



## The use of natural resources from the point of view of the entrepreneurs living in Salitre Canton - Guayas Province

El aprovechamiento de los recursos naturales desde la mirada de los emprendedores que habitan en el Cantón Salitre- Provincia del Guayas

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## Abstract

This article aims to expose the natural, cultural and patrimonial resources that Canton Salitre enjoys; and, from the scenario of these resources, actions framed in its culture and heritage are proposed, adding environmental strategies; that, the native entrepreneurs of the canton must take advantage of to attract real and potential own, local, regional and even national tourists through a plan of action and by the conditions tourism is potentiated. Entrepreneurs today have the task of integrating the natural, cultural and heritage resources of the place with the austere economic resources available to this group of entrepreneurs, to make their businesses attractive and seductive to tourists. For this purpose, a quantitative methodology was applied, applying a quantitative study on a real data of 50 entrepreneurs with more permanence in the canton, including a field observation, as well as a focus group, where they identified and valued the natural wealth, in addition to a survey in Google Forms directed to random visitors in field visit. The results that were achieved were of great interest since

Received 2022-08-19  
Revised 2022-11-09  
Published 2023-04-07  
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**How to cite this article (APA):** Huerta, S., Cortez, A., Changoluisa, L., Santos, J. (2023) The use of natural resources from the point of view of the entrepreneurs living in Salitre Canton - Guayas Province, *Revista Científica Interdisciplinaria Investigación y Saberes*, 13(2) 84-

the natural inventory, customs and heritage of Cantón Salitre were recognized and enhanced, supported by the current government. From this study, an action plan is proposed in the short term, from which criteria and characteristics associated with the social and economic progress of the canton are derived.

**Keywords:** exploitation, natural resources, entrepreneur, action plan, tourists.

### **Resumen**

Este artículo tiene por objetivo exponer los recursos naturales, culturales y patrimoniales que goza el Cantón Salitre; y, a partir del escenario de dichos recursos, se plantea acciones enmarcadas en su cultura y patrimonio, agregando estrategias ambientales; que, los emprendedores autóctonos del cantón deben aprovechar para atraer a reales y potenciales turistas propios, locales, regionales e incluso nacionales a través de un plan de acción y por las condiciones se potencializa el turismo. Los emprendedores hoy en día tienen por tarea integrar los recursos naturales, culturales y patrimoniales autóctonos del lugar con los austeros recursos económicos que dispone este grupo de emprendedores, para hacer de sus negocios atractivos y seductores a los turistas. Para ello se aplicó una metodología de tipo cuantitativa, aplicando un estudio de corte cuantitativo sobre una data real de 50 emprendedores con mayor permanencia en el cantón, incluyendo una observación de campo, así como un focus group, donde identificaron y valoraron las riquezas naturales, adicional realizó una encuesta en Google Forms dirigida para los visitantes aleatorios en visita de campo. Los resultados que se alcanzaron fueron de gran interés puesto que se reconoce y potencializa el inventario natural, sus costumbres y el patrimonio del Cantón Salitre, apoyados por el gobierno de turno. De este estudio, se propone un plan de acción propuesto en el corto plazo y del cual se deriven criterios y características asociados al progreso social y económico del Cantón.

**Palabras clave:** aprovechamiento, recursos naturales, emprendedor, plan de acción, turistas.

## Introduction

While it is true that the aftermath of the pandemic allowed the development of strategic survival skills and capabilities in different parts of the country, which all productive sectors of goods and services identified; and, Ecuador, being characterized as a biodiverse country due to its tangible natural resources (AEI, 2014) Ecuador is characterized as a biodiverse country due to its tangible natural resources, heritage and cultural resources of each corner of the country, and its customs, traditions and gastronomy, which are of interest to tourism (National Secretariat of Planning and Development, 2014). (National Secretariat of Planning and Development, 2021) that through its mechanisms, promoters, entrepreneurs will boost the economic dynamics of the region. (Russo, 2002).

For this purpose, different studies that have been conducted in the canton will be taken into account, focusing on tourist sites and places, climate, landscapes and land occupation by farms and estates of significant value that have been identified from the financial strategies (Cruz, 2021). (Cruz, 2021) The plan of action, taking into account environmental parameters, will allow the greatest benefit to the canton to be sought through an action plan.

Hence, Cantón Salitre, Guayas Province has been the subject of research. (Carvache-Franco et al., 2018) is a canton with friendly people, natural attractions of fresh water (Herrera, Danner; Mosquera, 2021) The canton's hard-working people, business owners, entrepreneurs and small merchants take advantage of these resources as much as possible in their economic scarcity (Herrera, Danner; Mosquera, 2021). (Herrera, Danner; Mosquera, 2021) The local people offer their culture, customs and traditional dates and propose to tourists a day of leisure and distraction; enjoy the gastronomy of Salitre, slogging this corner as "Salitre, spa for a day".

This allows the Canton's economy, in first place is agriculture, livestock and trade; the latter group exploited by entrepreneurs. (Herrera, Danner; Mosquera, 2021) who continually assess their strengths and weaknesses (Herrera, Danner; Mosquera, 2021). (Cruz,

2021)The latter group takes advantage of entrepreneurs (Herrera, Danner; Mosquera, 2021) who continuously value their strengths and weaknesses (Cruz, 2021), their cognitive, operational, motivational and social capacity to sustain their businesses by taking advantage of natural attractions, their culture, customs and traditions, which combined with the concepts of innovation (Herruzo et al., 2021). (Herruzo et al., 2019) and creativity. Hence, their perspective on conservation and sustainability(Arias-Vargas et al., 2022)its respect for the environment and the benefit to third parties, including its own or neighboring local communities (Russo, 2002). (Russo, 2002).

Since the research conducted by (Carvache-Franco et al., 2018) it was evidenced that the gastronomy offered by Salitre is varied with a touch and taste of the countryside, since most of them are elaborated from the raw material provided by mother earth, concluding that satisfaction with respect to gastronomy is high, "the variety of dishes" and "the speed with which they served you" are the most valued attributes in relation to satisfaction, optimal aspects to enhance the gastronomy of Salitre as a tourist attraction.

General information raised by youtuber show that the canton Salitre, celebrates its traditions and cultural attractions among which are imposed the month of the montubia identity is the framework of the celebration of cantonization of Salitre; which, on November 27, 1959 ceased to be known as the parish of Las Ramas, to begin its cantonal political life, the Rodeos Montubios, Horseback Riding, Equestrian Competitions and Cockfights, which are held every year or on holidays such as the Day of the Race, on February 15, which celebrates the parish and on August 2, the Feast of the Angels. This Canton, offers spacious natural wetlands, in which there is a flora and fauna, unique in the province of Guayas; noting that some research explains that there are species that are in danger of extinction. <https://www.goraymi.com/es-ec/guayas/salitre/ciudades/salitre-ae9dd7612>.

With the above, it is necessary to ask how to maximize the strategies that add to the tourist development of Canton Salitre without infringing on the natural resources; and, from this question, the present research aims to identify the natural, cultural and patrimonial

resources that value the adequate use of Canton Salitre, this from a direct observation and the application of a qualitative type of research.

In the last two centuries, man has taken advantage of the existing natural resources, whether they are renewable, such as forestry or fishing, or non-renewable, such as oil or coal extraction. Likewise, the tangible and non-tangible use of existing resources (flora and fauna, use of rivers and natural spaces), converting all this into a source of life and development for the community that inhabits the different natural spaces that Ecuador has at its disposal.(Diego & Carrera, n.d)..

The depletion of natural resources is evident because this model does not take into account the limitation of the resources present in nature, which has led to the emergence of new approaches focused on the insertion of the sustainability variable in the theories of development; and it is in recent years that the concept of sustainable human development appears, based, like that of sustainable development, on the confluence and mutual dependence of the economic, social and environmental variables. However, unlike the latter, the new theory gives a primordial role to the social factor, whose core is the person and the satisfaction of his or her needs(Mora & Martínez, 2018).

From the interest of the proponents of environmental conservation, the sustainability of its flora and fauna and the economic and social sustainability and preservation of a sustainable economy in the homes of the planet, it is imperative for Ecuador to be aware of the costs and economic benefits associated with environmental added value. (Russo, 2002)Although these are expressed in items that may be different from the traditional accounting of the business/establishment (Lopez, 1993), it is imperative to keep in mind and know the costs as economic benefits associated with the environmental added value (Russo, 2002). (López, 1993)..

Bibliography and studies mention that they have been presented to the environmental problems of development, including aspects of a new ecological culture and ethnobiological studies that gather the wealth of traditional knowledge on the multiple use of natural resources (Leff & Carabias, 1993).(Leff & Carabias, 1993).It concludes

that the support and viability of an alternative environmental paradigm, where the cultural dimension of the use and transformation of ecosystems plays a fundamental role. It also addresses processes and aspects on how cultural identities and values are described in the practices of resource use; and it is from the logic of the market that the cultural dimension of the use and transformation of ecosystems plays a fundamental role. (Rivera-Rodriguez, 2022) and the contribution of capital and labor as productive factors (Loor Bravo et al., 2022). (Loor Bravo et al., 2021) and a productive process based on the articulation of three levels of productivity: ecological, technological and cultural (Carvache-Franco et al., 2021). (Carvache-Franco et al., 2018)..

Hence the importance of investigating: a) the relationship between natural resources and the culture of a village; b) the relationship between natural resources and community tourism; and c) the relationship between natural resources and community entrepreneurship.

The research developed by (Mancera-Valencia, 2020) summarizes that Guillermo Bonfl Batalla's Theory of Cultural Control for the mixed and intercultural evaluation of gastronomic heritage: immaterial, material and biocultural, concludes that the notion of traditional cuisine has sociocultural, nutritional and cognitive importance, regardless of whether or not it is identified as "Haute Cuisine" gastronomy and that in recent times Ecuador is recognized for a gastronomy with sociocultural and epistemological content and which provides an outlet for its protagonist needs.

On the other hand, the potential of the natural and cultural resources of the province of Manabí - Ecuador, as a factor of local tourism development, mainly on tourism and local development; addressing the analysis of the determination of the potential of natural and cultural resources as a condition for tourism planning; tourism is explained as a factor of development and planning as an instrument of its management. The results show the close relationship between the natural and cultural resources of the province and its local tourism development, where it is determined that there is a need to redefine development policies and programs and redesign the supply of

tourism products and services in order to improve the image, quality, competitiveness and sustainable management of Manabí as a destination (Shirley et al., 2020). (Shirley et al., 2020). This study shows the potential, but despite this, tourism in the province is in a basic state, not exploiting all the natural qualities it possesses, as well as its cultural diversity and gastronomy; among the negative aspects or weaknesses of Manabí's tourist destinations are: the lack of basic services, street food businesses and insecurity.

#### Relationship between natural resources and community-based tourism development

Many researches conclude that tourism is one of the main economic sectors at the international level, and that is why it is necessary to develop new forms of tourism that are practiced in a sustainable way; and that aim to improve the socioeconomic development of local communities by taking advantage of the cultural, patrimonial and natural potential, as well as to improve the conservation of natural, cultural and heritage resources. (Mancera-Valencia, 2020). Analyze community-based tourism as a tool for the sustainable development of underdeveloped destinations; and that is why, within the pillars of sustainable development, priority is given to socioeconomic development and conservation and protection of the environment. These pillars can be applied to tourism, and as such, new typologies and forms of tourism appear that can be developed in a sustainable way; being the case of community tourism (Orgaz, 2013)

In Ecuador, tourism (Loor Bravo et al., 2021) represents an important pillar for development; and hence the participation of the governments in office have proposed to reactivate it by promoting national tourism; and hence community tourism, to recover its position after the pandemic. The results highlight the importance of: Enhance conscious tourism related to sustainable human development, recognize the relationship between health and safe destination; develop community tourism, finally rethinking the way of conceiving and doing tourism should be analyzed in its relationship with the structural problems of the country; it should be sustainable in all its dimensions and inclusive, so that it constitutes a factor of

national development.(National Secretariat of Planning and Development, 2021)..

The effects of tourism in the communities are qualitative rather than quantitative; since it favors the conservation of natural and cultural resources, human and community development, strengthening empowerment, self-esteem, cohesion, social capitals of the community (Rodas, 2015). The success factors for community tourism are strong social capitals in a community, justice, equity and participation. Basically, a community must achieve conflict management, cohesion, pursuit of the common good with defined roles, empowerment, harmonious relationship with key social actors and strong leadership (Society et al., 2019). Finally, the study (Vargas, C. Yáñez, S. Hernández, H. Méndez, J. Valdiviezo, W. Tafur, 2018) evidences the positive contributions of community-based tourism in Ecuador, such as the generation of jobs, positioning in non-traditional markets, rational use of natural resources, fundamental bases of ecological tourism and social - community responsibility based on community organization, identification of available resources for tourism; as well as some weaknesses are evidenced in terms of the availability of basic infrastructure, promotion and deficient labor organization in the public sector(Vinasco Guzmán, 2017)..

Relationship between natural resources and the participation of the community entrepreneur

The importance of the adequate use of tools for decision making that allow generating indicators that transmit scientific and technical information, as well as transforming it into action; this is essential to evaluate and predict trends in the situation of a region or locality regarding economic and social issues, as well as to assess the fulfillment of the goals and objectives set in government policies. (National Secretariat of Planning and Development, 2021).. In the attempt to develop the appropriate number of indicators without an overwhelming amount of details that can generate confusion in the priorities, they are based on the "information pyramid", which shows the need to have a very extensive set of primary data from which it is recommended to optimize the set of indicators, which can be defined based on these data and, by aggregation, a reduced number of



indexes can be obtained (Carvache-Franco et al., 2021).(Carvache-Franco et al., 2018)..

Community-based tourism should pay attention to the importance of allocating part of the profit towards reinvestment, whether in fixed assets of the community, in training or in any tangible or intangible element that has deteriorated and is necessary to guarantee tourist satisfaction. (Ledesma Gruezo et al., 2018).. Hence, the entrepreneur is recognized as a person who is able to determine business opportunities, while solving a problem that affects other people to the social entrepreneur and from the existing literature in the different bibliographic sources the characteristics of social entrepreneurs who take advantage of what they have around them are identified(Orellana et al., 2016)..

A large part of community tourism centers in Ecuador do not have a management model; subsequently, they do not have the knowledge of tools, business strategies and an ideology of key partners, since they do not have strategic alliances that allow them to reach the desired market segment; and it is the entrepreneur who has made an agreement with tourism businesses or educational centers for the commercialization of their services or products (Ledesma Gruezo et al., 2018).. Among the main shortcomings detected, lies the lack of knowledge of the market segment that the communities hope to reach, losing the opportunity to specialize in satisfying the needs of a national and international market niche; however, there are community establishments that perform little or no action necessary to reach influence the desired consumers and generate higher income (Nicacio, 2017).

The main problem of social entrepreneurs (García-Hernández, 2016) in a general way is the possible failure, identifying three triggers that influence their stability and/or growth as such: a) the inability to pay debts or obligations at the agreed moments (Dixit et al., 2018)b) the legal declaration of suspension of payments or bankruptcy, or a financial situation that is a precursor of future failure (Ledesma Gruezo et al., 2018). (Ledesma Gruezo et al., 2018).; and, finally c) the possibility of failure implies a condition of temporality of this economic development group, with the initial periods being those of

greatest risk. Finally, we aspire to achieve objectives that characterize this study, which are born from diagnosing the state of the resources and natural attractions of Cantón Salitre, Guayas Province through a SWOT (Herrera, Danner; Mosquera, 2021)The study is based on a SWOT analysis (Herrera, Danner; Mosquera, 2021), followed by the identification of the characteristics and perspective of the entrepreneurs that develop any economic activity in the Canton and, finally, the relationship between the use of natural resources and the development of the entrepreneurs that live in the Canton of Salitre, Guayas Province.

## Methodology

The methodology used in this research was exploratory-deductive with a quantitative approach applied to small traders, entrepreneurs and service providers in family businesses located in Canton Salitre and its nearby parishes, for this purpose a survey was applied with closed, dichotomous and objective questions, with a random population of 342 people who contribute to the productive apparatus of the Canton, which was conducted during the months of March, April and May 2023 in person and in physical form. In this survey, priority was given to the participation of entrepreneurs with training in the area, so an additional 5% of surveys were included in the sample. For this purpose, the sampling formula that explains the statistics was applied:

N: Population universe 342  
VC: Constant value 1  
EA: Admissible error 0.05  
(% AE)<sup>2</sup> of AE squared 0.0025

$$TM = N / 1 + (EA)^2 \times N$$

$$TM = 342 / 1 + (0.0025) \times 342$$

TM= 184 entrepreneurs/small traders/business owners.

To determine the direct relationship of natural resources with entrepreneurship, tourism and culture/traditions/heritage existing in the canton, a sample observation was made of tourists and visitors who, during the weekends of March, April and May 2023, visited the different places in the canton, including the beaches and haciendas where the contribution and satisfaction of tourism itself make the canton attractive. In order to provide a theoretical basis for this research, different bibliographic sources were used, collected from various magazines and digital libraries, as well as publications related to the topic. From both sources of information, we will determine the questions that will contribute to the definition of the indicators with environmental contribution, which will be added to future research of the FCI 006-2020 project called "Design of a socioeconomic development model with environmental contribution to the tourism sector in the Salitre Canton - Guayas Province".

## Results

The results of the sample collected from the 184 entrepreneurs, small business owners, pointed to the following results in the foreground.

**Table 1.** General information on the group of entrepreneurs/business owners surveyed.

Criterios		Porcentaje de participación por sector productivo			
		Agricultura	Comercio	Turismo	Total
<b>Edad</b>	Menos de 18 años	2%	5%	2%	9%
	Entre 18 y 28 años	44%	39%	39%	122%
	Entre 28 y 38 años	20%	22%	42%	84%
	Entre 38 y 48 años	10%	9%	13%	32%
	Mas de 48 años	24%	25%	4%	53%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>300%</b>
<b>Nivel de educación</b>	Pre bachillerato	71%	59%	2%	132%
	Bachillerato	11%	17%	21%	49%
	Técnico	5%	11%	32%	48%
	Tecnólogo	9%	9%	17%	35%
	Universitario	1%	1%	13%	15%
	Especialista	3%	3%	13%	19%
	Maestría	0%	0%	2%	2%
	Doctorado	0%	0%	0%	0%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>300%</b>

Fuente: Elaboración propia de recopilación de fuente primaria

From this first analysis it can be detected that entrepreneurs, small business owners and others related to tourism are found among young people between 18 and 38 years old, this is due to many factors that in observation and open interviews were attributed to lack

of formal employment, decrease migration of young people to large cities, continuity with family tradition or custom, among other factors related to family or family economic resources. This was contrasted with the level of education of the research group, of which the results were that 32% responded to a technical level of education, considering that in the Canton there is a middle level educational center that produces technical high school graduates.

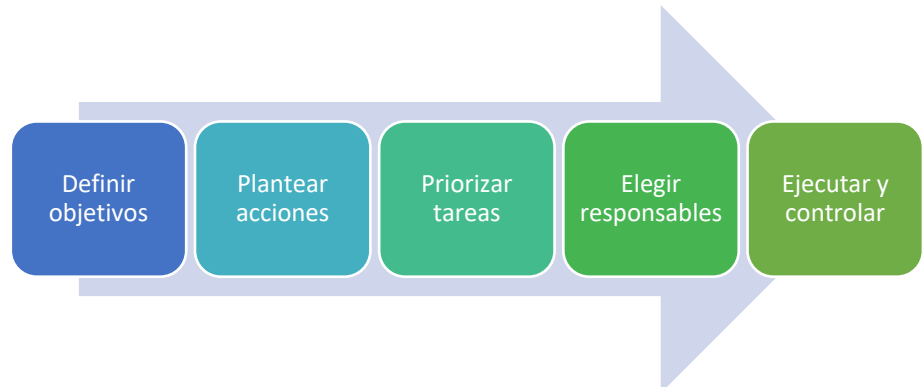
With respect to the analysis criteria in this research: a) Natural resources and culture/customs/heritage; b) Natural resources and community tourism use; and c) Natural resources and the participation of the community entrepreneur, the results obtained by criteria allow identifying the question(s) that will contribute to the action plan that this group of entrepreneurs should address where natural resources are effectively considered as a reference to their business line of business.

**Table 2. Information related to criteria by group related to natural resources NR**

	Criterios	Porcentaje de participación por sector productivo			
		Agricultura	Comercio	Turismo	Total
<b>Recurso natural y cultura</b>	Reelaborar políticas y programas de desarrollo en pro de:	19%	7%	3%	29%
	Rediseñar la oferta de productos y servicios de utilización de RN	7%	9%	5%	21%
	Rediseñar la oferta de productos a fin de mejorar la imagen del Cantón	1%	5%	6%	12%
	Rediseñar la calidad de los productos/servicios de los emprendedores	29%	16%	17%	62%
	Rediseñar la competitividad	15%	16%	11%	42%
	Fortalecer la gestión sostenible del Cantón	11%	11%	9%	31%
	Fortalecer la diversidad cultural y gastronómica	11%	7%	18%	36%
	Recibir apoyo gubernamental (falta de servicios básicos)	3%	12%	3%	18%
	Mejorar las condiciones de los negocios de comidas ambulantes	2%	12%	19%	33%
	No contar con medidas preventivas a la inseguridad de los RN por parte de los visitantes	2%	5%	9%	16%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>300%</b>	
<b>Recursos naturales y aprovechamiento del turismo comunitario</b>	Se aprovecha los recursos naturales para realizar sus actividades	22%	2%	12%	36%
	Se protegen los RN con acciones en pro del sector	6%	3%	10%	19%
	Se prioriza el bienestar de la familia y la protección al medio ambiente	12%	11%	17%	40%
	Considera que el turismo conciente aporta a su actividad económica	5%	3%	9%	17%
	Repensar en la forma de concebir y hacerle frente a los problemas estructurales país.	10%	21%	7%	38%
	Los factores de éxito logran el manejo de conflictos en su actividad económica	11%	21%	11%	43%
	Al aprovechar los RN incentiva a generar nuevos puestos de trabajo	19%	3%	13%	35%
	Al aprovechar los RN fomenta el turismo ecológico	2%	7%	8%	17%
	Al aprovechar los RN se hacen en función de la responsabilidad social comunitaria	6%	8%	8%	22%
	Los RN son prioridad para disminuir la disponibilidad de infraestructura básica	7%	21%	5%	33%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>300%</b>	
<b>Recursos naturales y la participación del emprendedor comunitario</b>	El turismo comunitario debe prestar atención a la importancia de destinar parte de la utilidad hacia la reinversión	1%	17%	11%	29%
	El emprendedor aprovecha de las capacitaciones o cualquier elemento tangible o intangible en pro de su negocio.	12%	9%	9%	30%
	Identifica las potencialidades de sus colaboradores generando subempleo	14%	7%	6%	27%
	Aplica herramientas y estrategias empresariales	1%	14%	7%	22%
	La ideología de negocio que sostiene es compartida por el/los colaboradores de su negocio	21%	5%	9%	35%
	Comercializa su negocio por medios físicos	2%	7%	11%	20%
	Da a conocer los productos/ servicios que ofrece su negocio a través de medios digitales	2%	6%	9%	17%
	Conoce el segmento de mercado al cual se dirigen	12%	14%	11%	37%
	Existe apoyo gubernamental a través de políticas públicas positivas al negocio	13%	5%	10%	28%
	Dispone de alternativas financieras para hacerle frente al negocio	3%	9%	11%	23%
Dispone de ayuda legal/financiera/ social para hacerle frente a problemas exógenos.	14%	3%	3%	20%	
Dispone de alternativas de negocios ante el fracaso de su actual actividad económica.	5%	4%	3%	12%	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>300%</b>	

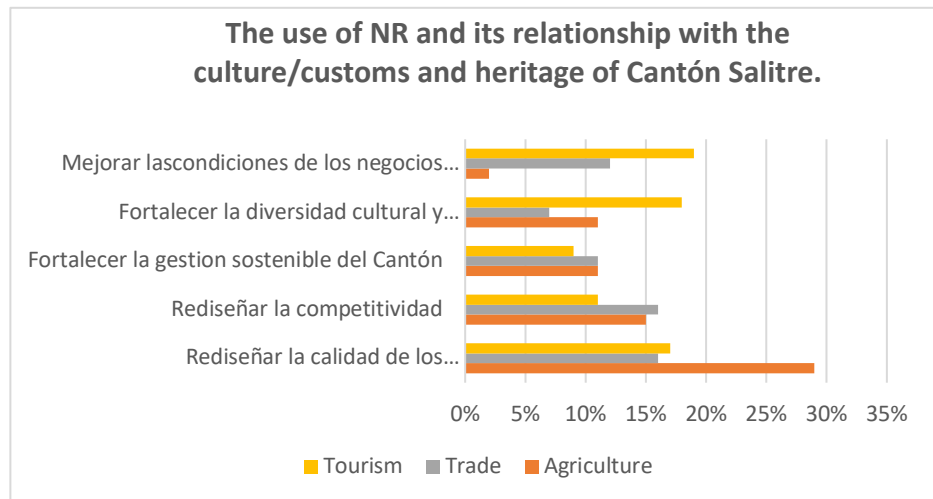
Fuente: Elaboración propia de recopilación de fuente primaria

From the criteria identified and supported by published articles, the questions that are above 30% were defined, considering them necessary to include them in the action plan, according to the information for each criterion:



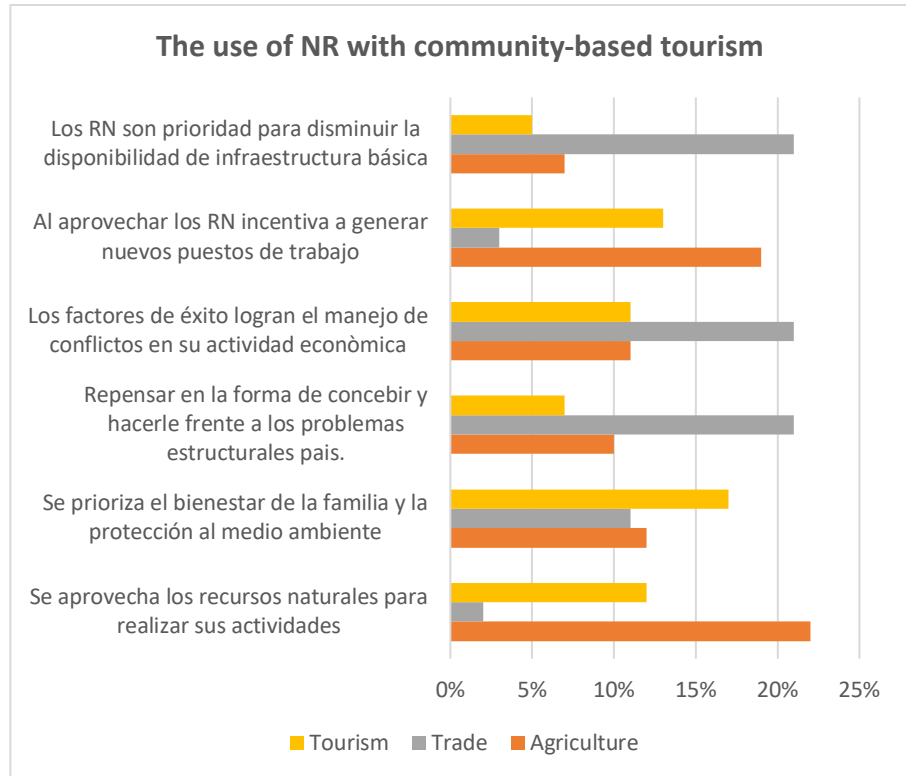
Taken from: (Cruz, 2021) adapted to the case (Zambrano Cerdeño et al., 2021)

From the use of natural resources, including the culture, customs and natural heritage of the Canton, the following results were obtained:



Source: Own elaboration

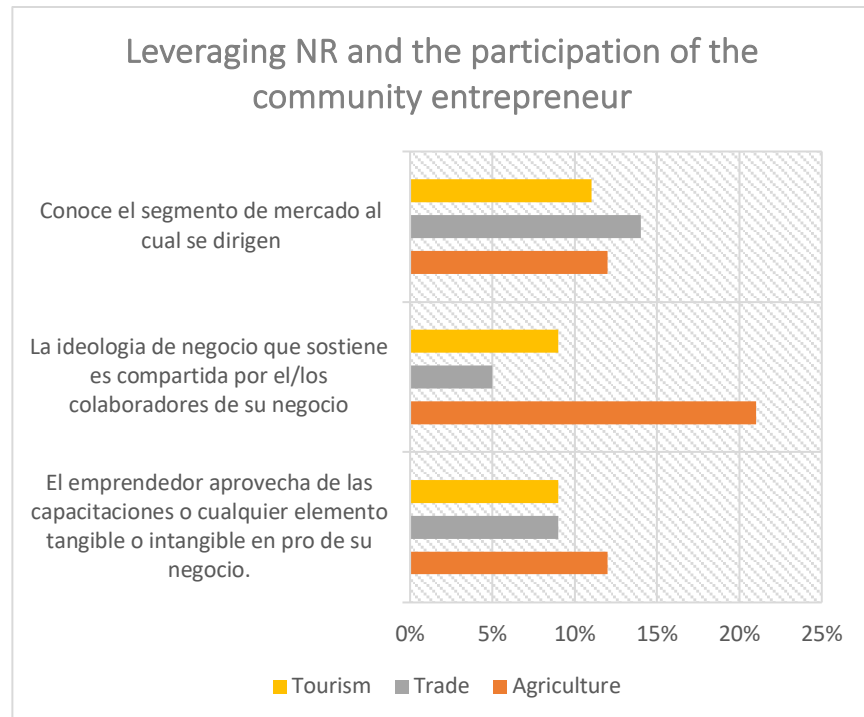
Hence, redesigning the quality of the products/services provided by the various entrepreneurs, business owners and followers of traditional and family businesses, this induces them to reanalyze and revalue the products/services offered to tourists and visitors. From the relationship of natural resources and community tourism the results show:



Source: Own elaboration.

In this criterion, the commerce sector emphasizes the use of natural resources, followed by tourism, and where the prioritization of the family and the protection of the environment is analyzed for the future.

Finally, from the relationship between natural resources and the participation of the community entrepreneur, it was evident in the graph that the commerce sector together with the tourism sector are the ones that compete in the evaluated criteria, with the results shown below.



Source: Own elaboration.

## Conclusions

According to the criteria proposed, indicators such as measuring: a) self-confidence to undertake with ease, b) optimism towards the continuity of the business, c) the mechanism to adapt to changes, d) to conserve natural resources, and e) to measure the use of community tourism, f) to define the welfare of their community, g) to quantify the welfare of their families, h) to give back to others what nature has given them, which are recommended to be assessed and measured in future research and publications.

Likewise, it is recommended to evaluate the contribution of natural resources from the general observation and the interest of national and international organizations considering the SDGs of the 2030 agenda and the measures considered necessary for their sustainable and sustainable use, although it is the social dimension of the entrepreneur that has the greatest impact on this type of business.



As a conclusion, it is stated that the social entrepreneurs of the Canton have the will to defend their skills, which is realized in the strong correlation between the probability model used in the study of social entrepreneurship and the qualities identified in this study, strengthening an effective management model for other related parties that will support the seedlings of new ventures.

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