

Handicrafts and Economic Impact in the Tourism Sector, a Challenge for the Archaeological Zone of Teotihuacan in the Face of the COVID-19 Health Crisis

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Abstract: *The present work tries to present the economic impact that the tourist influx of the Teotihuacan valley has had, specifically in the Archaeological zone; revaluing the work that characterizes this place through its typical handicrafts made with native products. In addition to how they have coped with the covid 19 health crisis throughout this time.*

Keywords: Teotihuacan, crafts, tourist influx, economic impact, revaluation

1. Introduction

Handicrafts are emblematic symbols of a nation, their socio-cultural connotation is rooted in authentic regional traditional and customs knowledge that generate intangible rights which deserve to be legally protected, in order to facilitate its development as a true economic sector.

In this sense, it is common for Mexico to go under the protection of registered trademarks and copyrights, as well as denominations of origin, which are an ideal tool that not only provides protection for artisan products and their creators, but also promotes the cultural identity of the country to the world; However, the role of the artisan has been diminished at first by the massive and industrialized production of handicrafts from abroad whose commercialization cost is considerably lower than that of a local artisan; as well as the inaccessibility to decent work, which means having the tools and adequate space for the production of handicrafts, the right to a public health system, vacations, retirements and even participating in institutional support for the improvement of their products Likewise, their opportunities are diminished in access to a higher education system.

Traditional crafts are considered as a historical process of collective creation; its elaboration tends to generate a real conscience of cultural goods, since crafts are what results from a process and elaboration of an object in order to transform the natural raw material into multiple forms and different uses; thus being a true art for being unique, with identity and symbolic and ideological values. According to Salas (2010), handicrafts are considered a form of expression that is

attractive to many when they have the facility to understand it; generating emotion when knowing a beautiful place or the culture that evokes memories, traditions and the identity of a people, all this embodied in some work of art. handicrafts are the result of creativity and imagination, embodied in a product in which they have been transformed. The handicrafts of Mexico come from rural areas since the artisans have taken advantage of the resources of their area to create all kinds of designs, and with this, giving great value to the material and immaterial culture of the country, that is, in the case of Mexico. the elaboration of handicrafts entails an economic income of 5.339 billion dollars (Freitag & del Carpio, 2017).

In this sense, in 1974, the so-called National Fund for the Promotion of Handicrafts emerged, which has functioned as a public trust sectorized to the Secretary of Social Development (SEDESOL), in response to the need to promote the country's artisanal activity and thus contribute to the generation of greater family income for artisans, through their human, social and economic development, within this sector it is mentioned that there are a large number of people who are dedicated to making handicrafts, and help to conserve the artisan culture through the elaboration of handicrafts thanks to the increase they have had in sales and profits has been marked as a source of work in our country.

In sum, it is important to highlight that the strengthening of the internal and external market, that is, the national or foreign market generates the necessary channels to link the artisan to hold exhibitions at universities, fairs, business centers and Freitag & del Carpio tourist centers (2017). On the other hand, the traditional value that is why the artisans when

making works such as saddlery, Huichol art, ceramics, silverware, amber, basketry, obsidian carving among others and selling it to tourists keep alive that tradition of preserving its artisanal value. . Currently, artisan activity in Mexico is based not only on memory; but also in the effort to maintain some ancient practices of their cultures, within the framework of these they can stand out by importance: the Mayan, Aztec, Zapotec, Olmec, Toltec, Mixtec and Teotihuacan culture; among others, which are transformed into figurines, vessels, necklaces, food or ornamental utensils; to name a few. On the other hand, its traditions that have grown over time, among which the guelaguetza, dance of the flyers, the day of the dead, carnivals and the extensive gastronomy stand out. A population of 15.7 million indigenous people is estimated in Mexico, there are 11.1 million who live in an indigenous household, are geographically locatable and are the population environment of public policies on indigenous matters. Of the 15.7 million, 6.6 million are indigenous language speakers and 9.1 million do not speak an indigenous language and 400 thousand of the speakers do not consider themselves indigenous, this according to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI).

A fundamental feature of the indigenous population is its diversity and plurality. The indigenous Mexicans are not a homogeneous body. Therefore, although in Mexico there are 68 Indigenous Peoples that correspond to the 68 languages spoken throughout the country, the truth is that there is a linguistic, cultural and even religious plurality among them and within them. The indigenous world in Mexico is complex and diverse.

2. Artisan activity, an instrument for the conservation of cultural heritage in Mexico

Cultural heritage is the heritage of a community from the past, today and waiting to be shown in the future. This seeks to promote cultural diversity and its enjoyment; Cultural heritage has acquired great economic importance for the tourism sector in many countries. This also creates new challenges for its conservation. Currently Mexico has been consolidated as a cultural power by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which aims to promote world peace and security through international cooperation in education, science and culture. Which is assumed with pride by the government, citizens and institutions with the commitment to protect and conserve the cultural riches of our country.

Currently, there are different institutions that are in charge of safeguarding, protecting and conserving the historical heritage of Mexico, such as UNESCO, the National Institute of Culture (INC), the Secretary of Culture and the National Council of Cultural Heritage (CNPC) which arise from end of the second world war. Due to their jurisdiction or competence, they are international, national, regional and local; all of them supported each other to achieve better results. Cultural

heritage reflects the historical, scientific, symbolic and aesthetic importance of a country and this is divided into two types: tangible and intangible.

For UNESCO (1986), the concept of a nation's heritage is understood as: That territory it occupies, its flora, fauna and all the creations and expressions of the people who have inhabited it, its social, legal and religious institutions, its language and material culture, from the earliest historical times. Heritage includes tangible and intangible assets inherited from ancestors; the environment where you live, the fields, cities and towns; the traditions and beliefs that are shared, the values and religiosity, etc. The natural and cultural heritage constitute the irreplaceable source of inspiration and identity of a nation, since that heritage of what it was, the substrate of what it is and the foundation of tomorrow that it aspires to bequeath to its children. According to the heritage classification proposed by UNESCO (1986), from which it is possible to derive a first level between natural heritage and cultural heritage, and the latter between tangible (material) and intangible (intangible), some contradictions are clearly generated. especially when proposing a dichotomous classification between cultural and natural heritage, viz.

Handicrafts are a product of the daily life of our country, and are considered intangible heritage if one talks about their elaboration process and becomes tangible heritage once it is finished, in both forms the cultural identity of each of our peoples and continues with the cultural heritage. In ancient times, handicrafts were made by traditional societies, where the responsibility fell on them to offer the best in the market in order to provide stability to their family; The same thing arises today, the imagination and creativity depend to be able to carry out a job as a craftsman to offer the essentials for daily life.

The creation of handicrafts has been envisioned through different aspects, the first of which is to represent their culture and make the gods they adore and respect stand out, then creating sculptures or works of art, some more elaborate than others, but always trying to show what characterizes them as a people, using techniques and instruments to make their work unique. During the war, those in charge of industrial activity were the underprivileged, who formed small groups, but had to work long hours to develop tools that would serve the upper classes or the army to fight wars. And the same thing happened while our ancestors hunted, they had to produce their own tools with natural materials that they found on the way.

Table 1: Crafts in Mexico

Aguascalientes	Jorongos, deshilados, alfarería, cerámica, talabartería y cestería
Baja California	Vasijas, muñecas de algodón, cestería, artículos de piel, artesanías de barro
Baja California Sur	Cestos, tapetes, juguetes de hojas de palma y trabajos de repujado
Campeche	Sombreros de palma, huipiles, bordados, cerámica y piezas de madera
Chiapas	Huipiles, textiles, ámbar, jade, pintura óleo, mascarar, alfarería barro blanco
Chihuahua	Artículos de piel, barro, instrumento musical, vasijas y canastas de palma
Coahuila	Sarapes, talabartería, alfarería, artesanías en madera, mimbre y carrizo
Colima	Madera, barro, alfarería, decorados al óleo, hojalatería, carrizo y textiles.
Distrito Federal	Concentrado de todas las artesanías del país y galerías de arte
Durango	Artículos de piel, cerámica, cestería, artesanías de alacrán y alfarería
Estado de México	Figuras de obsidiana y ónix, rebozo, repujado, telares, barro, cerámica, cestería
Guerrero	Rebozo, cantera, cerámica, alfarería, juguetes típicos, muebles madera, cestería
Hidalgo	Platería, huipiles, pinturas sobre óleo, talabartería, cestería, alfarería y madera
Jalisco	Platería, telares, cerámica, alfarería, madera, juegos pirotécnicos, bordados
Jalisco	Arte Huichol, vidrio soplado, alfarería, figuras religiosas, cerámica, talabartería
Michoacán	Huipiles, rebozo, cerámica, artículos de piel, alfarería, bordados, madera y joyería
Morelos	Esculturas de madera, instrumentos prehispánicos instrumentos musicales
Nayarit	Arte Huichol, instrumentos musicales, mascarar, morrales, artesanías víxarikas
Nuevo León	Talabartería, alfarería, cerámica, vidrio soplado, tapetes de ixtle y marquería
Oaxaca	Alebríjes, barro cocido, huipiles, tapete, filigrana, talabartería, cerámica, cantera
Puebla	Talavera Poblana, huipiles, textiles, esferas, productos de ónix, barro y platería
Queretaro	Bordados, muñecas de trapo, productos de ópalo, talabartería, productos de ixtle
Quintana Roo	Huipiles, cestería, joyería, vestimentas de algodón, dijes y telares
San Luis Potosí	Rebozo, canastas de hoja de palma, talabartería, alfarería, ebanistería, floraria
Sinaloa	Tallado en madera y piedra, alfarería, mosaicos, artículos de piel y cerámica
Sonora	Tallado de madera, textiles, macramé, joyería, cestería y muñecas de trapo
Tabasco	Cestería, mimbre, esculturas de madera, piel, barro, piñatas y talabartería
Tamaulipas	Barro, madera, filigrana de cuero, arcilla, talabartería, vidrio soplado y alfarería
Tlaxcala	Sarapes, rebozo, tallado de madera, barro vidriado, figuras de totonomote
Veracruz	Huipiles, guayabera, palma, alfarería, textiles, Peletería, bordados y textiles
Yucatán	Huipiles, guayabera, petates, creación de juguetes, bordados y calzado de piel
Zacatecas	Arte Huichol, tejidos, joyería, cantera, talabartería, artículos de lana.

Source: Own elaboration based on del Carpio (2013)



Image 1: Map of handicrafts in Mexico

Source: Own Elaboration based on del Carpio (2013)

The production of handicrafts depends on the short or extensive culture that each place develops. Each state is characterized by being the creator and provider of different types of handicrafts and their elaboration based on typical products of the place, such as in Nayarit the Huichol art, Oaxaca the alebríjes, Tamaulipas the mud, and the State of Mexico the obsidian figures to mention a few. These types of aspects are what form the cultural identity of each state, allowing them to compete with each other to improve each time what makes them feel proud of their place of origin.

3. Artisan production, a cultural legacy of the Teotihuacan Valley.

The Teotihuacan Valley region is located in the basin of Mexico and is located northeast of the Valley of Mexico, it is made up of the municipalities of Temascalapa, Tecámac, Santiago Tepetitlán, Tepetlaoxtoc, Acolman, Otumba, San Juan Teotihuacan, San Martín de las Pirámides, these last two municipalities will be the basis for the elaboration of this research and they are very important since it is where the Archaeological Zone of Teotihuacan is located, which is located only 45-50 km from Mexico City approximately.



Image 2: Map of the Teotihuacan Valley

Source: Own Elaboration based on INAFED (1987)

As mentioned by Leyte and Navarro (2020), the Teotihuacán Valley has a great wealth in its attractions and tourist destinations which can be potentially exploited, distributing the attraction of tourists to the more than 2.5 million people who visit the religious center of Teotihuacan annually to the other destinations, this being the largest attraction of tourists within the Valley; on the other hand, the municipalities have the distinction of magical towns and charming towns, having the investment by the government to take advantage of the resources.

The Teotihuacan Valley has tourist attractions such as the Padre Tembleque Aqueduct, the Ex Convent of Acolman, Burrolandia, Hacienda de Ometusco and mainly the Archaeological Zone of Teotihuacan, which is the most important tourist resource in the region, since of all the attractions mentioned above is the one that receives the largest number of tourists, “Teotihuacán, in the State of Mexico, was the archaeological zone with the highest number of visits in Mexico in 2019, with a total of almost 1.7 million people. Rooms (2020) . These attractions meet the needs of tourists who decide to appreciate the cultural richness of the region.

The city of Teotihuacan had its origins approximately in the classic period of the year 500 a.c. At 800 AD it is the most important evidence of the greatness of our ancestors in the Mexican Altiplano, Teotihuacan came to concentrate 100,000 inhabitants at its time of maximum splendor. The Aztecs recognized it and gave that city its name: "Place where the gods were made" (INAH, 2020). This is a public area open to all types of tourists and within it they can appreciate the Temple of the Feathered Serpent, The Citadel, Calzada de los Muertos, Palace of Quetzalpapalotl and the Pyramids of the Sun and the Moon. On the other hand, it has areas such as Tetitla, Atetelco, Tepantitla, La Ventilla, Yahualala and Zacuala where wall paintings can be displayed.

The Archaeological Zone of Teotihuacan shares territory with the municipalities of San Juan Teotihuacan where the access gates, the causeway of the dead, the citadel, the temple of the feathered serpent and the pyramid of the sun and San Martín de las Pirámides are located where is the pyramid of the moon, this site has a considerable reception of tourists, "currently it has an area of 264 hectares, an area of 82.65 km² and an

influx of approximately 3, 145, 384 visitors per year" (INAH, 2020). This can contribute to publicize other tourist attractions and obtain a greater demand and tourist influx.

In the industry, obsidian played an important role in the economic development of the city and its interaction with neighboring areas because of the obsidian that was handled since its cut allowed the manufacture of prismatic blades of higher quality and with less work. As mentioned by Manzanilla, L (2017) The city was supplied by two main sources: the preceding gray obsidian from Otumba, and the green obsidian from the Sierras de las Navajas located in Hidalgo and is one of the characteristic features of the classic Teotihuacano, Obsidian, especially green obsidian was the main attribute of the city.

The real or affective demand is a clear example of the archaeological zone since the people who visit this attraction are motivated by the trend and historical popularity, they also seek to exploit its cultural capital making use of all the additional services offered by this archaeological site, This is how Cooper (1993) describes it.

It is important to highlight that tourism has served as a benefactor agent in the Archaeological Zone of Teotihuacan since the economic impact it generates for the communities that participate in tourism activity and for society in general is important for a higher quality of life; In addition to greater job growth for the people of the region and greater local development. Tourists come to this Archaeological Zone looking for autochthonous objects with the identity and characteristics of the region, and that is when tourists generate work for artisans and merchants, and most importantly reactivate the value of each craft from its historical and cultural essence.

4. Crafts, cultural heritage of Teotihuacan.

The crafts that were made in Teotihuacan were used for daily use, many people used blades for hunting, they used raw and polished obsidian stone as healing methods, masks and dolls as idols, and currently inlaid pieces of shell of sea, carved dolls, Teotihuacan masks and charms with pre-Hispanic symbols as objects of simple tradition. Among the most outstanding crafts that are commercialized within the Archaeological Zone of Teotihuacan are the old looms, overcoats, shawls, wool sweaters, figures and masks made of clay, jade and obsidian that are replicas of those made in pre-Hispanic times. The crafts made with obsidian stone are the most representative of the place, since it is considered a magic stone, since they used it as a work tool, religious use and as a healing use.

For the elaboration of obsidian crafts a very delicate and fine process is carried out, since to obtain such a detailed work of art, it is necessary to choose from the beginning that the raw stone is in good condition, this stone is extracted from the Cerro de las Navajas in Hidalgo and there are several types of stone depending on the temperature in which the lava is found,

generally the obsidian is black or gray, but it can also be red, brown, green and mixed colors that form a rainbow. It is essential to check that the stone does not have cracks, since, if it does, it can break at any time you are working.



Image 4: Raw obsidian stone, extracted from the Cerro de las Navajas in Hidalgo
Source: Mineralesdelmundo.com

Once the stone with which to work has been selected, a cutting machine is used, which serves to shape the stone, making the necessary cuts to direct the contour of the figure, it is necessary that when the the stone being cut has contact with water so that it does not crash or break, since when it is cut it is warming up. It should be noted that work equipment must be used such as: masks, apron and glasses, since the obsidian releases burrs that could fall into the eyes of the craftsman and when cutting the stone, it releases dust that is harmful to the lungs.



Image 5: Carved obsidian stone, giving it the shape of an Aztec warrior
Source: Mexicodesconocido.com

Subsequently, since the stone has been cut and the design that is going to be given is in mind, the process of the form begins, which by means of emery machines and water, begins the carving of the stone, giving it the necessary details already be it for embedding with sea shell materials, plastic, aventurine stone, or simply polishing it. If it is going to be embedded, glue is used, various colored stones are glued to the carved figure, then resin is applied to cover the small holes that remain without fitting and again it is taken to the emery machine to remove the imperfections and go to the last stage of elaboration.



Image 6: Teotihuacan mask, inlaid with sea shell ready for polishing.

Source: Mexicodesconocido.com

Finally, since the stone is embedded or well carved, comes the polishing process, where with a machine with two parts, one for fabrics and another for sandpaper, the figure begins to be polished, the sandpaper makes the stone begin to stop being porous to make it completely smooth as inside, the fabrics with the help of a paste, gives the final touch with a spectacular shine, finishing this step, it is ready for marketing and distribution by the artisan.



Image 7: Finished black obsidian doll

Source: Teotihuacanmexicanart.com

Currently, the fact is highlighted that in a particular way in the Archaeological Zone of Teotihuacan there is no geographic information system that compiles information on the number of artisans in the region and that describes the process as they develop their work and the courses of received training; This leads not only to the weakening of handicraft production but also to the loss of the culture of the local community, to the weakening of the region's tourism system.

5. Labor autonomy and economic impact in the Archaeological Zone of Teotihuacan by COVID-19.

In the Archaeological Zone of Teotihuacan there is a countless number of street vendors and merchants who had a place within the Archaeological Zone or, rented premises within it that were severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic in February 2020 when The first diagnosis and onset of the Covid-19 pandemic was given in Mexico, and therefore it

affected the artisans who worked for them in the same way, which caused many people to be unemployed and unable to distribute their crafts.

The Archaeological Zone of Teotihuacan is the most important tourist resource in the region, it receives a large number of tourists, "Teotihuacán, in the State of Mexico, was the archaeological zone with the highest number of visits in Mexico in 2019, with a total of almost 1.7 million people" Salas (2020). The moment they have to close the archaeological zone, tourism in Teotihuacan begins to decline, and therefore, people begin to fear for the economy of their region, unemployment and the closure of businesses; However, people choose to seek strategies so that the local economy does not decline and remains strong regardless of said pandemic, the merchants who sold within the archaeological zone, among the alternatives they found, decide to place their positions in the circuit of the Archaeological Zone of Teotihuacan, hoping that tourism would benefit them even if it was not in the same way they were used to. In the same way, this situation triggered that neighbors from other communities used the same strategy without even knowing what the management of said activity was like and in this way they can generate money and bring a livelihood home.

The Archaeological Zone of Teotihuacan, even when it was closed, was visited daily, and although there was no access to the pyramids and the amount of tourism was minimal, the merchants who had stalls around the archaeological circuit, offered more tourist services to visitors who arrived such as: hotels, gastronomy, handicrafts, ATV tours, bicycle tours, cultural tours, balloon flights, pre-Hispanic shows and other tourist packages that caught the attention of tourists and who returned home with a good taste in their mouth when visiting Teotihuacan although not have visited the main tourist resource; all this under the protocols and adequate sanitary measures to prevent further contagion of covid 19.

Currently the Archaeological Zone of Teotihuacan reopened its doors on February 24, 2021 with a schedule from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm from Monday to Saturday and with a maximum capacity of 3,000 visitors per day and although the situation of the pandemic of the Covid-19 is still in force, artisans and merchants choose to take the necessary sanitary measures and with restrictions to be able to lead a normal life, since the base of the region's economy is located in the Archaeological Zone of Teotihuacan.

During said investigation of how the economy in Teotihuacan has been affected, we decided to take the case of a 61-year-old merchant named Ramón Alvarez Negrete, who mentions that for him, the situation that he experienced since the beginning of the pandemic has greatly impacted economically speaking, since it is his only income for his home, he has dedicated himself for more than 30 years to the elaboration of handicrafts and the sale of them within the Archaeological Zone, when the pandemic reached its maximum point, Ramón Alvarez had to take strategies to move forward in his family, because like all merchants and artisans, they used the circuit of

the area to put their craft stalls and offer to the few people who circulated on the cobblestones, only this way he was able to bring money home.

6. Conclusion

To develop a topic that is having so much relevance today, is to go into talking about different terms. The covid 19 pandemic is a disease that was unleashed in March 2020 and that since then has generated great repercussions on the working and economic life of thousands of artisan workers, merchants, tenants and itinerant workers in the archaeological zone of Teotihuacán.

The archaeological zone of Teotihuacan is one of the venues in charge of promoting culture and making known the work that artisans of this place carry out in detail. The tourism sector stands out in a large percentage in this area and has had a great impact on the market due to the level at which artisans have located it thanks to their great work. Both the archaeological zone and the typical handicrafts of this area are considered cultural heritage, which had generated that the artisans from here managed to receive greater profits and income for their homes with the sales they managed to generate. But, falling into a pandemic situation caused the loss of all these benefits.

The number of people affected during this pandemic is uncountable; Workers who stopped bringing their livelihood to their homes due to the closure of the archaeological zone asked the government for support, which was not given, they looked for jobs without being hired due to the closure of businesses and fear of contagion, they continued to look for alternatives to leave ahead, which led them to settle around the archaeological zone hoping to be able to offer and sell their crafts there with the little tourism that came.

Knowing or having strategies as prevention measures in a situation of this great magnitude should be necessary for the general population, so when a pandemic like the one we are experiencing until now we would know how to react and how to give a solution to a problem such as such. These should be vital protocols.

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