

## Competitiveness in Boyacá Based on an Organizational Strategic Diagnosis for the Tourism Sector

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### ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the factors that influence tourism competitiveness in the department of Boyacá (Colombia), based on a strategic organizational diagnosis of the sector. Constant changes in tourist demand, evolving visitor consumption habits, and the search for more sustainable tourism have driven the entire tourism value chain to adapt to new service modalities. Despite possessing countless comparative advantages, Boyacá shows significant competitiveness gaps, ranking ninth in the Departmental Competitiveness Index (2018). Through the application of Serna's (2014) strategic diagnostic model integrating the External Opportunity and Threat Profile (POAM), the Internal Capability Profile (PCI), Key Success Factors (KSF), and the SWOT matrix critical gaps in the department's tourism value chain were identified, along with offensive, defensive, adaptive, and survival strategies to improve Boyacá's competitive position. Findings reveal structural weaknesses in infrastructure, human talent, innovation, marketing, and governance, but also significant opportunities arising from tourism internationalization, strategic alliances, and the potential of cultural and gastronomic tourism. The study concludes that the department's tourism competitiveness requires multidimensional intervention, articulated among public, private, and academic sectors.

**KEYWORDS:** Tourism competitiveness, strategic diagnosis, SWOT, Boyacá, tourism value chain, competitive advantage.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The constant changes in tourism demand, the evolution in the consumption habits of visitors and the search for a more sustainable tourism that promotes direct encounter with nature and individual experiences have driven the entire tourism value chain to adapt to new service modalities. In this context, some key elements of dissemination and information such as the internet and social networks, with rapid growth in the last decade, have managed to consolidate themselves as the main means of communication for tourism promotion. Currently, the tourism consumer is an active participant who has been empowered and integrated into the processes that have to do with the tourism value chain. In this sense, if the destination wants to correspond to the expectations of tourists, it must adapt to this new market model (Pulido & López, 2013). Consequently, consumers are more likely to make the purchase decision through these means, as

they offer and generate new innovative shopping experiences, such as a better perception of the product and faster access to information (Galaviz, 2021).

Nowadays, any destination no longer depends only on its comparative advantages (physical resources, beaches, mountains or climate), but requires a comprehensive approach that involves developing acts of innovation in technology or processes, and new ways of doing things that differentiate it from its competitors (Porter, 1985). At the strategic level, the tourism value chain becomes the sum and sequence of primary and support activities to respond to the performance of the tourism sector. This includes processes such as integrated policy formulation and planning, product development and presentation, promotion and marketing, distribution and sale, and generally all destination operations and services (UN Tourism, 2024).

This new scenario requires analysis and study in each link that makes up the tourism chain of Boyacá, to understand the factors that determine the success or lag of Boyacá tourism. Although the department of Boyacá (Colombia) has countless competitive advantages in the tourism sector, the value chain has not been able to take advantage of them in a sustainable way. Shortcomings are identified in each of the tourism processes and in the resources invested by the government, service providers and intermediaries for the satisfaction of visitors. On the other hand, there is an absence in good tourism practices and notable deficiencies are observed in hotel infrastructure, customer service, associativity, government ineffectiveness and innovation (Such et al., 2009).

Boyacá shows little progress in competitiveness in various sectors, including tourism. According to data from the Departmental Competitiveness Index (2018), the department ranked ninth in tourism, below leading departments in this sector such as Antioquia, Cundinamarca or Santander. In its definition of guidelines and strategic actions, the Strategic Plan for Science, Technology and Innovation Boyacá PEDCTI (2022) points out that the tourism sector of Boyacá lacks marketing and promotion mechanisms for tourism products and destinations. This translates into the absence of adequately designed, coordinated and executed strategies. This situation is aggravated by the deficient use of information and communication technologies by providers that provide spaces for interaction between tourists and destinations, in addition to lacking dissemination mechanisms (PEDCTI, 2022: 180).

This same report reveals a deficient qualification of human resources. Most of the staff employed in hotels and restaurants have basic secondary education or technical level. There is also little promotion of foreign language programs (English and French), despite the fact that the department has training programs in these areas at the National Learning Service (SENA) and the Pedagogical and Technological University of Colombia (UPTC). Although the department has a Briceño-Sogamoso dual carriageway, which connects it with the capital of the Republic of Colombia, Bogotá, the report points out that the secondary and tertiary roads of Boyacá are deficient and the absence of action plans in adaptation, construction and signaling of roads stands out. Regarding the safety of visitors, deficiencies are identified in the design of strategies, since it is necessary to strengthen the measures established to promote and guarantee the confidence of tourists.

In general terms, the report concludes that Boyacá needs public policies to promote itself as a tourist destination, create financial support mechanisms for service providers, improve connectivity, increase the training and engagement of qualified personnel, and guarantee the care and preservation of the ecosystem (PEDCTI, 2022: 181).

This study seeks to understand and deepen the different factors that affect the results (positive and negative) in the tourism sector of Boyacá, as well as to identify gaps in tourism research over the years.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. Theoretical foundations of competitiveness

The tourism sector should not be alien to competitiveness, which involves an infinite number of management, economic, financial, production and innovation concepts. Its implementation through strategic direction is crucial to create and develop an environment that facilitates the income and sustainable development of organizations, service providers and other sectors involved, if this sector is to consolidate.

#### 2.2.1. Modern approach to competitiveness and competitive advantage

The concept of competitiveness is not recent, it has been coined and developed over time. A first approach is proposed by Galindo (2008), who states that the term competitiveness is at least three centuries old, when Adam Smith developed the theory of absolute advantage relating it to international trade and the benefits for all the actors participating in the process in his work *The Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776.

Adam Smith, in 1776, proposed to meet human needs efficiently by managing production costs. From the classical theory of international trade, the pattern of trade between countries was studied. The neoclassicists improved on this theory, culminating in the arrival of the theory of international trade (Heckscher, 1919; Ohlin, 1933).

Initially, the models assumed the existence of perfect competition, an argument that was later questioned and managed, giving rise to the new theories of international trade (Posner, 1961; Vernon, 1966; Jacquemin, 1982; Helpman & Krugman, 1985; Krugman, 1990).

Grant (1991) argues that what is characteristic of all these theories is that they focus more on explaining the growing trade between countries with similar characteristics and not on explaining the pattern of that trade. This first link leads to different concepts of competitiveness that make it multidimensional and dynamic.

Some approaches to the concept of competitiveness are presented below:

For Ferraz et al. (1996), competitiveness is the ability of an organization to create and implement competitive strategies and maintain or increase its share of products in the market in a sustainable manner. These capacities are related to internal and external factors that include and link elements such as managerial management, administrative processes, human management practices, government policies, public infrastructure and the gear that encompasses supply and demand.

On the other hand, for Rubio & Baz (2015), the competitiveness of each business unit depends on its internal structure, that is, its organization and capacities to produce in order to increase its sales above the competition.

Hassan (2000), on the other hand, states that competitiveness lies in the efficient management of the value chain. Consequently, if destinations implement sustainable strategies, their growth will be better. For this author, tourism competitiveness refers to all the capacities of the tourist destination to innovate, integrate and create differentiating products that boost its resources, without neglecting its position with respect to the competition.

However, Haque (1995) states that a company must grow by increasing the quality of life of the population within a framework of trade liberalization, but without the restrictions of the balance of payments. This shows that a company, in addition to innovating and improving its products in the market, must consider the contraction of the economy to achieve a consistent growth adjustment, maintaining trade balance.

While Oster (2000) refers to the competitiveness of a company as the capacity it has to produce goods with high quality standards and with the efficient use of its resources, as opposed to similar industries in a given period of time.

One of the main exponents of the theory of competitive advantage is Michael Porter, who in 1991 through his book *Competitive Advantage*, states that there are two fundamental determinants to generate business profits: the attractiveness of industrial sectors and the competitive position of the company (Porter, 1991). This author insists that any industrial sector, whether domestic or international, or that produces a product or service, is encompassed in five competitive forces: the entry of new competitors; the threat of substitute products; the bargaining power of buyers; the bargaining power of suppliers and the rivalry between existing competitors.

Porter argues that a sustained competitive advantage is required, that is, that it is made up of differentiating components, which are difficult to copy. For this author, therefore, there are three types of advantages that a company can have: low costs, focus and differentiation. These are the result of a company's ability to fight with the five competitive forces.

This author also focuses the attention of his theory on the Value Chain, stating that each company is a set of activities that are carried out to design, produce, bring to market, deliver and support its products. All these chains can be represented using a value chain, and the way in which it performs its activities is a reflection of its history, its strategy, its approach to implementing the strategy and the fundamental economies for the activities themselves (Porter, 1991: 53-54).

### **2.2.2. Tourism competitiveness**

Competitiveness is a concept that encompasses different dimensions; therefore, it is dynamic and involves complex processes that trace paths for tourist destinations to remain competitive. However, although the concept on its own seems simple when studied, it is difficult to put into practice (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003; Dwyer & Kim, 2003).

For this reason, competitiveness uses elements in which differentiation prevails. In this sense, tourism competitiveness focuses on the characteristics and resources that a destination must possess to be different from the competition; that is, to get the tourist to choose one option over another, with similar characteristics. Consequently, some researchers have developed different theoretical models of competitiveness in this sector, which can be used as a reference for tourism industry managers to direct their efforts in the development of strategies that allow them sustainability and competitiveness in their regions (Abreu et al., 2018).

To understand competitiveness applied to the tourism sector, it is vitally important to know that a tourist destination is a specific geographical space, with its own features of climate, roots, infrastructures and services, and with a certain administrative capacity to develop common planning instruments, which acquires centrality by attracting tourists through perfectly structured products adapted to the satisfactions sought. thanks to the enhancement and organization of the available attractions endowed with a brand, and which is marketed taking into account its integral nature (Valls, 1998: 4).

Hence the importance of understanding that a tourist destination must have the capacity to use its resources effectively and efficiently in the medium and long term. This is known as competitive advantage. To this end, a tourist destination may have a wide variety of resources and, however, not be as competitive as another destination that has few tourist resources, but uses them more effectively and more efficiently (Garcés et al., 2018: 4).

Ejarque (2005) agrees with the above, stating that a tourist destination is the territory or place identified with a brand, and that manages to maintain in the market, for a period of time, a certain

and sufficient number of visitors to turn tourism activity into one of the essential bases of its economy.

On the other hand, Hassan (2000: 239) understands the competitiveness of a tourist destination as the destination's ability to create and integrate value-added products that sustain its resources, while maintaining its position in the market in relation to its competitors.

In general, although the concepts are close, the competitiveness of tourist destinations is established according to the attractiveness of the destination; its management, organization, information and efficiency. After all, appeal depends on what attracts or deters the visitor. Thus, management depends on marketing and management efforts, while organization depends on capabilities and alliances. Finally, efficiency depends on integration, experience, and productivity (Francés, 2003).

It can be concluded then that tourism is a macro-product that generates experiences, which takes place in a certain territorial environment, which involves the natural or cultural and is part of it. For this reason, the study of tourism competitiveness can be better approached from the perspective of the destination, rather than that of the sector, because competitiveness occurs only between destinations (Torres & Marrero, 2014).

### **2.3. Models of competitiveness of tourist destinations**

As already mentioned, there is still complexity related to the study of tourism competitiveness. There are several models that explain its composition based on the factors that determine its measurement. There are conceptual, explanatory and causal models, and there are studies that have used indicators that can be empirically verified (Garcés, et al., 2018). Here are a few.

#### ***2.3.1. Crouch and Ritchie's conceptual model of the competitiveness of destiny***

According to Ortiz (2018), this model is considered one of the most complete. It focuses on tourist destinations with an emphasis on the resources they possess and their ability to manage them strategically. It recognizes the impact of competitive macro and micro environmental forces that influence the operation of the tourism industry associated with the destination (Crouch, 2011; Ritchie & Crouch, 2000).

Ritchie and Crouch are the first to make contributions to the study of the competitiveness of tourist destinations (Garau, 2006). In their conceptual model, also highlighted by Diéguez et al. (2011) and Crouch & Ritchie (1999: 152), they underline the importance of the competitiveness of a tourist destination. They argue that this competitiveness is a key factor in improving the living conditions of its inhabitants and, in addition, this model serves as a favourable frame of reference for the destination to compete more efficiently.

These authors define two variables: comparative advantage and competitive advantage. The first refers to external resources, such as human, physical, knowledge of resources, infrastructure, capital, historical and cultural resources, and size of the economy. Regarding competitive advantage, they refer to the resources deployed, that is, to the ability to move those resources efficiently, including auditing and inventory, maintenance, growth and development, efficiency and effectiveness. In the conceptual model of these two authors, the key is resources, which are the factors of attraction and an adequate planning of these resources.

#### ***2.3.2. Dwyer and Kim's integrated model of tourism competitiveness***

Also called the Integrated Model. This model has four major variables: resources, destination management, situational conditions and demand. Each of these dimensions leads to a common goal: to be more competitive (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). The variables are described below:

Resources: it is made up of those that destiny has acquired or with which it has been endowed, but also of other resources that it has managed to develop due to its culture, customs or traditions, or that it has created over the years and in which it has managed to differentiate itself from the competition. These two authors call them Created Resources and Legacy Resources.

Destination management: involves the participation of government and industry, which will serve as a support to improve socio-economic prosperity and competitiveness. In this section, adequate planning and efficient management of resources will reduce risk.

Situational conditions: they are tied to the availability of resources and to government and business conditions, as well as to climatic or conjunctural events that can be corrected over time and will generate greater or lesser demand.

Demand conditions: internal and external, fundamental elements when analyzing what visitors are preferring when choosing their destination.

The model of Dwyer & Kim (2003) is represented by six factors of competitiveness: inherited resources; resources created; supporting factors and resources; destination management; demand conditions and situational factors, which are measured by 85 indicators.

This model has been applied in Korean, Australian, Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian destinations. As a general characteristic, it includes both supply and demand, and its attributes are measured quantitatively, multidimensionally, abstractly, and inaccurately (Berdo, 2015; Gomezelj & Mihalič, 2008; Knezevic et al., 2016).

In addition to these two models, comprehensive systems for measuring tourism competitiveness have been developed, which are the result of adaptations to the field of tourism of systems of indicators of general competitiveness at the country level. Among them are: the World Travel and Tourism Council's (WTTC) Competitiveness Monitor and the Gooroochurn and Sugiyarto Tourism Competitiveness Index (Garcés, 2018: 6).

For Bravo (2004), the Competitiveness Monitor was created to evaluate the degree of competitiveness of more than 200 countries, based on 65 indicators of tourism competitiveness that are summarized in eight large groups. The methodology can be summarized in two stages: first, 23 indicators are selected and standardized according to the technique adopted by the United Nations. An aggregate index is then calculated for each of the eight groups, which is obtained as the arithmetic mean of the normalized indices (Bravo, 2004: 16).

There are other models of tourism competitiveness that attest to the breadth and field of action of this area. Among them are: Porter's Competitiveness Model; the World Economic Fund Competitiveness Model; the competitiveness and innovation model; the World Competitiveness Center (WCC) Model of the Institute for Management and Development (IMD); the ISC Model of Harvard University and the World Economic Forum (WEF); the Model of the Integrated International System of Competitiveness in Tourist Destinations (SIIC); and the Crouch and Ritchie (1999) Resource Model (Serrano et al., 2021).

#### **2.4. Tourism competitiveness in Colombia and Boyacá: state of the art**

Polanco (2011) carries out an analysis of social networks essential for tourism development in the department of Antioquia and clarifies the need for governance for the tourism sector to create more productivity and competitiveness.

For their part, Zuñiga & Castillo (2012, cited by Serrano et al. 2021: 238) in their study highlight that Colombia urgently requires public policies that further develop tourism activity as a fundamental instrument for the social and economic development of the country, as well as the

importance of using synergies between the public and private sectors and communities. and where universities and research centers participate, in order to develop the sector.

For the specific case of Boyacá, Ochoa (2015) analyzes regional competitiveness in the municipality of Villa de Leiva as a tourist destination, highlighting the 2009 Tourism Competitiveness Agreement of the department of Boyacá. The purpose of this agreement is to provide concerted planning between the public and private sectors with the vision that by 2025, Boyacá will be among the ten main tourist and cultural destinations recognized in Latin America (Ochoa, 2015: 37).

According to Callejas and Lesmes (2014), with the purpose of boosting tourism activity in the region and taking advantage of the natural resources, Boyacá geography and cultural aspects it has, the departmental government promoted a project called The Tourist Rings of Boyacá. In this study, the authors diagnosed that this strategy reveals two structural problems: the lack of technical and cultural preparation in the Hinojosa ring, and the enclave phenomenon in the Dinosaur ring.

The study by Angarita and Orozco (2013) concludes that the Province of Sugamuxi, department of Boyacá, has a great diversity of natural, cultural and religious attractions that have been wasted due to the deficient road infrastructure to the municipalities that make it up, the advertising used by the municipalities is practically non-existent and there are no tourist guides.

The research by Puerto, et al. (2024) focused on identifying the community's willingness to get involved in monument conservation efforts in the development of community-based tourism in the department of Boyacá. The results provide a comprehensive view of the community's willingness to engage in monument conservation, which reinforces the social fabric and generates a sense of belonging and local pride.

Vargas and Torres (2008) present the results of collaborative research between academia, the productive sector, and the State on tourism competitiveness in Boyacá. The text evaluates the viability of the sector based on its structural strengths and weaknesses, raising the need for an integrating plan that unifies the development of the department's production chain through the cooperative work of local actors.

Serrano, et al. (2021) carry out a study focused on evaluating various competitiveness models applicable to the Province of Sugamuxi. These authors selected the model of Crouch and Ritchie (1999) to diagnose the region. The findings underline the potential of nature tourism as a key strength, while identifying the disarticulation between the sector's actors as a critical weakness.

Rodríguez and Fonseca (2019) identify the critical success factors for the competitiveness of tourist destinations in Boyacá, reaching consensus on these factors through a 3-round Delphi.

It is therefore concluded that the competitiveness of tourist destinations is a fundamental element in the development of the region and the country. In principle, it can be defined as a function of the attractiveness of the destination, its management, organization, information and efficiency (Castellanos et al., 2014: 255).

## **2.5. Tourism Competitiveness Index for Colombia (ICTRC)**

The Regional Tourism Competitiveness Index of Colombia (ICTRC) corresponds to a collective construction of knowledge, based on the approaches of the team of researchers from the Center for Tourism Thought of Colombia (CPTUR) and the validations carried out with public and private actors that make up tourism activity, both nationally and regionally. CPTUR (2023: 12) defines tourism competitiveness as the ability of a destination to insert itself into markets in a sustainable way, through the articulation of public and private actors and the creation of high-

quality, innovative and attractive differentiated products that generate positive experiences and high added value for tourists and visitors.

Taking as a reference the postulates of the model and the previous definition, the ICTRC was organized into three levels: indicator, criterion and index. According to the ICTRC (2023), indicators are constructed from the processing of the variables obtained in the phase of collecting both primary and secondary information. In turn, the criteria are made up of a group of indicators organized based on common characteristics. Seven criteria are considered in its structure: Environmental, Cultural, Economic, Business, Marketing Strategy, Destination Management and Infrastructure.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

For the preparation of the strategic diagnosis of Boyacá, the analysis of the audit of the external and internal environment of the department was based. According to Serna (2014: 147), the environment is the source of its opportunities and threats, in order to find niches that fit the products, services and capabilities offered by the organization, and identifies harmful and even destructive elements in the areas analyzed.

Strategic diagnosis is a management tool that is based on the concepts of strategic planning and allows organizations to adapt and adjust to changes in the environment in which they operate. It traces and routes the path to the ideal state of the organization. Therefore, its purpose is to gain competitive advantage (Blanco et al, 2007; Castellanos, 2010 and Leiva, 2012).

In order to offer a greater understanding to the analysis of the Strategic Diagnosis, the model proposed by Serna (2014: 147-191) was applied, which integrates four major instruments: the Environmental Opportunities and Threats Profile (POAM), the Internal Capability Profile (ICP), the Key Success Factors (FCE) and the SWOT Matrix. Each of the steps on which this analysis was developed is described below.

#### **3.1. Environmental Opportunities and Threats Profile (POAM)**

To examine the external environment of Boyacá, the POAM was used to identify and assess potential threats and opportunities. The factors considered were: economic, political, social, technological, competitive and geographical.

In the preparation of the POAM, secondary information was obtained on each of the factors under analysis and opportunities and threats were identified. The strategic groups were organized with the factors and brainstorming was carried out on each of these. External factors were prioritized and classified, where low is a minor opportunity or threat and high is a major opportunity or threat. The ratings were then averaged and the current impact of each opportunity or threat was rated in degrees: high, medium and low.

#### **3.2. Internal Capability Profile (IPP)**

To analyze the internal environment, the ICP was prepared, which determines whether the tourism sector is capable of performing in its environment. The ICP aims to assess the strengths and weaknesses in relation to the opportunities and threats of the sector. Five categories were examined: managerial capacity; Competitive or market capacity; Financial capacity; Technological capacity; and Human talent capacity.

The following steps were taken to develop the ICP: information on each capacity under analysis was prepared; the strategic groups were integrated; strengths and weaknesses were identified

through brainstorming; it was grouped by capabilities; Strengths and weaknesses were rated and prioritized through the interpretation of the matrix, identifying strengths and weaknesses according to the impact on the tourism sector.

### 3.3. Key Success Factors (FCE) and SWOT Matrix

As a complementary method to the ICP and the POAM, the analysis was carried out through the SWOT matrix. Once the SWOT matrix was developed, a selection of FCEs was made and the fundamental variables for the success or failure of the tourism sector were chosen for each case analyzed. The study is complemented by an impact analysis of each strength, weakness, threat or opportunity, in order to turn it into a Key Success Factor, carried out through an impact matrix. Finally, the Strength-Opportunity (FO), Strength-Threat (FA), Weakness-Opportunity (DO) and Weakness-Threat (DA) variables are triangulated, which serve as the basis for the formulation of strategies for the tourism sector of Boyacá.

## 4. RESULTS: STRATEGIC DIAGNOSIS OF THE TOURISM SECTOR OF BOYACÁ

### 4.1. Preparation of the Opportunities and Threats Profile (POAM)

As described above, the first step in the preparation of the strategic tourism diagnosis consists of the definition of opportunities and threats of the external sector. According to the model proposed by Serna (2014), six factors were defined in this case with their respective opportunities and threats.

The results of the POAM analysis were as follows for each of the factors: economic (5 opportunities and 7 threats); political (3 opportunities and 3 threats); social (7 opportunities and 9 threats); technological (6 opportunities and 2 threats); competitive (7 strengths and 5 threats) and geographical (2 opportunities and 3 threats).

**Table 1. POAM tourism sector of Boyacá (extract of main factors)**

FACTORS	OPPORTUNITY			THREAT			IMPACT		
	HIG H	MEDIU M	LO W	HIG H	MEDIU M	LO W	HIG H	MEDIU M	LO W
<b>ECONOMICAL</b>									
Economic openness	X						X		
Currency price	X						X		
Suppliers' price				X			X		
Trend to reduce inflation	X						X		
Labor reform	X						X		
<b>POLITICIANS</b>									
Renewal of the ruling class	X						X		

More active government involvement		X						X	
<b>SOCIAL</b>									
Social peace	X					X		X	
Lead innovative projects with social impact		X					X		
Increased investment in security	X							X	
Increase in the unemployment rate				X			X		
<b>TECHNOLOGICAL</b>									
Telecommunications	X						X		
Ease of access to technology	X						X		
Globalization of information	X						X		
<b>COMPETITIVE</b>									
Strategic alliances	X						X		
Internationalization of the tourism business	X						X		
Foreign investment in the tourism sector	X						X		
Low-skilled labor				X			X		
Evolution of cultural tourism	X						X		
<b>GEOGRAPHICAL</b>									
Proximity to larger cities	X						X		

Difficulties in access roads				X			X		
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Source: Authors' elaboration based on Serna (2012).

#### 4.2. Preparation of the Internal Capacity Profile (ICP)

The same method as the POAM is applied to the preparation of the ICP. The results of the Capabilities factors were: directive (4 strengths, 11 weaknesses); competitive (3 strengths, 12 weaknesses); financial (1 strength, 8 weaknesses); technological (3 strengths, 5 weaknesses) and human resources (1 strength, 10 weaknesses).

**Table 2. Degrees of strength, weakness and impact of the environment (PCI - excerpt)**

FACTOR	FORTRESS			WEAKNESS			IMPACT		
	HIG H	MEDIU M	LO W	HIG H	MEDIU M	LO W	HIG H	MEDIU M	LO W
<b>MANAGERIAL CAPACITY</b>									
Corporate image. Social responsibility		X					X		
Use of strategic plans				X			X		
Speed of response to changing conditions				X			X		
<b>COMPETITIVE CAPACITY</b>									
Product strength, quality, exclusivity		X					X		
Customer loyalty and satisfaction		X					X		
Investment in research and development				X			X		
<b>FINANCIAL CAPACITY</b>									
Profitability, return on investment		X					X		
Ability to compete on price				X			X		

<b>TECHNOLOGICAL CAPACITY</b>									
Capacity for innovation					X		X		
Technology level in services and products				X			X		
<b>HUMAN TALENT CAPACITY</b>									
Academic level of talent				X			X		
Motivation				X			X		
Accident rate	X						X		

Source: Authors' elaboration based on Serna (2012).

#### 4.3. Key Success Factors (FCE) and SWOT Matrix

To prepare the SWOT matrix, a selection was made of the key factors essential for the success or failure of the tourism sector in Boyacá, based on the qualification of the impact of the construction of the POAM and the PCI.

**Table 3. Key Success Factors**

<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
Currency price	Air-land transportation difficulty
Trend to reduce inflation	Low-skilled labor
Labor reform	Climate variation
Renewal of the ruling class	New competitors
Lead innovative projects with social impact	Human talent turnover
Strategic alliances	Lack of coordination between political, economic and social fronts
Increased investment in security	Structural weakness of the education system
Telecommunications	Salary policy
Ease of access to technology	Crisis of values
Internationalization of the tourism business	Poor communications
Foreign investment in the tourism sector	Deregulation of the financial sector
Evolution of cultural tourism	Drop in employment levels

Proximity to larger cities	Increased migration to major cities
<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
Corporate image. Social responsibility	Low costs of sale
Control Systems	Investment in research and development in new products
Product strength, quality, exclusivity	Advantage taken advantage of the market's growth potential
Customer loyalty and satisfaction	Communication and management control
Product Portfolio	Ability to compete on price
Level of coordination and integration with other areas	Level of technology used in services and products
	Added value to the product
	Academic level of talent
	Motivation

*Source: Authors' elaboration based on Serna (2012).*

#### 4.4. Definition of strategies based on SWOT

For this analysis, the six most important variables of the key success factors with a high impact on the weighting were selected. The Offensive (FO), Defensive (FA), Adaptive (OD) and Survival (DA) strategies were defined. Based on these, the strategies that should be applied to improve the tourism competitiveness of the department were proposed.

##### 4.4.1. Offensive Strategies (FO)

These strategies seek to take advantage of internal strengths to capitalize on the opportunities of the environment:

- To take advantage of the organizational structure of some tourism companies in the department to improve processes, through the optimization of workflows and standardization of customer service protocols, to offer permanent training and build solid foundations on the services and products offered.
- To position the variety, quality and exclusivity of typical dishes (almojábanas, doughs, wines, soups, meats and cheeses) for foreign tourists.
- Develop strategies for positioning hotel products and services (trail travel, hotel and gastronomic quality), given its wide portfolio, through the inclusion of gastronomic routes.
- Strategic alliances of chefs that promote traditional products and the use of local ingredients such as milk, arequipe, corn on the cob and cheese.
- Position products of high tourist value by taking advantage of hiking in rural areas and well-being through yoga and massages in mud and algae areas, as well as themed experiences.
- Develop strategies that lead to strengthening knowledge in finance and marketing, through the development of workshops and seminars on the use of digital tools, financial management courses and specialized advisors in tourism.
- Attract national and foreign tourists through the promotion of artisanal products.

- Develop structured business plans in the tourism sector and identify market niches to attract investors specialized in adventure tourism or ecotourism.
- Prepare strategies in order to promote cultural tourism taking advantage of the events that have been taking place such as band festivals, ruana and pañolón festivals, Christmas route, culture festival, festival of lights, film festival and municipal festivities.
- Promote and train in theatricalization, in order to interpret local costumbrista characters and characters from the colonial and independence era.

#### **4.4.2. Defensive Strategies (FA)**

These strategies seek to use internal strengths to minimize the effect of external threats:

- Develop personnel training plans, through the implementation of coaching and cross-training programs, so that the most qualified personnel train new employees with continuous training plans.
- Develop contingency plans to prepare for changes in exchange rate policies, through the diversification of market sources and tourists from different countries and currencies.
- Develop talent retention plans through the development of recognition and reward programs, which are not only monetary (rest and days off), and the offer of career and promotion opportunities.

#### **4.4.3. Adaptive Strategies (OD)**

These strategies seek to overcome internal weaknesses by taking advantage of the opportunities of the environment:

- Invest in installed capacity and manufacturing to improve economies, modernize facilities, develop high-quality artisanal products, and create multipurpose spaces for different types of events, such as cooking workshops or handicraft making.
- Develop training in second languages and design immersion programs in others to strengthen hotel vocabulary.
- Develop internal campaigns in communication and teamwork through integration and team building days on days other than work, in order to promote trust and a sense of belonging.
- Implement after-sales computer systems and customer management systems to analyze data on consumer habits, preferences, and visitor history.
- Initiate research programs, through the development of pilot projects for new products and services and alliances with universities to develop projects that generate value for communities.

#### **4.4.4. Survival Strategies (AD)**

These strategies seek to reduce internal weaknesses and avoid threats in the environment:

- Develop strategic thinking around the tourism sector to identify new market niches such as wellness, health and sustainable tourism, in order to specialise the sector.
- Permanently prepare competitor analyses and audits and monitor market trends, in order to compare what other similar regions do well, to react to environmental contingencies.
- Define a unique value proposition, which incorporates differentiating components that make the visit to this region a unique experience.
- Strengthen communication, planning and control at the management level, aimed at conflict resolution, with the incorporation of immediate resolution of complaints and claims.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The strategic diagnosis of Boyacá's tourism sector reveals a significant gap between the natural, cultural and geographical potential of the department and its ability to translate these comparative

advantages into real and sustained tourism competitiveness. Through the analysis of the POAM, the PCI, the FCE and the SWOT matrix, structural patterns were identified that explain Boyacá's lag in the national rankings of tourism competitiveness.

In the field of the external environment (POAM), it is evident that the department has significant opportunities derived from the internationalization of tourism, foreign investment in the sector, the evolution of cultural tourism, the advance of telecommunications and the proximity to large urban centers such as Bogotá. However, these opportunities contrast with persistent threats related to low-skilled labor, deficiencies in road and transportation infrastructure, lack of coordination between political, economic, and social sectors, and incoherence in the media.

The internal analysis (ICP) shows a worrying balance: the tourism sector of Boyacá presents a marked supremacy of weaknesses over strengths in all the capacities evaluated. In the managerial capacity, weak strategic planning, slow response to changes in the environment and poorly developed management systems are identified. In terms of competitive capacity, the lack of investment in research and development, poor customer management and low barriers to entry limit the differentiation of the destination. Financial and technological capabilities reflect deficiencies in access to capital, investment, and adoption of digital tools. Human talent, perhaps the most critical variable, has low levels of academic training, high turnover, low motivation and little belonging.

The set of formulated offensive, defensive, adaptive and survival strategies proposes a framework of action articulated around four fundamental axes: the strengthening of human capital through continuous training, bilingualism and certification programs; the development of differentiated tourism products based on the cultural, gastronomic and natural heritage of the department; the construction of strategic alliances between the public, private and academic sectors; and the adoption of information and communication technologies to improve promotion, management and the visitor experience.

In short, Boyacá's tourism competitiveness cannot be consolidated without a structural change in the governance of the sector, which involves the articulation of public policy with private investment, the professionalization of human resources, the adoption of tourism innovation models and the sustainable management of its natural and cultural resources. The strategic diagnosis model applied proves to be a valuable tool to identify gaps and formulate a roadmap that allows the department of Boyacá to position itself competitively in national and international tourism markets.

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