the role of contact staff and general staff in delivering total quality to enable the customer to live a unique experience and build customer loyalty;
- willingness to cooperate both as demand and supply, stimulating the need to activate relationship marketing initiatives at all levels of organizations and to select targeted customers interested in participating in the delivery of products/services;
- the initial cognitive distance between the seller and the buyer: this happens, in particular, when the tourist buys products about which he has no information and feels, geographically, far away (in the case of the tourist or travel agency organizing the first trip in Central Africa);
- the importance given to price or power: in tourism, it becomes less crucial if the actors have a collaborative relationship that is not necessarily related to the technical support with which they interact.

From the tourist's perspective, creative tourism meets consumer trends in at least two directions:

- avoidance of McGuggenheim-cultural experiences is avoided (in which passive contemplation of cultural tourist objects is pre-determined in certain areas of the tourism industry) and the tourist is left to determine his own perspective and "write" his own travel story;

- the emphasis on intangible tourist resources reduces production costs and increases the flexibility of destinations (in which locals become active producers of the tourist experience).

The forms of cultural tourism and creative tourism are distinguished by the type of focus (Table 2).

Table 2.

Forms of cultural tourism and creative tourism

	Time	Culture	Consumption	Learning
<i>Cultural tourism</i>	• past • present	• high • popular	• product • process	• passive
<i>Creative shows</i>	• present	• the art • interpretation	• interpretation	• passive
<i>Creative spaces</i>	• present • future	• the art • architecture • design	• atmosphere	• interactive
<i>Creative tourism</i>	• past • present • future	• creative process	•the experience • work together	• development of active skills

Source: [14]

Thus, creativity can support the effort of tourist destinations to become unique and to transform cultural tourism into creative tourism (Figure 3).

	Cultural tourism	Creative tourism
<i>Focus on value</i>	• Upstream	• Downstream
<i>Creating value</i>	• Sequences of values	• Value networks
<i>Externalities</i>	• Store	• Innovation
<i>funding</i>	• Publish	• Commercial
<i>Orientation</i>	• Towards the past	• Towards the future
<i>The trial</i>	• Interpretation	• Co-creation
<i>Structure</i>	• Products	• Platforms and content

Figure 3. The transition from cultural tourism to creative tourism [22]

The basic principles of creative tourism are those related to flexibility (in their relationships and in terms of the subject of creativity because creative tourism means co-production or collaboration); permeability and visibility (small producers must make their products visible). The main players from the creative sector need to expand their economic capital by developing new skills in the cross-sectorial area and by investing creative capital in new companies.

We present some examples of creative tourism experiences and how these experiences can be delivered (Table 3).

Table 3.

Creative tourist experiences

The experience	Delivery
Buy	• showcases
To taste	• experiences
Learn	• open workshops
To see	• workshops

Source: [adapt different authors]

CONCLUSIONS

Many tourists are now looking for alternative forms of tourism based on knowledge and skills, in other areas of the region than until now, far from the traditional cultural heritage, areas they visit both for their creative atmosphere and for doing creative activities. From this perspective, the great challenge for all regions globally is to identify ways to incorporate creative alternative tourism implicitly of creativity and to make tourists believe that they are in the unique place they wanted for a quality holiday. The ways in which creativity can be used in tourism are: attracting attention; creating the atmosphere, providing products/services and tourist experiences, revitalizing existing products/services and capitalizing on cultural and creative assets.

As the cultural tourist becomes more interactive and creative, cultural tourism is repositioned and becomes more creative, this can be achieved through a more interactive relationship between the tourist company and the tourist by creating biographies, identities and stories emphasizing that it is important to stimulate mutual learning by increasing the desire for self-development and informed consumption. Thus, the willingness to cooperate both as demand and as supply can be done by stimulating the need to activate relationship marketing initiatives at all levels of organizations and by selecting targeted customers interested in participating in the delivery of alternative products/services, the attractiveness of creativity as a form of expression.

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