

Permanency of the Tourism MSME's in Puerto Rico: A Balance between Traditional and Modern Elements

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Abstract

Conventional tourism, powered from the 70's with the offer of sun and beach destinations, propelled the creation of MSME's on tourism and restaurant sector. The Caribbean region, world famous by its beaches, was benefited from it and many of these establishments over thirty years of operations continuing to provide their services. As seen in the area of Grand Tourism, the hotel facilities and services were modernized and acquired new policies. However, there are many small or medium size hotels that support its existence in a simple, classic service. This research aims by applying a semi-structured interview directed to owners and managers to identify indicators that demonstrate how these companies remain. This study is directed to Tourist destinations along Puerto Rico Island and to identify the relationship that may exist between permanence and management from the perspective of 1970 classic tourism and grand tourism recent or new proposals. Permanency indicators will be employed, including classic hotel management techniques to analyze eight hotel establishments in four tourist sites along the island and through a depth interview directed to a manager of each tourist site to identify those elements that define the preference and intention to return visits in each establishment. The results showed that managers identify elements such as aspects of service, adapting to new technologies and classic tourism management that keep and form a balance with newly acquired items. The permanence in Puerto Rico tourism companies is related to the relationship between 1970s conventional hotel management practices and contemporary practices that integrate different factors of technology and quality, achieving balance without losing the classic essence.

Keywords: traditional tourism enterprises, permanency, indicators, MSME's

1. Introduction

1.1 Subject Description

The tourism industry is an integral part of the economy of Puerto Rico. It is a source of great economic activity and jobs for Puerto Ricans. Tourism accounts for approximately \$3.6 billion annually to the economy or about 6% of GNP (Law No. 113, 2011). Puerto Rico is located in the Caribbean, where the tourism market competition is wide and with diverse competitors. Small and medium enterprises (“SMEs”) are central to the economic affairs of Puerto Rico. Specifically, SMEs with less than fifty (50) employees are ninety-five percent (95%) of the companies, and constitute almost 50% of the private sector jobs in Puerto Rico (Law No. 120, 2014).

Conventional tourism, driven from the 70's with an offer of sun and beach destinations, propelled the creation of SMEs concerning the tourist hotel and restaurant sectors. The Caribbean, world famous for its beaches, turned benefited and many of such establishments over thirty years of operation continue to provide their services. Over time the hotel facilities and services in the field of Grand Tourism modernized and acquired new policies. However, a large number of small and medium hotels remain that supported its existence in an austere and classic service.

The definition of MSME's in this study was designed by the revenue (less than \$10,000,000 each) and by the employees' number (less than 250 employees) (Lemes & Machado, 2007). In the filter main questions of our

interviews, we selected the MSME's that were going to shape our sample.

The situation of tourism in Puerto Rico is between the development of grand or modern tourism and the continuity of classic hotel management practices since 1970. Most of Puerto Rico tourism companies are embedded in interest sites of sun and sand characterized by beautiful natural landscapes and Puerto Rican cultural elements. However, there is a big difference between the grand tourism and the classic tourism management practices. Thus, the research question raised is: Which are the adaptation aspects that traditional tourism businesses integrate in their services regarding modernization and how are they expressed in terms of their adaptation in order to remain?

This research is organized as follows: The literature review section presents the study results of the analysis of the concept of permanence and the comparison on the indicators used to evaluate old and new tourist services. The Methodology section includes characteristics of the sample, the operational definition of the variables, the procedure for design and application interviews and the data analysis. The results section uses tables to facilitate the submission of data and its summary explanation. The findings allow us to compare the results with the stated objective and show the relevance of this study to understand the factors of permanence as elements for the development of tourism enterprises in Puerto Rico.

1.2 Research Relevance

There are some studies from the economic perspective related to permanency in the enterprises. As seen in economic research perspective, they use to select their subjects of study by integrating clusters of distribution, based on the qualitative analysis previously executed. A clear example is the study developed by Liu & Li. (2013), they selected a cluster of dominant companies to identify the aspects related to permanence and feedback controls. In our study we selected a cluster of 8 tourism enterprises with three segments of relevance applied to the objectives in the study. The first one is the time that it has remained in operations (more than 30 years of operations); the second one is the relevance that it has in the regional tourism (main recognized hotels) and the third one with the variability between them to identify the differences between different kinds of tourism services with the previous characteristics.

Varga (2011) developed a research about the continuity in enterprises with the main variable of Innovation, taking some categories that may contribute to our research looking forward to develop the indicators. The contributions by the previous data will be detailed in the methodology section.

The importance of this study lays on the relevance of express the adaptation of two kind of practices developed in tourism – hospitality practices, taking advantage of the traditional/classic and the modern protocols of service, looking for an adaptation that may allow that these companies remain for over thirty years and how they have adapted their service along decades of development. Then in fact, we have not found any studies of permanence applied directly to tourism enterprises and the relationship previously raised, so it will contribute to literature by providing an analysis of the balance that may create the traditional tourism enterprises between their original practices and those that they have acquired recently.

The practical implications of the indicators to present will allow improving the situation of some establishments that may be facing. The balance of the traditional and modern tourism practices will be a kind of adaptation and innovation for the establishments that have succeed in a long time, and it will allow evaluating them by a permanency criterion.

1.3 Literature Review

According to Ortuño (1990), the demand for mobility expressed by tourism and inspired by an imaginary, drives the subject to travel. This subject aims to find a number of items that his imaginary integrates through suggestions of previously acquired inspirations. For Villa Real (2007), the tourist looks for a complete package of fun, entertainment, wellness, hygiene and courtesy. Puerto Rico does not have a tradition culturalized service and hospitality as old as in the case of France, Spain and Italy. Since the 70's and thanks to the tourism marketing in the Caribbean, Puerto Rico becomes popular around the world and began the development of micro, small and medium regional hotel companies in the San Juan capital and subsequently to other parts of the island. Many of these companies started operations in the early 70s with an international tourism approach, and still remain operating with a distinctive touch of authentic, latent and constant hospitality similar to the type of tourism observed by (Velazquez-Sanchez et al., 2014) in Mexican communities.

Currently the permanence of tourism is considered as a matter of vital importance in regional economies around the world. According to Rocha Centeno (1992), the first step to gain knowledge on tourism is to observe and examine the phenomenon (social) to describe and capture its essential and general characteristics. Starting from

this methodological principle applied to the study of tourism, began with a descriptive study - practical, allowing finding the elements that lead to the permanence tourism MSME's.

It is possible to make a approaching looking for the indicators by taking advantage of the background previously raised by Rodríguez Valencia (2010), the main problems that MSME's face are the deficient management, lack of technological culture, lack of negotiation, bad planning (business improvisation), non competitive quality and constant changes in the employees.

Innovation is a main category in our indicators index, and according to Gómez & Marín (2012), the MSME's does not have the same capability as the bigger enterprises to reduce costs and obtain more competitive products taking advantage of their innovation facts.

Economic theories generally link innovation to technological development, economic growth, entrepreneurial activity and government support (Varga, 2011), as well as with innovation, but we are sure that there are other facts that influence in the permanency of these kind of enterprises.

The human capital is another important point in the development of the "new tourism" (modern tourism), for Molina (2007), appropriate creativity and personal duties assigned to development of tourism activity could be taken as strategy to maximize the tourism attractives; by doing this, these enterprises will increase their revenue as well.

The companies have to assume the costs of uncertainty in their operations; by acquiring experience, they reduce the costs mentioned (De Lucio et al., 2008), increasing their chances of remain in the local, regional, national or international market.

With the expectation of foreign tourism market, certain standards and features that today are probably somewhat outdated settled, at that time they were the best. That is precisely what this study aims to analyze, the characteristics that allow the continuity of these companies as well as the innovative elements at their disposal to identify the balance that enables permanency. Regarding companies retention studies, there are different perspectives for analysis, from the financial projections perspective to the specialized point of view. As in the case of Cervantes and Gallardo (2009) study, which analyzes the permanence in MSME's under viability and risks strategies. However, there are no studies that make an analysis taking as subject the tourism enterprises. Thus, it was proposed to integrate variables of permanency as a duality between the elements that prevail in the classic hotel practices and those modern hotel management practices added through the years.

1.4 Justification

The permanency of tourism enterprises in Puerto Rico is apparently is related to factors of adaptation and innovation. As Gómez & Marín (2012) highlights factors of innovation and how it influences in the achievement of community enterprises. The presentation of indicators to identify the elements of permanence in tourism MSME's based on the criterias of traditional and modern hospitality management protocols in adaptation will shape specific indicators spent in this kind of enterprises.

By developing an operationalization of variables, presents an alternative to innovation vision, and that through an adaptation between traditional and modern practices, maintains a preference and market presence (Gomez & Robles, 2015). That is why these indicators provide an overview of the key points that influence the permanence of tourism MSME's in Puerto Rico Island to the presence in the regional, national and international tourism and the development of its service by harmonious adaptation between traditional and modern variables of hospitality service.

The benefit of having indicators of permanence on tourism MSME's is to diagnose the strengths, vulnerabilities and opportunities for operational continuity of the enterprises. This in turn will benefit the revenue by the tourism preference, creating a concept of authentic and appropriated protocol that may contribute to improve their services and increase their presence in their main market.

1.5 Hypothesis Formulation and Objectives

Hypothesis: The balance between traditional and modern practices of hospitality service in the tourism MSME's of Puerto Rico allows the ir permanence.

Main Project Objective: Analyze the factors that influence in the permanence of tourism MSME's in Puerto Rico.

Specific Objectives:

- Analyze the characteristics of traditional service that influence the permanence of tourism MSME's in Puerto Rico.
- Analyze the characteristics of modern service that influence the permanence of tourism MSME's in Puerto Rico.
- Analyze the balance between traditional and modern practices of hospitality service and how it influences in the permanence of tourism MSME's.

2. Methodology

A sample of eight traditional providers of tourism services was analyzed. A semi-structured questionnaire with questions aimed at checking the features that define the permanence was design. Eight owners or managers of hotel companies were interviewed in the cities of Old San Juan, Ponce, Quebradillas and Isabela, in Puerto Rico in the second half of 2014.

The variables of classic management practices and contemporary or modern management practices were included. The data obtained made it possible to make a first approximation, identification and definition of indicators of permanence and consistency between the classic and modern tourism management practices in the island of Puerto Rico.

2.1 Operational Definition of Variables

- **Elements of traditional-classic hotel management.** It is considered a numerical variable. From authenticity indicators, own initial techniques and adaptation. It is measured based on the answers of the interviewees.
- **Elements of contemporary-modern hotel management.** It is defined by the services offered and is considered a numerical variable. It is measured based on the answers given by providers or managers of tourism businesses.

Table 1. Operational definition of the variables of classic hotel management elements and the contemporary-modern hotel management elements

VARIABLES	CATEGORIES	INDICATORS
Traditional-Classic hospitality management elements	Authenticity	Originality Philosophy Services offered Target market
	Initial techniques	Guest service Information systems Administration
	Adaptation	Modern elements Competition Change of ownership/management Local regulations
Contemporary-modern hospitality management elements	Innovation	Services added Growth and hiring Renovations Management Changes Collective bargaining agreements/other
	Technologies	Incorporated Technologies Tecnologías incorporadas Infrastructure Equipment
	Marketing	Physical Media Electronic media Market analysis
	Recreation	Sports and activities External agreements for recreation Natural tourist attractions Cultural tourist attractions Environment in general

Table 1: The Categories and indicators of the variables of classic hotel management elements and contemporary-modern hotel management elements are observed. The variables are numeric and are included in the analysis of the relationship between the initial services and the categories of modernity as a result of adaptation.

2.2 Procedure Description

Based on information obtained from data of the Puerto Rico Hotel and Tourism Association, PRHTA, four cities were chosen with eight tourism companies located throughout the island of Puerto Rico to shape the sample cluster. These are included in Table 1 to be analyzed under the headings of classic and modern-contemporary hotel management.

After the interviews application, we proceed to the qualitative analysis of the answers, finding the different indicators showed in the table and shaping the categories presents there. As seen, the traditional/classical elements have their bases in the Authenticity and initial techniques. On the other side, the contemporary/modern elements have their bases in the Innovation, Marketing and Services Added Recently.

2.3 Cluster Description

Table 2. The eight tourism companies analyzed located in four cities of Puerto Rico (sample cluster)

TOURIST COMPANY	LOCATION (Cities)
El Convento	Old San Juan
Plaza de Armas	Old San Juan
Viejo San Juan	Old San Juan
Fortaleza Guest House	Old San Juan
Hotel Bélgica	Ponce
Hotel Meliá	Ponce
Hotel El Guajataca	Quebradillas
Parador Villas del Mar	Isabela

Table 2: This table shows the eight tourist companies analyzed in this research that are located at four sites of the island of Puerto Rico. Source: Prepared with data collected from interviews on the island.

The interviews were directed to managers, owners, directors or employees of the presented tourism enterprises in the cluster; they were able to provide the information necessary to identify the categories and indicators after the qualitative analysis. The eligibility was based on the recognition of the enterprises as “old-traditional hospitality services” and the employees should have the information that we are looking for, if not, we were looking forward to find the main director, owner or manager of each enterprise.

2.4 Research Design

The eight subjects that shape our cluster were selected by relevance in the region where they are established. The general conditions of the research were to look for the owners to get the most appropriated perspective about the problem previously coined; based on this premise, we try to develop the interviews directed specifically to this subjects. About the neutral conditions, we took in account the variable of the availability of the main subject, so we elaborate the interview directed to employees as well.

3. Results

3.1 Findings in the Cluster

Hotel El Convento. It is located in Old San Juan. Befitting its origins as a Carmelite convent 356 years ago, it is a small luxury hotel of Spanish Colonial architecture and design with 58 elegant rooms. In 1646 - Construction began on the Carmelite convent, through a petition by King Phillip IV of Spain; July 1651 - The convent was inaugurated as the Monastery of Our Lady Carmen of San José -and was situated across the street from San Juan Cathedral, the Western Hemisphere's oldest cathedral; Dec. 9, 1903 - The convent was closed by the Archbishop of San Juan; 1959 - Under the auspices of Operation Bootstrap, Robert Frederic Woolworth - heir to the Woolworth fortune - began converting the convent into the El Convento Hotel; Jan. 27, 1962 - El Convento Hotel opened; 1990s and 2000s - The property was renovated again and renamed Hotel El Convento.

The main reason people stay at El Convento is tourism and its location in Old San Juan. Services provided is hosting 58 rooms with hot water, air conditioning, fitness center, three restaurants, business center, Valet Parking, Beach Club, Meeting room, pool, Laundromat and botanical garden. Apparently, it does not have loyal

customers. In the high season it increases prices. Recently, its tourist influx has not suffered. Its market is geared towards grand tourism in the historic center.

Hotel Plaza de Armas. Located in the historic center of Old San Juan, 200 meters from the Cathedral of San Juan Bautista and 15 minutes' drive from the international airport with more than 60 years of operations. It has Wi-Fi in public areas. The rooms (50) have air conditioning, cable TV, desk, wardrobe and ironing facilities. The bathroom is private and has a shower and hairdryer. The hotel does not have a restaurant. A change of the administration did not interrupt the operations of the company. It offers services in English, Spanish and French. It promotes itself on the island and abroad. Also, it has convention agreements with local companies. In the high season it increases its prices. Apparently, it does not have loyal customers. Their livelihood is based abroad, from foreign tourism, mainly from cruises. This situation affected its income when there were conflicts with cruise lines and the port authorities few years ago.

Castro Guest House Old San Juan. (Tanca 205 Guest House). It is an old guest house in the historic center of San Juan. It began operations in 1925. In 1957, management changed due to the death of the owner and the property remained intestate. It started operations with 5 people and today it has 10. Castro Guest House does not have any marketing or technology for reservations or payments online. It has 32 private rooms with 6 shared bathrooms, shared rooms for four people and a terrace camping. It does not increase its prices during the high season and has not suffered a decrease in their affluence. The Guest House has a faithful clientele for years. Its market focuses on casual tourism. (It is promoted in tripadvisor, and lonelyplanet.com).

Fortaleza Guest House (Guest House Old San Juan). A small Guest House in the historic center of San Juan. It has 10 double and quadruple private rooms, four of them with balconies. It has no private bathrooms, 4 shared bathrooms in 2 floors, with wi fi, 3 kitchens self-service, a terrace, and laundry benefits. It is promoted through hostelsworld.com. Does not increase its prices during high season and has not suffered diminishing in their client affluence. It has loyal customers. Its market focuses on the backpacker tourism.

Hotel Bélgica. Located in Ponce, the second largest metropolitan city in the south side of the island. It is a family owned boutique Hotel, landmark structure in the historical district of Ponce. It is characterized by neoclassical architecture developed at the end of the XIX century. Founded in 1872, the hotel has recently been restored for the enjoyment of the modern day tourist looking for the traditional beauty of past centuries. It has cathedral ceiling, air conditioned rooms with access to balconies, patios or terrace. It has had several owners from different families. From 1995 it is run by the same family and its employees are relatives or friends. It offers services in English. It has cyber marketing and online booking systems. It has rooms in different categories. It has suffered damages in revenue from natural causes such as hurricanes and floods. It has loyal customers. Its market focuses on older people.

Hotel Meliá. Located in the heart of the Historic District of Ponce, facing Plaza Las Delicias and the colorful and picturesque Ponce's Firehouse Museum. It is within walking distance of Ponce's Central Business District, the Ponce Art Museum, the Museum of History of Ponce and the Serralles Castle Museum. It has been managed by the Meliá family for more than 80 years. Mr. Bartolo Meliá, a Spaniard, started his business with a small grocery store in Ponce and later added a restaurant and then finally the hotel. This Hotel has no relation to the Meliá Hotels from Spain. The Hotel Meliá Ponce is a historic colonial-style building with all the latest accommodations and features such as Wi-Fi, Cable TV, HBO, business center, swimming pool, hairdryer, iron with ironing board in its 73 rooms, and its famous Mark's at the Meliá Restaurant which offers international cuisine. The hotel had been in the Meliá's family for four generations but in 2013 a local investor bought it. It has reservations online and social networks. It has suffered damages due to natural catastrophes but it has not suffered interruptions in its operations.

Hotel El Guajataca. El Guajataca is located in the northwest part of the island, Quebradillas. Built in 1930, serving as a tourist stop, being a historical attraction with the beach view and the old train tunnel, as well as the appreciation for the natural environment. It has 37 rooms, a spa, a swimming pool, Jacuzzi rooms and a restaurant. Also, it has social media marketing and local advertising. It has not recently suffered declines in its income, although it has a new administration since 10 years ago. Its market focuses on relaxation tourism, adventure and family tourism.

Parador Villas del Mar Hau. It is a Parador. (Paradores are small inns typically managed and owned by locals. In order for each of these properties to carry the name "Parador" they must be approved by the Puerto Rican Tourism Company). Located in the northwest side of the island, in Isabela. It is a complex of 46 units for 2, 4 and 6 people. The units/cabins are equipped with kitchen area, area to "grill" out and spacious balcony with ocean view and beachfront. It began operations in 1950 with the Hau family. It has never stopped its operations.

It is characterized by alternative technologies such as solar cells and wind generators. One attraction is the arrival of turtles, manatees and whales during the year. It has online marketing, reservations and television programs abroad, such as Caribbean

Vacations and Places to go. In 2001, it suffered some decreases in its tourist influx due to social contingencies and hurricanes. The facilities include: Tennis Court, Basketball Court, Volleyball Court, Beach Kiosk, Restaurant, Kayaking, Swimming pool and Laundry room.

Villas del Mar Hau is a green facility, certified as a Sustainable Tourism Facility by the Puerto Rico Tourism Company. It has a garden of lettuce and tubers for consumption in its restaurant. It has developed green initiatives throughout all the property in water and electric power consumption, all cleaning products (detergents, disinfectants, fabric softeners, etc.), all maintenance products (paint, sylocone, tints, etc.), office supplies (toners, paper, newspapers, magazines, etc.), green areas, noise, and general solid waste generated by the hotel.

3.2 Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis was conducted to the interview data of owners/managers of the tourist companies. Results showed the formation of three factors in the variable of classic hospitality management elements: Authenticity, Own Initial Techniques and Adaptation. The elements that distinguish visitors fall into three categories proposed in this study. With the results of the factor analysis, assessment of each of the eight hotels was performed and results are summarized in Table 3.

3.3 Indicators Index

Three categories are shown in the study: authenticity, innovation and adaptation that helped the tourist companies to survive and to be effective throughout the years. Table 3 present the results showing the index indicators of permanence in the tourist companies analyzed in this study.

Table 3. Indicators index of permanence identified on in-depth interviews conducted to hotel owners or managers of hotel companies with more than 40 years of activities in Puerto Rico

TOURISM COMPANIES	CATEGORIES FEATURED	INDICATORS (NUMERIC VARIABLES)
El Convento	Authenticity to be a modern offer in its opening years. Technologies for the integration of infrastructure and new equipment after remodeling.	Does not have the recreation variable and Adaptation elements are not found under the set time. <i>*(.715)</i>
Plaza de Armas Hotel	Adaptation by integrating hotel management factors and using classical techniques. Innovation integrating new services, contracting, remodeling, management changes and external agreements.	It has maintained a constant adaptation and innovation through time. Does not count with recreation factors despite external agreements. <i>*(.723)</i>
Castro Guest House	Authenticity based on the new concept of guest house at that moment.	It has very few contemporary hotel management factors, which causes the adaptation value to be null. <i>*(.547)</i>
Fortaleza Guest House	Adaptatio as a very basic business, these factors are met.	The adaptation aspect is considered sufficient under indicators of equipment, refurbishment and management. <i>*(.694)</i>
Hotel Bélgica	Authenticity Being a family business of the past. Own Initial Techniques for the above reason. Adaptation for being antique.	The classic hotel management makes good balance with those adopted elements of modern times used when necessary. This benefits the tenure. <i>*(.789)</i>
Hotel Meliá	Own Initial techniques because of the specialized administration. Adaptation for harmony between ancient and modern elements. Innovation because of changes in the management and its growth.	In the old firms adaptation is almost inevitable; in the authenticity factor it fails because it aims toward the executive tourism. <i>*(.703)</i>
Hotel El Guajataca	Authenticity its wide range of offering. Adaptation by integrating modern factors. Innovation for the change between Parador and hotel. Recreation includes sports and nature tourism factors	By including many modern factors in harmony with the old ones and also the variable of alternative tourism, there is an increase. <i>*(.855)</i>
Parador Villas del Mar Hau	Authenticity, having its own initial technics, Adaptation, Innovation, Technology, Marketing and Recreation.	Including all the variables analyzed increases radically the value of permanence. <i>*(.905)</i>

Table 3: The results of the data analysis from the interviews of eight owners or managers in the four tourist destinations located on the island of Puerto Rico are shown. Factors of permanence and adaptation to the new elements of tourism are highlighted in the results. Among the eight tourist companies analyzed manifest the only Guest Houses are Fortaleza and Castro Guest. It stresses that Villas del Mar Hau expresses its turn as a Tourist Parador.

3.4 Correlations

When the qualitative categories were coined, the quantitative part of the study began. In the statistical analysis, looking to identify the relation between the raised variables and the main category, the correlations were developed using SPSS. These correlations will allow identifying the importance of the variables in the permanence or continuity of tourism MSME's in Puerto Rico. The correlations were made according to Pearson's coefficient, defining the subject's operative characteristics as positively related to the permanence categories of permanence.

3.5 Adverse Events

The incidence of not finding the main subject (owner or director) was minimal, because they were available in almost all of the enterprises we selected. Only in the case of Hotel Melia and El Convento we were not able to contact or interview the main subject, so we developed the interview to employees.

4. Conclusions

Reviewing the results of Castro Guest House and Fortaleza Guest House it highlights a low cost and austere service. They fulfill sufficiently the retention rate as Hostel or Guest House for the latent demand of casual or youth tourism. Despite being different from a hotel, the adequacy of their services and infrastructure manifests in their permanence as a tourist service. A potential growth is observed. There is collaboration with the other nearby tourist companies that work together, for example, when one hostel has no capacity, they share the clients. Although they have a minimal charge capability, they point to remain in the market because of the rising demand on hostel type hospitality services.

Plaza de Armas includes adaptation values. It is one of the most recent subjects in this study and despite that it highlights in adaptation values and constant innovation. It integrates new technologies that help management and marketing. Like the other hotels does not have the category of recreation. It points to remain as well taking advantage of the situation in the main square of Old San Juan.

In Parador Villas del Mar Hau all the categories analyzed are observed. Within which it highlights aspects of adaptation and, unlike others, it integrates elements of recreation. It has a strong push from modernity (even more in environmental technology), but without losing the essence of a classic tourism service. The innovative business rotation that it has when beginning and continues offering allows to increase its permanency.

Hotel el Guajataca, having previously served as a Parador (a resort with government support), and recently with a change of management and a change to a hotel classification, it retains elements of classical tourism. To the extent of which it was previously a tourist project of nature, sun and beach, now it has features of recreation and adaptation. This subject is a recognized reference point for the regional and foreign tourism and this is the main reason why it points to remain as well.

Hotel Bélgica has the familiar or friendly administration despite management changes throughout its history. Its market advantage is the fact that Ponce is a strategic point of communication to other places on the island. It is a simple hotel but it has a high permanence value because of its adaptation elements.

In El Convento, the values of modern hotel management dominate. There is a lagging in the category of adaptation, which significantly reduces its value of permanence.

Moreover, Melia minimizes the values of modern hotel management, rescuing many classical values, but without the factor of modernity and adaptation, the permanence value reached is not greater.

The results obtained in this investigation allow answering the research question. The elements of classic hotel management combined with adaptation to new techniques and technologies achieve harmony and consequently a high permanence value.

These results contribute to the body of literature with a methodology that evaluates the relevance of the hotel practices in Puerto Rico. Assessing the importance of the elements of adaptation for the preference of the visitor could be an advantage in the variable representing the tourist influx. It also contributes to the knowledge of the adequacy of combining classical hotel practices with modern practices.

Within the limitations of this study can be considered the characteristics from the tourists owned perspectives. The time to develop the study, the small variability between owner and manager interviewed. The tourist companies analyzed. Thus, the study can be conducted in other regions or countries and other visitation periods.

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