

# Creative Tourism Based on Handicrafts in the Municipality of Ráquira, Boyacá

Jorge Alexander Mora Forero and Alvelayis Nieto Mejía

Universitaria Agustiniiana, Bogotá, Colombia

[Jorge.mora@uniagustiniana.edu.co](mailto:Jorge.mora@uniagustiniana.edu.co)

[alvelayis.nieto@uniagustiniana.edu.co](mailto:alvelayis.nieto@uniagustiniana.edu.co)

**Abstract:** This research allows to know the symbolic value and the representations that tourists give to the traditional utilitarian and artistic handicraft work in pottery and ceramics, to identify the criteria of inclusion and exclusion at the time of purchase in Ráquira Boyacá, considered as the handicraft capital of Colombia. The objective of this research is to identify the potential of creative tourism based on utilitarian and artistic crafts as a strategy for economic revitalization and cultural dissemination in the municipality of Ráquira Boyacá. In addition, it is based on the main categories which identifies having a support or information on a participatory scenario involving artisans, tourists, merchants and the community. Likewise, the type of research handled in this project is qualitative where the analysis is interpretative and reflexive. In this way, ethnographic interviews are carried out to obtain decisive information from the artisans in relation to the techniques, know-how and traditional knowledge associated with their artisan work in which tourism contributes to the dissemination, valuation and conservation of artisan work, privileging the principles of sustainability, quality and responsibility of cultural and creative tourism. Therefore, as a result, relevant information from tourists who visit Ráquira was evidenced, with the purpose of knowing the symbolic value and the representations they give to artisan work. Equally important, concluding this research, there is a great potential to strengthen creative tourism products based on handicrafts in Ráquira.

**Keywords:** Cultural tourism, Sustainable tourism, Creative tourism, Heritage

---

## 1. Introduction

This research allows teaching the importance of creative tourism, which has been achieved through a community tourism research project. This strengthens the academy and tourism research in Colombia. Likewise, it is aimed at the creative tourism potential of the traditional and ancestral artisan work of the municipality of Ráquira Boyacá, generating a participatory scenario that involves artisans, tourists, merchants, and the community. This research intends to potentiate artisan tourism constituting a means or instrument that contributes to the dissemination, valuation and conservation of artisan work, privileging the principles of sustainability, quality and responsibility of cultural and creative tourism that took place in the municipality. Therefore, the research question is, what are the potentialities of creative tourism from artistic crafts as a strategy of revitalization and cultural dissemination in the municipality of Ráquira Boyacá. The Sustainable Development Goal related in this paper is Sustainable Cities and Communities. Due to the artisans have the opportunity to reach a Good economy with the creative and cultural tourism. According with Mora the cultural tourism can improve the projects through interaction between communities and tourists (Mora et al., 2019).

The municipality of Ráquira is a strategic territory within the framework of the orange economy as a state policy and the national commitment to strengthening cultural tourism, as these axes can contribute to the economic, social, and cultural prosperity of the territory. Likewise, a way to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals to which the national government has committed itself. This inquiry was developed from ethnographic research in order to generate a scenario for the construction of collective knowledge among the actors involved in this proposal. Considering the above context, this research aims to identify the potential of creative tourism based on utilitarian and artistic handicrafts as a strategy for economic revitalization and cultural dissemination in the municipality of Ráquira Boyacá.

This involves inquiring with artisans about the set of techniques, know-how and traditional knowledge of ancestral origin associated with the work of pottery and ceramics from a socio-anthropological perspective, in order to understand their cultural dimensions. Likewise, to know the symbolic value and the representations that tourists give to the traditional artistic and utilitarian handicraft work of pottery and ceramics, to identify the criteria of inclusion and exclusion at the time of purchase so that the creative tourist can contribute to the dissemination, appreciation and cultural education of handicraft work and in turn boost the local economy by improving the income of artisans.

It is determined by strategic guidelines for the materialization of creative, innovative and transformative ideas that incorporate sustainable development criteria in productive processes (Mora et al., 2022). It seeks to strengthen traditional ancestral knowledge, intangible cultural heritage practices and the arts in general through conservation and dissemination. It constitutes a strategy for the achievement of the Sustainable Development

Goals (SDGs) (Gil, 2018), complying with the 2030 agenda and thus developing in a broad and forceful manner, the economic potential of the cultural and creative sector of Colombia.

The above also implies a challenge in relation to local communities, since cultural resources must be activated in order to achieve a better quality of life and well-being for their inhabitants (Saavedra et al., 2021). This proposal is justified by the need to identify the autochthonous artisanal work of clay, along with its techniques, knowledge and traditions that constitute the goldsmith and ceramics as a cultural practice of the municipality of Ráquira.

## **2. Artisanal Tourism**

Tourism in the construction of handicraft activity influences the forms of trade and the economic situation of the craftsmanship performing tourism activity in relation to the heritage values embedded in handicrafts (Saldaña et al., 2018). Likewise, craft tourism has a far-reaching impact on the economy and tourism (Shen, 2022). In addition, handicrafts are considered evidence of the travel experience, they are marketed for tourist consumption (Monterrubio, 2018). However, in handicraft tourism they are constantly involved in both local, regional and national events (Duque, 2017). Nevertheless, ancient techniques and knowledge linked to tourism are reproduced, such as craft markets and craft fairs (Carbonell, 2020).

In this way, artisanal tourism teaches the process of before, during and after the craft, in addition to touring the tourist resources (Gómez, 2020). Also, some artisans do their work in homes or in poorly equipped ateliers that do not allow them to develop their work optimally starting from the tourism sector (Burga, 2022). That said, handicraft objects should be strategic and have a form of commercialization within fairs and exhibitions in the tourism activity (Machuca et al., 2022). Therefore, this craft role is endowed with a tourist value because it is traditional and historical, as it is a heritage of the indigenous Muisca peoples (Cediel, 2022).

Among the new proposals of creative tourism, the term escapism emerges as a new form of leisure, adapting to the demand of millennials that has generated a transformation in the tourism industry (Mowincke, 2016). In addition to this, escapism adapts well to the current lines of tourism development such as sustainability and the promotion of culture (Lama, 2018). Thus, it is important to consider in the analysis and creation of new creative tourism projects, to include indicators to measure and compare the relationship between creativity and sustainability (Romero et al, 2020).

## **3. Creative Community-Based Tourism**

Community-Based and creative tourism is currently a differentiated, alternative offer that enhances the experience, culture, environment and art as a generator of opportunities for creative tourism and cultural economic activation. Likewise, it is an original journey of experiences and commitments to art, cultural heritage or the special character of a place (Chinea, 2017). Creative and community-based tourism embraces sustainability that integrates social, economic factors and the environment, seeking mechanisms to preserve cultural identity (Cardona, 2017). However, it explores in depth communities with very specific realities and social identities woven around the relational processes of tourism (Molina, 2016). Similarly, they indicate the policy and management of the state in community-based tourism and local tourism management and development (Mora et al., 2022).

Community-based tourism has become an efficient alternative to mass tourism (Vera et al., 2017). Now, creative tourism is a form that falls into the category of cultural tourism, which allows visitors to develop their creative potential by actively participating in destination-specific learning experiences (Unesco, 2004). On the other hand, the figure of the tourist is not limited to a mere consumer of goods and service (Mansilla, 2021). However, they include travel services, transportation/access, accommodation, food and beverages, souvenirs/merchandise and product packaging (Rodriguez, 2021). Likewise, Community-based tourism has become an important analysis of tourism trends (Mora et al, 2018).

According to Tresserras (2021), creative tourism generates opportunities for those activities that focus on intellectual property through creativity, combining innovation with tradition and providing opportunities for the community, which implies the possibility of creating artisanal or industrial processes, goods and services for the tourism sector, improving the economy of the inhabitants of the area. Creative tourism should also focus on children, encouraging learning through fun and creativity. However, tourism demand is changing with the passing of time, currently there are different types of tourists and they all seek to live experiences out of the conventional (Alberca, 2019).

For this reason, creative tourism emerges which is considered as the social phenomenon of the last century and the beginning of the present (World Tourism Organization, 2018). Given the characteristics of creative tourism, it is considered an extension of cultural tourism and a response to mass tourism (Richards, 2011). In addition to this, the tourist tries to get to know the locals by making a cultural exchange (Korstanje, 2015). It is important to note that, for creative tourism planning ideas should not look alike, each territory and sector based on their qualities can develop innovative products and projects (Molina, 2016).

#### 4. Methodology

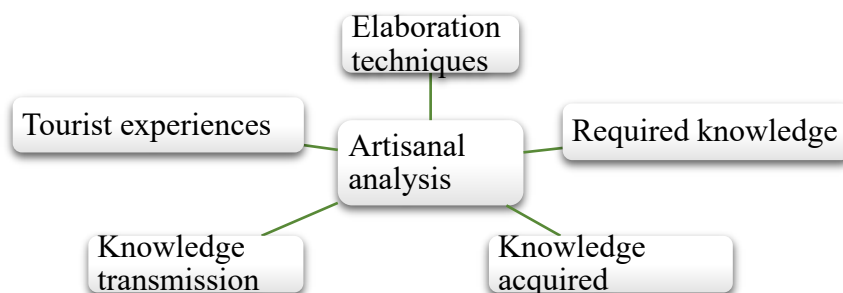
The methodological structure used for this research is based on a qualitative approach taking into account that the object of study is of social characteristics. In addition, the type of research used in this investigation is interpretative and reflexive. Likewise, ethnographic interviews are conducted to obtain decisive information from the artisans in relation to the techniques, knowledge and traditional knowledge associated with their handicraft work. However, the main categories which identifies to have a support or information on a participatory scenario involving artisans, tourists, merchants and the community.

This research describes what was found in Ráquira in the department of Boyacá, which is considered the handicraft capital of Colombia. The municipality of Ráquira is located in the province of Ricaurte in the department of Boyacá, 60 kilometers away from the capital city of Tunja. It is bordered on the north by the municipalities of Tinjacá and Sutamarchán, on the south by Gachetá in Cundinamarca, on the east by Sáchica and Samacá and on the west by San Miguel de Sema and Laguna de Fúquene. It has a population of approximately 13,588 inhabitants, its altitude is 2,150 meters above sea level, its average temperature is 17 ° C and has an area of 233 km<sup>2</sup> (Fernandez et al., 2020).

From the theoretical point of view, two theoretical axes of the social sciences are approached, on the one hand, the concept of creative and artisanal tourism and its main characteristics are reviewed, and on the other hand, the theories of community tourism in a territorial context are reviewed. These elements allow establishing a discussion between the theoretical assumptions, the case study and reality; additionally, they make it possible to describe the potential in which the community manages creative tourism in Ráquira.

Three semi-structured interviews were conducted, according to Lopezosa (2020) they have fixed questions and respondents can answer freely without choosing a specific answer. We took into account artisans who had craft enterprises and who received visitors and were in the center of the municipality of Ráquira Boyacá.

#### 5. Results



**Figure 1: Artisanal Analysis: Own Elaboration**

Craft analysis is identified with the elaboration techniques, required knowledge, acquired knowledge, knowledge transmission and the experiences that the tourist has when making crafts in Ráquira.

**Table 1: Craft Analysis: Own Elaboration**

<b>Manufacturing techniques</b>	The respective techniques of elaboration are the ancestral techniques left to them by their ancestors, such as the preparation of the clay, the cream of the ceramic, the technique of the roll being one of the oldest techniques. Also, with the ancestral techniques are those that were made vessels, pots, chorotes among others. Now, it has evolved with molds and lathes, finished by hand, in the same way, the processes that are used are called squeezing, lathe, casting, mold in cast or castings and relevant lathe.
---------------------------------	---

<b>Required knowledge</b>	The knowledge that is required to make handicrafts is to be willing, to put love to the clay to be able to mold it. In addition, to continue practicing it every moment and learning from other knowledge since each of the knowledge learned is thanks to the grandparents and relatives who previously made handicrafts.
<b>Acquired knowledge</b>	The knowledge acquired is traditional since it was conceived by family, such as grandparents and great-great-grandparents. In fact, the Muiscas transmit this knowledge emphasizing the inheritance they leave behind. Also, the knowledge is obtained from the teachings of the ancestors since the desire to smear mud is a pride for living those experiences, in the same way, the different techniques, styles and finishes are also a source of pride.
<b>Knowledge transfer</b>	The knowledge is transmitted, and the elaboration of the handicrafts is taught, with the participation in the respective demonstrative and participatory workshops and interaction. However, the knowledge is transmitted to visitors explaining the process and guiding them with each process of making crafts with ancestral experiences of where the clay comes from, what kinds of clay exist in Ráquira, how it is prepared and what is needed to process in different techniques and how to reach the person to elaborate and make the procedure with the guidance of an artisan.
<b>Touristic experiences</b>	Tourists get involved with the production of handicrafts according to social networks, communicating and having the interest to participate in the workshops, to know how the process is. In other words, it is healthy and relaxing to participate and explore creativity when creating handicrafts, interacting with each of the handicraft processes since it is a cultural richness. In conclusion, Ráquira means town of pots and has a strong knowledge having a great value and taking this knowledge learned to their relatives and acquaintances.

The techniques used to elaborate handicrafts are analyzed, with respect to the knowledge required and the knowledge acquired to make handicrafts, having the technique of how it transmits the knowledge for the elaboration of handicrafts and how the tourists are involved with the production of these same ones.

## 6. Conclusion

It is very important the elaboration and creation of handicrafts, being this a great labour for each work that is made with the different techniques of elaboration. In other words, these crafts are created as a durable product, which original function is determined at the social and cultural level. At the same time, handicrafts contribute to the conservation and revitalisation of cultural heritage, and it is important to generate projects that promote knowledge of this activity. In short, the potential of a creative tourist product is identified, which potentiates the traditional and ancestral handicraft work of the municipality of Ráquira Boyacá.

Also, the potential of creative tourism from artistic crafts as a strategy is based on the elaboration techniques, the knowledge required and acquired, identifying the transmission which contribute to the knowledge highlighting the tourist experiences which are carried out with crafts in Ráquira. The main future lines of research should establish projects that allow knowing the creative tourism, taking into account that it gives tourists the opportunity to develop their creative potential by actively participating in learning experiences. Similarly, the work of artisans should be analysed, identifying the innovation of the different possibilities to expand the potential of creative tourism based on utilitarian and artistic handicrafts.

According to Saldaña (2018) indicates the tourism activity in relation to the heritage values inserted in the crafts, however, for the interviewees they are more than heritage values since for them it is something they are passionate about and day by day they make the crafts generating a participatory scenario involving artisans, tourists, merchants and the community. Likewise, the success of creative tourism projects is due to a joint effort of all actors including the community as Liévano (2018) exposes. Additionally, the interviewees indicate that the success of their ventures is due to the artisanal experience and the demonstrative and participatory workshops.

This research was carried out in the municipality of Colombia with the most traditional craftsmanship. Therefore, the results allow us to learn about the techniques and knowledge of the artisans of this place. However, it would be important to make a comparative analysis with other municipalities to identify the potential and development of artisan tourism.

## References

- Alberca Sialer, F. A. (2019). El turismo creativo. Conceptualización y características. *Cultura: Revista de la Asociación de Docentes de la USMP*, (33), 11-15.
- Burga Temoche, J. A. (2022). Centro de innovación artesanal para mejorar el turismo del circuito Muchik en el distrito de Monsefú, Lambayeque 2022. 14-127.
- Carbonell, E. (2020). Entre redes, patrimonio y turismo: mutaciones de la pesca artesanal en la costa norte de Barcelona (Cataluña). *Estudios atacameños*, (65), 3-19.
- Cediel Duque, L. M. (2022). Diseño de una experiencia de turismo comunitario para resaltar y exaltar el valor cultural del sector artesanal de la lana en Nobsa-Boyacá. 19-108.
- Duque, C. A. C. (2017). Proceso organizativo de las comunidades negras rurales de Antioquia. Ancestralidad, etnicidad y política pública afroantioqueña. *Estudios Políticos*, (50), 180-202.
- Fernández-Vargas, Y., Puentes Montañez, G. A., & Sanabria Neira, N. C. Planificación del sistema de producción-Recolección del agraz (Vaccinium meridionale Swartz) en el municipio de Ráquira, Boyacá-Colombia. *Revista ESPACIOS*. ISSN, 798, 1015.
- Gil, C. G. (2018). Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS): una revisión crítica. *Papeles de relaciones ecosociales y cambio global*, 140, 107-118.
- Gómez Chancafe, R. S. (2020). Producción artesanal de “paja palma macora” para el desarrollo del turismo vivencial en ciudad Eten, región Lambayeque. 13-129.
- Korstanje, M. E. (2015). Un análisis crítico del Turismo Creativo. *Gran Tour, Revista de Investigaciones Turísticas*, (12). 6-19.
- Lopezosa, C. (2020). Entrevistas semiestructuradas con NVivo: pasos para un análisis cualitativo eficaz. Lopezosa C, Díaz-Noci J, Codina L, editores *Metodos Anuario de Métodos de Investigación en Comunicación Social*, 1. Barcelona: Universitat Pompeu Fabra; 2020. p. 88-97.
- López-Rodríguez, CE, Mora-Forero, JA, & León-Gómez, A. (2022). Desarrollo Estratégico Asociado al Branding en el Sector Turístico: Análisis Bibliométrico y Revisión Sistemática de la Literatura entre los Años 2000 a 2022. *Sostenibilidad*, 14 (16), 9869.
- Machuca Medina, A. J., & Rodas Curo, M. C. S. (2022). Integración del malecón turístico-cultural con el centro de acopio de la pesca artesanal para la revalorización y promoción del turismo en el distrito de san José. 47-248.
- Molina, S. (2016). Turismo Creativo. *Revista Turismo: Estudios e Prácticas (RTEP/UERN)*, 5(1), 170-173.
- Molina, S. (2016). Turismo creativo. *Investigaciones Turísticas*, 6, 170-173.
- Monterrubio Cordero, J. C. (2011). Turismo y cambio sociocultural. Una perspectiva conceptual. México: UAEMex, Plaza y Valdés.
- Mora Forero, J. A., & Bohorquez Patiño, L. M. (2018). El turismo rural comunitario¿ Una oportunidad en el posconflicto colombiano?.
- Mora Forero, J. A., & Motato Ramírez, J. W. (2019). Turismo comunitario en Colombia: desarrollo social y sostenibilidad. *Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios*.
- Mora Forero, J. A., & Nieto Mejía, A. (2022). Economía solidaria y apropiación del turismo rural comunitario: estudio de caso Sibateando1. *Revista hispanoamericana de Historia de las Ideas*, (56), 194-208.
- Mora, J. A. F., & Saavedra, J. A. (2022). Community-based tourism as an approach to a solidarity economy. In *European Conference on Management Leadership and Governance (Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 340-346)*.
- Mowinckel, K. M. (2016). El turismo experiencial y creativo: el caso de Cantabria. *International journal of scientific management and tourism*, 2(3), 195-203.
- OMT. 2018b. *Tourism for development - Volume I: Key areas for action*. Madrid: UNWTO. doi.org/10.18111/9789284419722.
- Richards, G. (2011). Tourism and creativity: the state of the art. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(4), 1225-1253.
- Rodrigues, J., de Carvalho, C. N., Ramos, M., Ramos, R., Vinagre, A., & Vinagre, H. (2021). Geoproducts–Innovative development strategies in UNESCO Geoparks: Concept, implementation methodology, and case studies from Naturtejo Global Geopark, Portugal. *International Journal of Geoheritage and Parks*, 9(1), 108-128.
- Saavedra Camargo, J., García Revilla, M. R., Martínez Moure, O., & Mora Forero, J. (2021). Análisis del turismo rural comunitario en Colombia y España: Estudio de casos. Bogota. *Corporación Universitaria Minutos de Dios*.
- Saldaña-Ortega, O. A., Serrano-Barquín, R. D. C., Pastor-Alfonso, M. J., & Palmas Castrejón, Y. D. (2018). Análisis interpretativo del impacto del turismo en el patrimonio cultural artesanal. Tepoztlán, México. *Revista Investigaciones Turísticas*, nº 16, pp. 46-67 ISSN: 2174-5609 DOI: [http://dx.doi.org/10.14198/INTURI2018.16.03\\_5-22](http://dx.doi.org/10.14198/INTURI2018.16.03_5-22)
- Shen, J., & Chou, R. J. (2022). Rural revitalization of Xiamei: The development experiences of integrating tea tourism with ancient village preservation. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 90, 42-52.
- Tresserras, J. (2021). El turismo cultural y creativo hoy. UNESCO México. <https://es.unesco.org/news/turismo-cultural-y-creativo-hoy#:~:text=El%20turismo%20creativo%20permite%20generar,productivas%20de%20las%20industrias%20culturales>

UNESCO (2004). Red de Ciudades Creativas. Recuperado de: <https://es.unesco.org/creative-cities/content/acerca-de>.  
Vera, L. E. H., Paladines, G. V., & Velasco, J. E. S. (2017). Gestión del turismo comunitario como alternativa de desarrollo local. Comunidad Yunguilla. Quito. Revista Publicando, 4(11 (2)), 427-441.  
World Tourism Organization. (2018). UNWTO Annual Report 2017. Madrid: World Tourism Organization.