

Social interest to the hosting population of tourism. Generated happiness in the supply and demand for the rural tourism

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Abstract Rural tourism has become one of the most demanded ways of leisure in our country. This type of activity, widely studied, gets happiness in the population from different perspectives. In this chapter, we are going to focus on the *happiness* generated by rural tourism activity from two different points of view although directly related: the tourists one and the population hosting of tourism. To measure *happiness* in tourists, we analyze the satisfaction obtained with the trip, by using primary information of 1,658 surveys made to people who stayed in any rural tourism establishment during 2014 and 2015. To measure the *happiness* in the hosting population, information about the level of employment that this activity generates in this population have been used. This variable is highlighted by several authors, as one of the most influent in the level of *happiness* in any population. For that secondary information from different Boletines de Coyuntura Económica of Junta de Castilla y León, and Encuesta de Población Activa (INE) will be used.

Keywords: happiness, satisfaction, local population, rural tourism, employment

1 Introduction

Rural tourism is one of the most practice activities during the year by a great number of tourism in our country. In 2018 the number of overnights in different rural tourism establishment of the country increased to eleven million four hundred thousand people (INE, 2018). What means that this is a key activity for the economy both of the country and the hosting places. As Garcia et al (2015) explain, the economical profits generated by the tourist development are wide, standing out employment options, high incomings and the business opportunities. So, the creation of employment is one of the beneficial aims that rural tourism provides to the hosting population without forgetting the local population interest. Carrying out these tourist project must be focus to the participation of the local population, getting economical profits while preventing and solving problems that could appear.

To analyze this activity, we have to start from its concept. Garcia (2011) define this activity as “that characterized by its stay and visit to rural places, normally inland, in establishment integrated in the natural environment, that tries to satisfy the relaxing necessity, as an alternative to the urban crowding and other touristic ones”. Blanco (1996) defines rural tourism as “the singular expressions of new ways of tourism characterized for getting development out of the cities, being produced minimally, using natural, cultural, patrimonial, hosting resources and the typical ones of the rural environment that contribute to the local development and the diversity and tourist competitiveness”. In this second definition the topic of local development by one activity that is not the most common in the rural areas is included. This is because of the link to the places with farming activities. Therefore, it can be said that rural tourism can be an activity that perfectly complements these traditional activities by allowing a sustainable economic development.

2 Satisfaction in rural tourism practice

Talking about tourists who practice this activity, we can affirm that one of the aims, is to get the best satisfaction and to get the tourist recommendation and try to go back in the future, after the trip. A lot of articles speak about how important satisfaction is in tourism practice. (Yoon & Uysal (2005), Hutchisonson et al (2009), Asgarnezhad et al (2018) and Penelas-Leguía et al (2019)). Serra (2011) explains that after

the trip, the tourist checks it while valuating the experience by having a satisfying or unsatisfying sensation. When this sensation is a positive one, we can define it as *happiness* that is the objective that tourist wants to get. The aim of this chapter is to check what the level of satisfaction of the tourists is after the trip, by paying attention to the global satisfaction and satisfaction in terms of expectations.

The choice of satisfaction as a *happiness* measure, it is carried out because it is a variable widely used in that direction in Economic Science and Politics (Rodríguez et al., 2016). The range of explanatory perspective is wide, from the most ethereal to the most pragmatic, with a large number of references analyzing the relationship between the variables. We can highlight a Diener (2000), who used it in different areas; Gerstenbluth et al (2008), in medicine; o Nader et al (2014) and Herreros (2010) in the labor organization field.

3 Happiness of the hosting population linked to the employment generation

Other important issue in this study, is to check the level of *happiness* the local population, host of rural tourism, gets from this practice. Sancho (2005), has the opinion that the sustainable tourism gets the possibility of improving the quality of life of local population. And those opportunities or benefits that tourism offers to the local population are the generator of new employs mainly. So, we can see that the practices of the rural tourism, and the bigger amount of employs ends in a bigger satisfaction of the host population. And more when this happens in depopulated areas in our country where their inhabitants get worse and worse. Settlement of rural tourism can create a lot of jobs that avoid the depopulation of many places.

But, can we link *happiness* and job creation? For Argyle (2003) unemployment is directly related with unhappiness. And that is why to have a job can be considered as a *happiness* source, mainly because of the level of incomings. For Alonso-Fernández (2009), the conquer of well-being and *happiness* are achieved by four dimensions: job, rest, social interaction and spare time. Ahn and Mochón (2007), look for a relation between expectations and *happiness* and have some conclusions, one is that expectation about the job and economical level, get a high *happiness* and satisfaction in the person. These same authors, in their article in 2010, checked that “employees”, are happier than unemployed.

That is why we are going to study *happiness* in rural tourist hosting population while analyzing the possible creation of job related with this activity, what is linked with improvement in quality of life in local individuals and so a lower level of depopulation by fixing population through employment.

4 The province of Soria, Spain, as a case of study

The empirical investigation was realized in the province of Soria (España). It was chosen because Soria is the province with the less number of habitants in Spain (88.600 inhabitants in 2018) linked to a big problem of depopulation. It is a clear example of what is called “emptied Spain”.

4.1 Analysis of happiness through satisfaction of the rural tourism in Soria

To the analysis of the rural tourist 1,658 surveys where done. With this study tourist level of satisfaction with the trip and loyalty level was analyzed.⁴ This way underlying *happiness* level can be checked in all the process.

The results both in global level of satisfaction (table 1) and level of satisfaction in terms of expectation (table 2) show a high level of satisfaction.

Table 1: Global level of satisfaction

Meaning	Frequencies	%
Very Unsatisfactory		0.00
Unsatisfactory		0.00
Indifferent	18	1.09
Satisfactory	450	27.14
Very Satisfactory	1,190	71.77
Total frequencies	1,658	100.00

Source: Own elaboration.

⁴ To analyze them, we have used the program DYANE (Santesmases, 2009).

Only a 1.09 % felt indifference and de almost 99 % answered that their experience with Soria as a tourist destination was satisfactory or very satisfactory in their surveys.

Table 2: Level of satisfaction in terms of expectations

Meaning	Frequencies	%
Much worse		0.00
Worse	16	0.97
Indifferent	226	13.63
Better	409	24.67
Much Better	1,007	60.74
Total frequencies	1,658	100.00

Source: Own elaboration.

85 % answered that their satisfaction was better or much better than expected. It is remarkable that 13 % gave the opinion that their satisfaction was the one had expected and only the 1 % answered that their satisfaction was worse than expected in their surveys.

So we can affirm that the link between global satisfaction and the destination is big. These results are reinforced when tourist loyalty is analyzed (table 3).

Table 3: Loyalty level with the destination. “Will you visit the province again some other time?”

Meaning	Frequencies	%
No, surely		0.00
No, probably		0.00
I don't know	119	7.18
Yes, probably	682	41.13
Yes, surely	857	51.69
Total frequencies	1,658	100.00

Source: Own elaboration.

Around 93 % respondents answered they would probably o surely go back. But nobody answered that they would not. And only one 7.18 % got doubts. What means that after visiting the rural destination in Soria, satisfaction with the trip is very high and the level of *happiness* is very high too (what can be translated in a high level of recommendation).

We can say that this high level of satisfaction when travelling to a rural tourism place (Soria, in our case) is very high and provides *happiness* to the visitor.

4.2 Analysis of happiness in the local population through employment

The second part of this chapter is focused on analyzing *happiness* that visiting the place means to hosting population. We have checked that employment is one of the main sources of *happiness* theoretically. This way, we are going to analyze how tourism in the province of Soria could increase the level of employment in the area.

First, we have to see how the number of travelers and overnights in rural tourism has increased in the last years. In figure 1 we can see the variation in the two last decades.

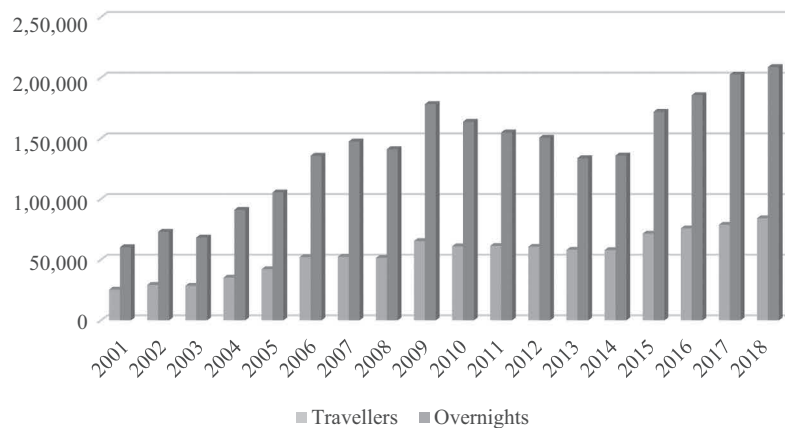


Fig. 1: Number of travelers and overnights in rural tourism in Soria. Source: Own elaboration work based in INE figures. Rural tourism accommodation occupancy survey

There we can see the differences between the rural tourism demands from 2001 to 2018. Until 2009 both the number of visits and overnights mainly increased. Since then, it has a highly drop when the economical worldwide crisis. The increasing in the number of travelers and in the overnights overpasses the number before the crisis, since 2014.

After checking how good rural tourism is nowadays, let's see if this numbers are linked to the number of employments in rural tourism in the province. For it, data related to the number of employs in this sector have been obtained and analyzed (table 4 and figure 2)

Table 4: Number of jobs in rural tourism in Soria

Years	Jobs	Years	Jobs
2005	2.515	2012	4.510
2006	2.914	2013	5.153
2007	3.345	2014	4.794
2008	3.479	2015	4.694
2009	4.189	2016	4.834
2010	4.650	2017	4.686
2011	4.737	2018	5.159

Source: Boletín Coyuntura Económica CYL.

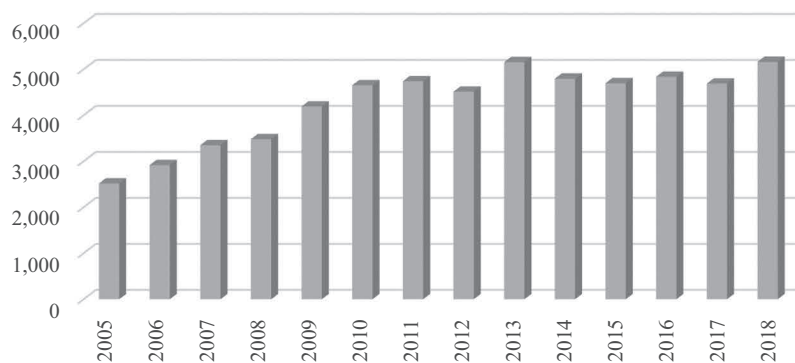


Fig. 2: Chart "Number of jobs in rural tourism in Soria". Source: Boletín Coyuntura Económica CYL

Between 2005 and 2013 there is an increase in number of employed people directly in rural tourism, with a light decrease in 2012. From 2014, the number goes down lightly, getting up in 2018, getting this year to a level seen in 2013. These levels can be compared with the number of employees in the activities of the service sector between 2008 and 2018 in all the province (figure 3).

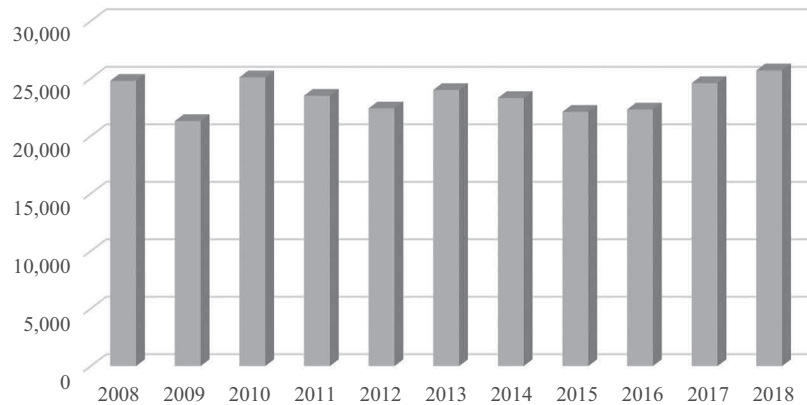


Fig. 3: Chart “Number of jobs in services sector in Soria”. Source: INE. Economically active population survey 2008–2018

With some ups and downs, we can see that the tendency is to maintain along the last 10 years, in contrast to the up tendency from 2005 to 2013 that we can check in the number of employees in rural tourism in the province. From that moment it doesn't change but light variations (figure 2).

While checking the number of inhabitants of the province in these years, from 2005 to 2018, a relation between the number of employs in rural tourism and the increase or decrease of population can be checked (table 5 and figure 4).

Table 5: Number of jobs in services sector in Soria

Years	Inhabitants	Years	Inhabitants
2005	92.773	2012	94.522
2006	93.503	2013	93.291
2007	93.593	2014	92.221
2008	94.646	2015	91.006
2009	95.101	2016	90.040
2010	95.258	2017	88.903
2011	95.223	2018	88.600

Source: INE.

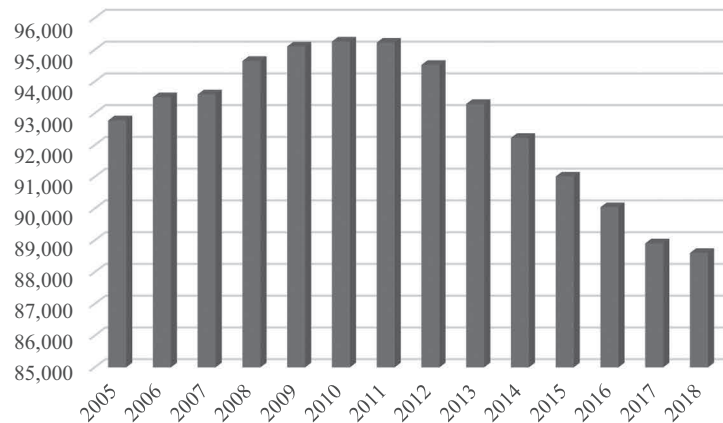


Fig. 4: Chart “Number of jobs in services sector in Soria”. Source: INE

It is observed that population in the province went up until 2011, moment when a downturn arrived until nowadays. In figure 2 we can see the number of employs in rural tourism highlight increase until 2011 with a rise in 2013, maintaining itself until 2018. Although we can't link only the increase or decrease of the level of employs in rural tourism in the population of a place, because there are a lot of variables, we can say that between 2005 and 2011 a clear upturn in both situations is observed.

5 Conclusions

From a group of primary data obtained thanks to a wide survey between people accommodated in rural tourism established in the province of Soria, it has been checked that the level of satisfaction is very high. Around 99 % of the interviewed where satisfied or very satisfied to the visit to the province and with respect to the previous expectatives, the amount got 85 %. They are very high and very clear evidences of the high satisfaction with the trip, what means into a great *happiness* with the province visitors. With this we can say that the touristic practice and mainly the tourist practice in Soria provides a high level of *happiness* to the visitors.

Hosting population has something to say in relation with *happiness*, too. Level of *happiness* can be measured by different factors, being level of

employment a good indicator and related with the rise of level of incomings. So, we have analyzed the rising of the level of employments in the area to measure the level of *happiness* in the hosting population of tourism.

By using secondary data obtained from Boletines de Coyuntura Económica from Junta de Castilla y León, we can check that the level of employments in the province directly linked to rural tourism doubled between 2005 and 2013, maintained in the last 6 years and lightly increased in 2018. This is a similar tendency to the other activities to the service sector in the last six years.

We can translate this by saying that the level of *happiness* of the province inhabitants rises because of rural tourism employment, although it can rise if this level of employment (and so the incomings), goes up the same way than the previous years (2005–2013 period). If this level of employment would go up, the so fear depopulation in this province, one of the most depopulated in all the Spanish territory, could decrease, and make inhabitants happier by maintained residents thanks to the increase of the employment. On the other hand, the number of population of the province increased to 2011, going drastically down from that moment to nowadays. Those data have a coincidence with the rise of employees in rural tourism in that period. A relation between the rise in rural tourism employment and the number of inhabitants is possible. But if the rural tourist job gets worse, we should add another negative factor linked with depopulation.

6 References

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