

A case study of the hospitality network relationship in the Campinas Region, Brazil

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Abstract

Globalisation has brought a pressing need for adjusting supply to meet demand in the tourism sector, which has given researchers opportunities to study and entrepreneurs the opportunities of business, chiefly in Brazil, where the tourism structure has not yet been consolidated.

The aims of this study were: to identify the services which contribute to the production of hospitality with emphasis on tourism services in Brazil, showing the relations, or lack of them, among the companies in tourism and those which serve residents and tourists, and finally, to analyse the relationships among these components of the tourism supply chain.

The methodology used was of exploratory study, gathering data relative to the services, which encompass the tourism chain, and further qualitative analysis. Initial bibliographical gathering was done for delimiting the action field and also for the contextualisation of the work. The case study comprised the public and private sector in six cities of RMC – Campinas Metropolitan Region, Brazil.

The results suggest formal and informal relationships among companies that deliver services to tourists and contribute to the model of networks proposed. The relationships formed are independent, either by type of service, or by the size of the city where the companies are located. One concludes that the companies construct these relationships aiming at the customer's benefit and their business improvement.

Keywords: service, hospitality, networks, business, tourism, partnerships, supply chain, logistics.



1 Introduction

The Brazilian vocation for tourism is undeniable. Brazil, within its continental characteristics, has a diversity of natural and constructed resources.

For the country to become a great world tourism destination it is necessary, therefore, that it first consolidates a strong, good, competitive industry with quality domestic tourism.

The Brazilian people in domestic trips show a tendency to remain in their regions. In 72% of the cases it is the state of São Paulo, considered the tourism hub for the rest of the country, which has significant importance in terms of tourism business and entertainment, contributing with approximately 50% of the domestic tourism revenue, which stimulates interest in knowing the local services which serve the tourist (FIPE [1]).

According to Saint Hilaire [2], Brazilian hospitality delighted the foreigners in XIX century. It seemed to have a pride in receiving the men of science and just for being foreigners.

The concept of hospitality is wider than just lodging and treating visitors well, "it is to receive cordially". Regarding hospitality in tourism, the scope is wide, provided the tourist gets involved with the host community, through the use of public services of communication, retail market, transport, entertainment, besides the environmental maintenance services: town cleaning, garbage collection, and retrofit of public patrimony.

Simionatto [3] in his research about the relevant dimensions on serving the client considers dimension hospitality as being the action to welcome kindly, generating physiological and psychological comfort through both tangible and intangible factors.

Each component of a tourist destination must have qualities compatible with the others for the experience to be memorable. The integration of the components through the organisations involved in tourism, such as tourism operators, hotels and transport companies, is not enough. Having the public authority is a great and important part of it. Some of these components, for example, the amenities such as the retail market and food suppliers are shared among residents and tourists.

From the analysis of different authors, e.g. Lage and Milone [4] and Boullón [5], a generic support structure is proposed for the tourism activities in a city.

Lodging, food and beverage suppliers traditionally produce the reception wished by every tourist; however the access and availability of varied means of transport raise the quality of the experience. Airports, ports, and bus stations are constructed for access to the transport, with buildings which use construction material besides the highways and fuel for the circulation.

One can say that the tourism product is formed by a network where the nodes are responsible for providing the experience to the tourist.

Daily life and tourism merge into the same place to a greater or lesser degree as is reported by Yáziqi [6], where each of the participants is responsible for the receiving of the tourist, and his/her integration through formal or informal

partnerships as an implicit or explicit benefit contributing for a production of the experience.

When planning a trip the decisions that are made involve the logistic planning and the interconnection of the necessary systems in the creation of the package which is the tourism trip, in the case of tourist. The interconnection of the tourism services creates integrated networks when using the information processed by companies, people or technology. The information flows in networks and is processed in centres such as agencies, operators, transport companies, hotels, which direct, plan and produce the necessary processes for meeting the needs of the clients, the tourists in this case.

As was reported by Villela [7] in his work about service network performance, there are several configurations possible for a network, with a higher or lower number of links which make it evident also in the tourism transactions where the demand can be met through the distribution channels or directly from destination.

The networks formed can have a formal or informal character, the communication ones being the most common.

The thematic book “Hospitality” developed by LALT [8] shows that the relation between hospitality and networks is very close, for receiving will be achieved through the formation of structured networks, from information networks, even before the beginning of the trip, up to infrastructure where the tourists are received.

Lamming et al. [10] defines logistic networks as a set of supply chains which describes the flow of products or services from their origin until the final consumer where, according to Ballou [11], the nodes are the points in the network at which the products have a temporary stop in order to continue to their final destination for consumption.

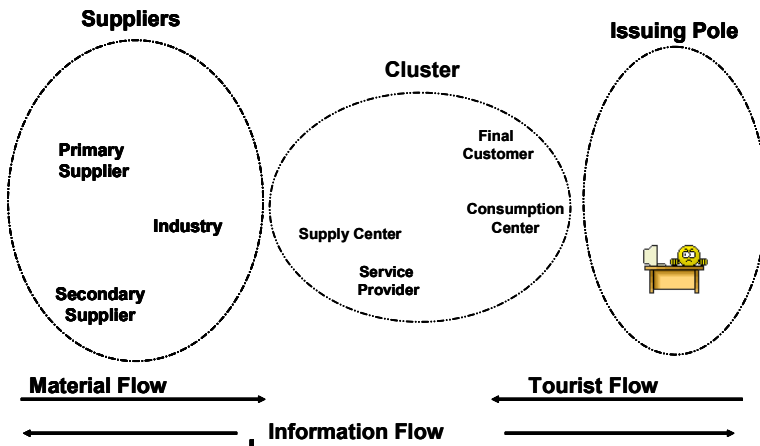


Figure 1: The supply chain in tourism (Almeida [11]).

These concepts can be related to the hospitality industry, and include the flow of tourist in the region, termed the issuing pole, through to their destination, called touristic cluster.

Logistics give the strategic view of the system and the understanding of the connections in the supply system and it is sufficient to take the client to the service, in the case of this study, the tourist, from his/her origin, through several systems up to the destination, according to what is represented in figure 1.

The specialisation of the third party sector, and the growing use of information technology, have been changing the competition structure as communication, sales and transport, become faster and more trustworthy.

2 The case study

One hundred and thirty five electronic forms were sent by CC&VB and by LALT/UNICAMP and twenty personal interviews were conducted by a researcher in the area of hospitality, however the electronic reply rate was low, only 9%.

The study was performed with companies serving tourists and also residents (table 1) and tried to characterise the type of companies, the motivation for the trips by the tourist, their clients, and to identify the types of service offered to the clients through both formal and informal partnerships.

Hotels and restaurants participated in the study in all cities, being considered very representative, as historically these are responsible for the production of hospitality. The hotels researched in one city besides accommodation also offer services for food and events.

Table 1: Range of activities available in the cities.

Services	Equipment	Public Sector and Associations
Travel and Tourism Agencies, Communication, Events, Executive transport, Rental Companies.	Hotel, Restaurant, Foods and Beverages, bar Parking lot, industry.	Associations, Government Agencies.

Most of the companies, 57%, are involved in more than one branch of activity. The companies which serve residents and tourists represent 97.1% and 31.4% of those serve more tourists than residents. The chief source of tourists is domestic and regional.

For 90% of the companies surveyed in this study the main tourist motivation was business, followed by events, shopping and finally leisure (see fig. 2), except for one of the cities that reported shopping as being the second motive. This could be explained by the strong textile trade in the area, its chief production activity.

The creation of partnerships for rendering service was verified in more than 50% of the companies. For 42.9% of the companies which make partnerships, the partners send the service provider to the client, 25.7% indicated that the



client is going to pick up the service in the partner company and in 11.4% of these, the service provider's headquarters is located in the company. Furthermore 25.7% of the respondent companies indicated the presence other partnerships, such as: services of maintenance, cleaning and security.

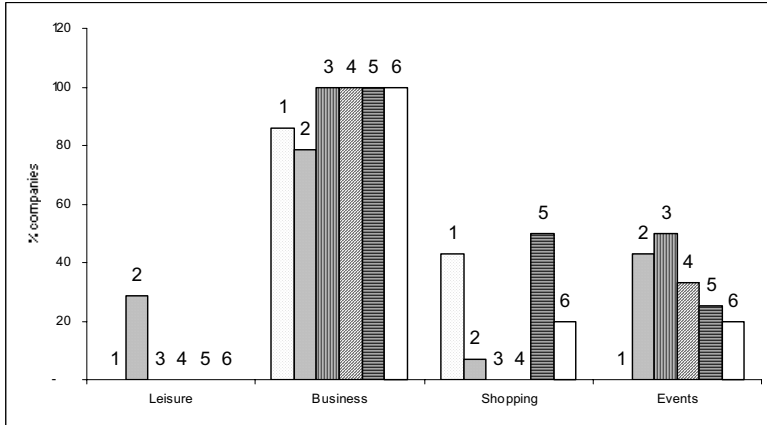


Figure 2: Trip motivation by city.

The partnerships created for rendering services to the clients, indicate in figure 3 that most of the suppliers go to the client, followed by the client going to the partner's company to pick up the service. In some companies the supplier's headquarters is located in the company, and others make other types of partnerships serving indirectly the client. The three ways of rendering service among the partners are practised in two cities.

Among the respondent companies that have more formal relationships with the companies connected with tourism, 34.3% make partnerships for rendering services to their clients; 14.3% of their clients receive discounts when they

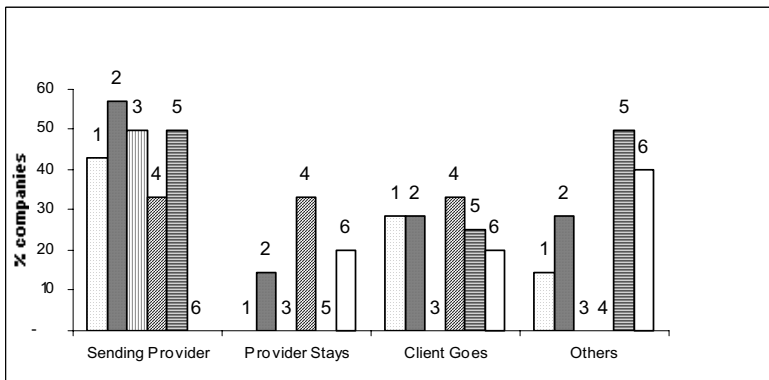


Figure 3: Form of rendering services in the considered cities.

purchase products in the partner's companies; 11.4% make partnership for prospecting clients, 8.6% have their products made public to the clients of the partner's companies, and 8.6% have other types of formal relationships. Figure 4 shows the type of relationship by city.

In two cities the percentage of companies which have formal relationships with companies connected to tourism is above the total average of 40% considering the studied group. In one city the companies do not have formal relationships and in the cities left, between 20 and 30% of the companies have formal relationships with companies connected to tourism.

As for the relationships with the companies in the local community the behaviour was the same in general. There was just a reduction in the percentage for other types of formal relationships to 5.7%.

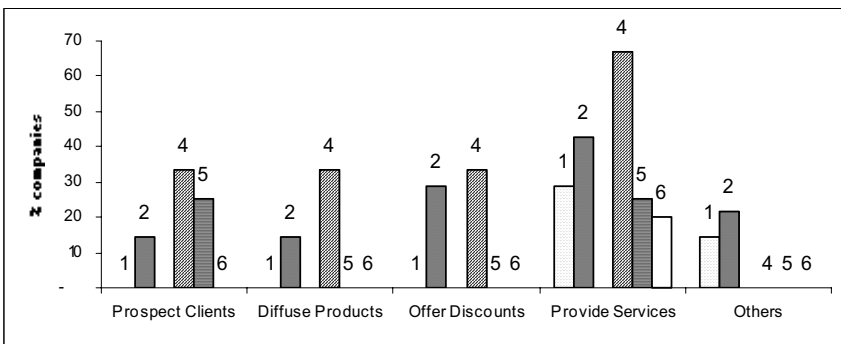


Figure 4: Formal relationships with companies connected to tourism.

The behaviour of the formal relationships with the local community was different city by city. In three cities the percentage of the companies which have formal relationships are above the total average of 45.7% considering the group studied. In one city the companies also do not have relationships and in the others, 25% to 40% of the companies have formal relationships with companies from the local community.

Most of the companies which have relationships in the local community indicate the relationships with taxi cab companies, being part of the support system. Executive transport and car rental were also indicated in two cities. Some companies from two cities also considered the car rental companies, one of them being highly industrial and the other closest to the capital.

In all the cities the relationships with companies of food and beverage, supply centre, banks and public agencies were indicated. The partnerships with parking lots were indicated by less than 50% of the companies in three cities and by more than 60% in one city. Beauty services and retail market were not indicated in two cities. Health services were mentioned only in two cities. Research centres were indicated in two cities where they are located.

In order to improve the service to the client, the companies in all cities indicated the organisers of events as probable partners. The companies of the chief chain of hospitality producers were cited, highlighting the need for the

creation of relationships which contribute to the experience of the tourist. The other relationships indicated in most of the cities were with transport companies, car rental and retail market.

3 Conclusions

Lockwood and Medlik [12] discusses how the interaction of the tourist will be – destination in the future, and reports the importance of understanding the confused local, national and international relationships between the businesses and their clients and so tries to foresee their needs.

Because this is an exploratory study, the results presented here are restricted to the studied group, however it is verified that the services made available by the respondent companies are complemented by the services supplied through the partnerships, suggesting the creation of networks for business relationships, according to the model constructed, resulting in a tourism product to be consumed by the tourists and even by the residents as the social contacts are the same in the studied region.

Businesses bring the tourist to the studied region, and it is noticed that the companies which deal with the guiding and reception of the tourist have an understanding about the need to make these clients loyal. The loyalty today is directly connected to the product and service supplied to the clients. The value added in rendering services must meet the immediate needs of the client, otherwise the risk of loss is bigger as the facility of obtaining information of the available services at any moment, as in the business world connectivity is essential.

Most of the companies make partnerships, to the benefit of their clients, related with rendering of services, and also for leverage of their businesses when prospecting clients and diffusion of their products. The formal partnerships made with the companies connected to tourism, or to the local community, did not show any differences in general, showing that the relationships created among the chains do not depend on the type of service rendered.

The existing relationships among the majority of the respondent companies and local community transport companies show interest in complementing the services supplied following one of the chief strategies of the logistic planning to serve the client which is transport.

The size of the city is not related with the creation of relationships among the companies; however two cities show practically all the types of relationships which lead one to believe that these cities have a behaviour oriented to tourism. The worry about improving the service to the client was highlighted chiefly by the intention of partnership creation.

Acknowledgements

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