

Perception of the People of Tepoztlán About Employment Since the Denomination of Magic Town

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This article aims to describe the perception of the residents of Tepoztlán Morelos regarding the level of employment since their designation as Magic Town. Tepoztlán is a municipality in the northern part of the State of Morelos, located in the South-Central of Mexico. It is a magical town situated on the slopes of the Tepozteco Mountain. It is recognized as one of the most attractive places in the aforementioned state. Its relative proximity to Mexico City makes this town an attractive tourist destination for visitors. The importance of this issue lies mainly in the fact that tourism is one of the largest sources of income and employment generation for the country, so it is essential to strengthen the tourism infrastructure through federal programs of social participation, which promotes the development from the bottom to top. With that objective, the Mexican government created a federal program primarily with the purpose of contributing to the development of rural tourism. So, the “Magic Towns” program emerged as a strategy to generate resources for certain communities and increase the tourist offer. Tepoztlán was one of the first towns to enter the program, so it is relevant to analyze if the benefits generated by this program related to employment are perceived by the population. That is to say, to know the opinion of the settlers on the increase and the conditions of the employment that tourism generates and how the denomination of magical town influences this. Regarding the method used, we can say that it is a research with a quantitative approach, a questionnaire was designed as an instrument for data collection. The sample was obtained by the sampling method called: simple random probabilistic sampling. The results presented here correspond to a sample of 119 inhabitants of Tepoztlán. In summary, the research on this subject allows us to conclude that there is an increase in the generation of jobs in Tepoztlán since its denomination as Magical Town; however, the working conditions and remuneration generated by tourism are perceived as low and far from the expectations of the population.

Keywords: employment and working conditions, cultural tourism, tourism development, federal programs

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Introduction

According to the World Organization of Tourism (OMT by its acronym in Spanish), tourism has become one of the main players in international trade, and at the same time it represents one of the main sources of income. The OMT also ensures that 1 out of 11 workers collaborate in the sectors related to it, as is the case of hotels, restaurants, transport, among others. But not only that, there are other industries that indirectly also benefit; the clearest example is that of all providers of the aforementioned services, such as food, gas stations, etc.

As this article aims to analyze employment in relation to tourism, it is considered pertinent to make it clear that tourism is also considered as an important source of foreign currency that helps macroeconomic stability. In addition, for many emerging economies, citizens working abroad providing services in the tourism sector generate a considerable flow of remittances. The countries that receive this labor force are also positively impacted by the exports of travel and tourism services derived from the expenses effected by foreign workers in their economies.

On the other hand, tourism is a job generator; governments recognize the participation of this sector to solve the problem of unemployment; therefore the government of Mexico creates the Magic Towns Program, which arises from a strategic line of local tourism development.

The said program raises several objectives, such as supporting municipal and regional tourism development, being economically, socially and culturally sustainable, and promoting tourism at a national and international level. Thus, in the year 2002, the town of Tepoztlán in the state of Morelos obtained the denomination “Magical Town”. As a result, it experienced a rebound in the tourist influx; subsequently it continued with a trend without changes. During 2010, it experienced a significant drop, apparently derived from the retirement of the Magic Towns program list. By 2011, in a joint effort between authorities, tourism service providers, residents and the Autonomous University of the State of Morelos (UAEM by its acronym in Spanish), the denomination was recovered (UAEM, 2013).

Literature Review

Tourism is an important driving force for job creation, for economic growth and for social development. Tourism contributes significantly to job creation, especially for women, youth, migrant workers, rural communities and indigenous towns and has multiple links with other sectors. This activity contributes to the well-being of the communities in which it takes place (Wanhill, 2000, p. 133), because tourism can favor the reduction of poverty and promote socioeconomic development.

Before continuing to explain the tourism-employment relationship, it is convenient to define for this case what is understood as employment because it has several meanings. On one hand, employment can be understood as the action and effect of generating and offering jobs, and can also be found in endless texts as a synonym of occupation, trade and work on the other hand. Therefore, it is important to clarify this concept.

The etymology of the word “employment” goes back to Latin, particularly the verb to use, which comes from *implicare*. Employment is the action and effect of employing, and employing means, in the first place, utilizing something to fulfill some function, as a synonym of using (Espasa-Calpe, 1999, p. 40). The Economics Dictionary of Arena and Méndez (2001, p. 74) defines employment as the “source of work, occupation carried out by the different people that make up the economically active population of a country”.

Employment is also defined as the action of giving work to another person, that is, to offer and guarantee a work function from a negotiated contract: it is affirmed that the act of giving employment must satisfy both parties, to the extent that one gives his/her work force and the other will use it to achieve productivity and thus obtain income, in exchange for a remuneration known as salary (Jahoda, 1987, pp. 25-27).

For the present work, we go back to the definition proposed by Jahoda, that is to say, the action of giving work to another person from a verbal or written contract in exchange for a remuneration or salary.

As already mentioned, the importance of tourism as a generator of employment is undeniable, which has been widely proven by Acerenza (2006, pp. 26-28). In agreement with the studies carried out by the World Council of Tourism and Travel, in 1999 tourism employed some 200 million people around the world, among direct jobs, meaning, those generated in the sector itself and in indirect jobs, that is, those originated in the suppliers of the tourism industry and related activities.

Another particular aspect in relation to employment in the tourism sector that should be highlighted is that the work force that is used during periods of peak season is complemented by personnel who carry out their activities and receive salaries during the rest of the year in other economic sectors, generally in agriculture and fishing. In such cases, tourism represents a supplementary income for the existing labor force in these sectors, without generating new jobs in the economy.

The generation of jobs is almost always the most considered variable when evaluating tourism development. The dissemination of this idea has generated a large number of studies that have focused on estimating the number of direct or indirect jobs generated by tourism development or the different rates of job creation that different tourism models would have. In this sense, different contributions establish that a "hotel tourism model" generates more jobs per unit of measurement than other tourism models (Talavera, 1997, pp. 74-75).

Methodology

The approach used in this research is of a quantitative type, where a questionnaire was designed as a data collection instrument that was applied to a sample of 119 elements. The sample was obtained by means of the sampling method called: simple random probabilistic sampling, which allows the elements that make up a universe to be described in the sampling frame, due to the fact that they have the same probability of being selected for the sample.

The formula to determine the sample size was as follows:

$$n = \frac{k^2(p * q)N}{(e^2(N - 1)) + K^2(p * q)}$$

where N is the size of the population or universe (total number of potential respondents), k is a constant that depends on the level of confidence assigned (the level of confidence indicates the probability that the results of an investigation are true), e is the desired sampling error, p is the proportion of individuals who possess the study characteristic in the population (the data are generally unknown and it is usually assumed that $p = q = 0.5$ which is the safest option), q is the proportion of individuals that do not have that characteristic, that is, $1 - p$, and n is the size of the sample (number of surveys that are applied).

In order to determine the size of the sample, it is necessary to know the level of confidence with which one wishes to work and determine the maximum acceptable degree of error in the results of the investigation. This can be up to 10%; since variations higher than this percentage reduce the validity of the information. For the determination of the sample of this investigation, a confidence level of 92% was taken, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Sample Reliability Table

Confiability	95%*	94%	93%	92%**	91%	90%
$N =$ Universe	18,283	18,283	18,283	18,283	18,283	18,283
$k =$ Confidence level	1.96	1.84	1.81	1.75	1.69	1.65
$e =$ error	5%*	6%	7%	8%**	9%	10%
$p =$ 50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
$q =$ 50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
$n =$ Sample size	376	232	166	119	88	68

Notes. The level of confidence expresses the certainty that the data sought are really within the margin of error. A confidence of 95%* carries a risk of 5%*. This means that, in every 100 samplings, it is expected that five of them give erroneous results. In this case, the level of confidence used is 92%** , so the risk or margin of error corresponds to 8%** . Source: own elaboration.

In this way, the confidence level was obtained for this study.

After obtaining the sample, 119 surveys were applied to know the opinion of the inhabitants of Tepoztlán Morelos about the generation of employment and its conditions as a result of its recognition as Magical Town in the year 2010. The results of the survey are presented in the next section.

Results

This section shows the results obtained from a sample of 119 elements obtained from a universe of 18,283 economically active inhabitants of Tepoztlán.

The results show that the average age of the respondents is 37 years old. Regarding gender, 47% of the respondents are men and 53% are women.

The most relevant results to determine the perception that the people from the Magical Town of Tepoztlán have on employment are described in Figures 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

Employment Generation

Figure 1 expresses that the tourist activity in the municipality of Tepoztlán Morelos, allows the creation of jobs. This means that there are opportunities for local development as a result of the Magic Town designation.

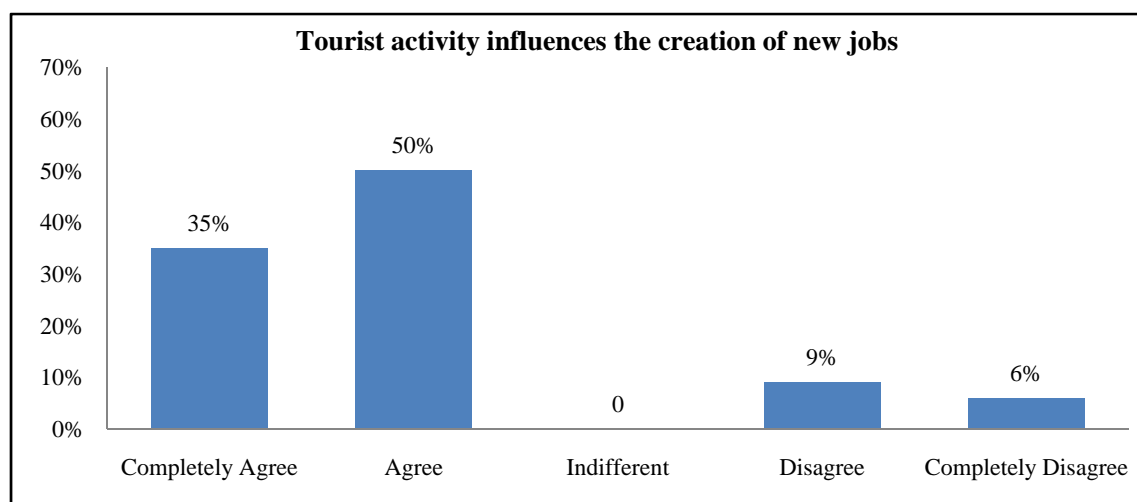


Figure 1. Tourist activity influences the creation of new jobs. Source: Own elaboration.

They say as well that the companies that generate the most jobs are the establishments of: food and beverages, lodging and sale of handicrafts. They are also aware that tourism generates business opportunities for residents and people can self-employ.

However, the conditions and characteristics of employment do not meet the expectations and needs of the residents, as shown in Figures 2-3.

Remuneration or Salary

Figure 2 shows graphically the response that subjects gave to the statement “The jobs generated by tourism are well paid”. Most recognize that although there is improvement of job creation, the wages received are not as high as they would like and they fail to satisfy the basic needs of the population.

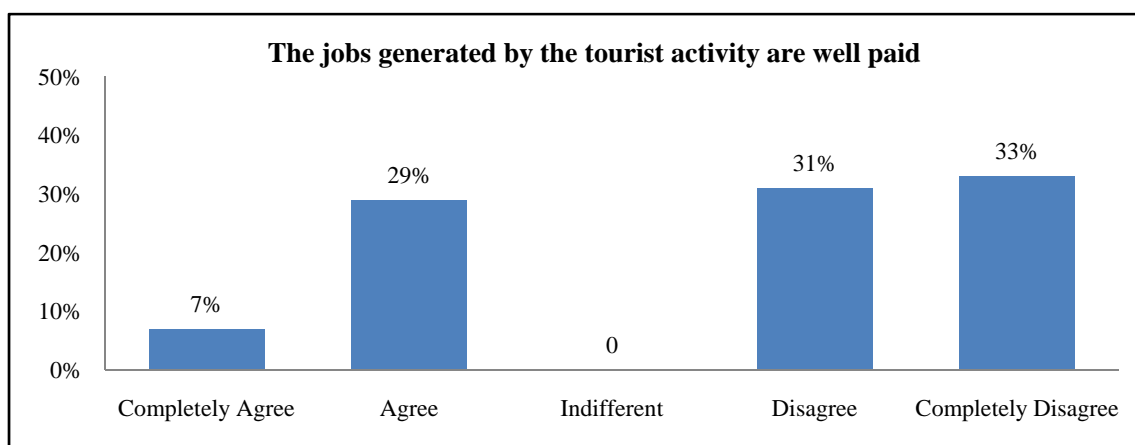


Figure 2. The Jobs generated by the tourist activity are well paid. Source: Own elaboration.

Working Conditions

It is observed in the graphic representation of the response to the statement “The conditions of employment that are offered are given according to the law”, that the respondents affirm that the jobs offered in the Magical Town of Tepoztlán do not meet the conditions indicated by the Law that regulates labor relations in Mexico, since most of them work more than eight hours, have no benefits and contracts are generally verbal.

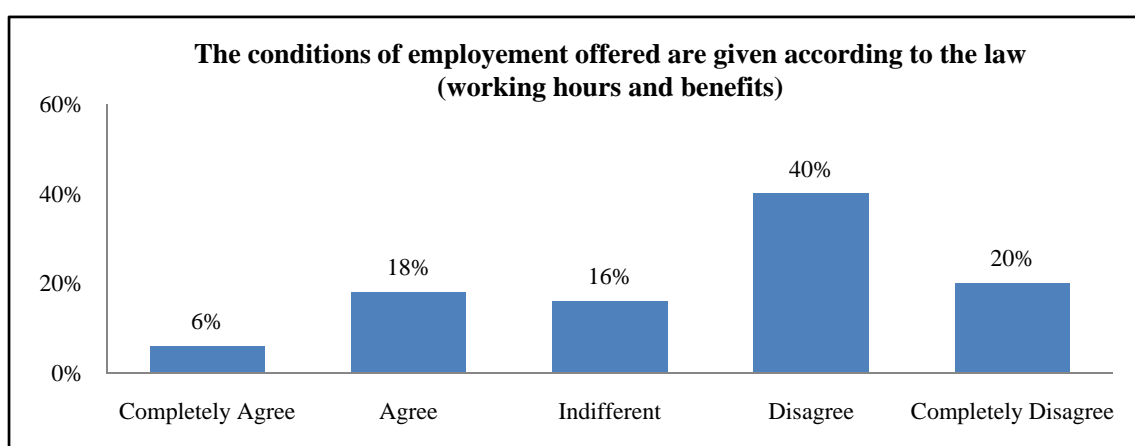


Figure 3. The conditions of employment offered are given according to the law (working hours and benefits). Source: Own elaboration.

Conclusions

The Magic Towns Program aims to make tourism a real contribution activity to raise welfare levels and maintain and increase employment, having as one of its basic principles the involvement and participation of society as a whole, as the main expectation is to capture a greater number of tourists, and therefore, a greater economic income.

Regarding the tourist activity in the Magical Town of Tepoztlán, based on the results of the survey, we can argue that, for most of the respondents, this activity is considered to be very important within the socioeconomic structure of Tepoztlán and occupies a relevant position for the generation of new jobs, so it offers an opportunity for local development.

Nonetheless, most of the interviewees consider that the jobs generated by the tourist activity are not well paid, mainly due to the fact that the inhabitants of the regions bordering Tepoztlán migrate to this Magical Town to find employment. This situation causes the remuneration to be lower than expected, because of the increase in the demand for employment and the employees of other regions are satisfied with receiving a low salary, while the residents of Tepoztlán demand a higher salary and better working conditions, situation that employers take advantage of and hire workers who accept a lower salary.

In this context, the villagers argue that the working conditions are bad, since they do not comply with what is dictated by the federal labor law and the constitution, which guarantees working conditions based on the principle of substantive equality between women and men, and also states that no differences and/or exclusions may be established due to ethnic origin or nationality, age, disability, etc. According to the nature of the tourist activity, formal employment must meet a number of characteristics such as the existence of a labor contract, the receipt of a salary, a work day of up to eight hours and benefits such as social security and benefits. The aforementioned conditions are not met by most of the jobs offered in Tepoztlán.

This study allows us to know some important aspects in relation to employment generated by tourism, from the perspective of the residents of Tepoztlán, who have opinions contrary to the optimists of the “Magic Towns” program or at least under another approach because although the majority considers that remuneration and working conditions have improved after the designation as a Magic Town, they do not have an important and beneficial impact on the conditions and improvement of employment, thus causing discontent and citizen disassociation phenomena.

On the other hand, this study is in its exploratory phase, and leaves the possibility open to deepen on this subject in future research.

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