SUSTAINABLE RECREATION-CULTURAL ANIMATION MANAGEMENT: CONTRIBUTION TO THE MINING TOURISM IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MOA, HOLGUÍN PROVINCE

GESTIÓN DE LA RECREACIÓN-ANIMACIÓN SOSTENIBLE. CONTRIBUCIÓN AL TURISMO MINERO EN EL MUNICIPIO MOA, HOLGUÍN

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Received: October 28, 2025

Accepted: December 15, 2025

ABSTRACT

The municipality of Moa, Holguín, internationally recognized for its nickel and cobalt production, owns unique lithological, structural, relief, and natural resource features of heritage value. However, insufficient management of sustainable recreation and animation limits the development of mining tourism in Moa. This situation led to the design of a plan of recreation and animation activities linked to mining tourism for the Moa destination. A descriptive-qualitative methodology was applied through analysis-synthesis, historical-logical study, induction-deduction, participant observation, and a population survey. The implementation of the sustainable recreation and animation plan in Moa enables the enhancement of mining and geological resources of high heritage value that previously lacked management. By exploiting geosites, industrial history is transformed into educational and recreational tourism products.

KEYWORDS: resource utilization; sustainable tourism; mining municipality

RESUMEN

El municipio Moa, Holguín, conocido mundialmente por su producción de níquel y cobalto, posee singularidades litológicas, estructurales, de relieve y de recursos naturales de valor patrimonial; sin embargo, la insuficiente gestión de la recreación-animación sostenible limita la gestión del turismo minero en Moa. Lo expuesto anteriormente condujo a diseñar un plan de actividades de recreación-animación vinculadas al turismo minero para el destino Moa. Se aplicó la metodología descriptiva-cualitativa a través del análisis-síntesis, el estudio histórico-lógico, la inducción-deducción, la observación participante y una encuesta a la población. La implementación del plan de actividades de recreación animación sostenible en Moa permite la puesta en valor de recursos mineros y geológicos con alto valor patrimonial que anteriormente carecían de gestión. Mediante el aprovechamiento de los geositios, se logra transformar la historia industrial en productos turísticos educativos y recreativos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: aprovechamiento de recursos; turismo sostenible; municipio minero

INTRODUCTION

The recognition of fundamental human needs reached a historical landmark with the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This pioneering document for the protection of individual guarantees establishes in its article 24: «Everyone has the right to rest, leisure, a reasonable limitation of working hours, and periodic paid holidays» (United Nations, 1948).

In response to this right, tourism has emerged as one of the most lucrative and dynamic economic activities globally; it is the preferred option for many: traveling to other cities, learning about other cultures, enjoying varied activities, and having unique experiences. Sotomayor & Cueva (2020) argue that worldwide, it is a significant source of income.

Recreational tourism is aimed at people seeking to enjoy their vacation with leisure activities. Recreational tourism is considered as trips taken by people for rest, medical purposes, recreation, and entertainment, to relieve daily stress, visit other places, and vacation (Gallardo et al., 2019). The recreation movement, which began with the creation of playgrounds, sports fields, park networks, and organizations dedicated to offering recreational activities, has evolved significantly over time and as a consequence of new human needs (Kraus, 1971). Thus, it has granted a leading role to natural spaces in modalities such as nature tourism (Rivera, 2018) and cultural tourism, including sub-modalities like mining tourism (Castillo, López & Millán, 2010).

Mining tourism has become a way to rescue those geosites forgotten after their exploitation and a development path for mining towns. It enhances the historical, cultural, and intellectual value of resources and the history of communities that have practiced mining through recreational activities such as hiking and speleology, encouraging physical activity, learning, and environmental care. The approach of recreation oriented towards environmental education arose from a pressing need: environmental protection. This would imply designing and managing recreational spaces to minimize negative environmental impacts, promote responsible resource use, and foster greater awareness of the importance of protecting the natural environment.

The Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Navigation of Málaga (CÁMARA, D. C. D. M., 2010) defines sustainable tourism as the balance between the maximum possible utilization of the economic, social, cultural, and natural resources of the destination area against visitor satisfaction and the negative impacts that may be caused to the host society or the environment.

Many towns with potential for mining tourism linked to sustainable recreation-animation face stagnation due to their economic dependence on mineral extraction and production. This subordination to a single financial reason causes administrations and civil society to focus their efforts exclusively on industrial activity, systematically ignoring their capacities to diversify the economy and offer

cultural or recreational products to visitors. This lack of an integrated vision brings critical consequences, such as: accelerated degradation of the natural environment due to the absence of restoration plans for public use purposes, progressive abandonment of local traditions, and scarce investment destined for sectors as tourism.

Moa municipality is internationally recognized for its nickel and cobalt production; it also has lithological, structural, and relief singularities and natural resources of high heritage value. However, following a survey of the population and government members, it was found that the territory lacks management in enhancing the value of its resources; therefore, designing a proposal to enhance existing resources, maintain local history, and simultaneously diversify the municipality's tourist-recreational offerings is urgent. This would benefit the local community as a source of employment, a development pathway, and a way to halt the degradation of the natural environment, which has been damaged by industrial activity and has negatively influenced the inhabitants' quality of life.

After applying a survey to 100 inhabitants of the Moa municipality regarding tourism in the destination, the following deficiencies were identified:

- Lack of knowledge regarding recreation-animation management in destinations.
- Insufficient population awareness of the municipality's potential for tourism development.
- Limited tourist use of landscapes related to mining sites and the mining history of Moa.

The above information reveals the problem: Insufficient sustainable recreation-animation management limits Mining Tourism Management in Moa.

To solve this, the following objective was set: to design a plan of recreation-animation activities linked to mining tourism for the Moa destination.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Theoretical methods

Analysis-synthesis: it was used to process the theoretical information obtained from reviewing specialized literature on sustainable tourism management, recreation-animation management, and mining tourism.

Historical-logical: it was valid for studying the evolution of tourist recreation-animation in connection with mining tourism, as well as the main concepts and experiences in various latitudes.

Inductive-deductive: it was used for establishing links between the concepts of tourist recreation-animation and mining tourism, literature review, and specialized documentation.

Empirical methods

Participant observation: it was applied to understand the current state of tourism in Moa municipality and study its potential.

Survey: it was applied to the population of Moa to detect the main deficiencies regarding tourism in the municipality.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sustainable Tourism Management

Tourism fully shares the conservationist state of productive environment resources, basing its principles on sustainability and promoting population development (Soler, 2020). In this case, management becomes a managerial tool to mitigate negative impacts and make good use of resources, thus promoting business success (Torres, Véliz & Peralta, 2018).

Sancho & Buhalis (1998) define sustainable tourism as tourism designed to improve the local population's quality of life, provide a higher quality experience for the visitor, maintain environmental quality at the destination, achieve higher levels of economic profitability from tourist activity for the local population, and ensure benefits for local entrepreneurs. To carry out sustainable tourism, it is necessary to achieve the participation of all interest groups, including residents, who are the greatest support and foundation of sustainability.

The development of sustainable tourism is focused on managing resources in a way that satisfies economic, social, and aesthetic needs while respecting cultural integrity, ecological processes, biological diversity, and life-support systems (Tuquinga et al., 2021). Currently, various practices allow for environment conservation from a tourist perspective. Román (2019) suggests several practices, such as:

- Promoting awareness about the care of the destination's natural heritage among employees and customers.
- Implementing an awareness system for customers, employees, and suppliers on responsible energy and water use.
- Integrating the use of new technologies in service provision, seeking sustainable innovation.
- Promoting sustainable mobility in the destination as an offering of tours based on hiking, biking, and horseback riding.
- Having preventive and corrective maintenance systems for facilities and equipment.
- Counting on renewable energy sources for energy supply.

Sustainable recreation-animation management in tourist destinations

Recreation as a means to use free time is a social need that allows for the continuous physical and spiritual enrichment of human beings, and its positive use

is an important condition for their integral development; therefore, it is necessary to properly motivate and guide its use towards activities that provide pleasurable, creative, and formative recreation.

According to Pérez & Devita (2023), recreation refers to an activity or practice through which we experience leisure. They also associate these practices with physical, sports, cultural, and social activities. In contrast, Encarnación (2021) gives it an educational focus in their definition, understanding recreation as the set of participatory processes that may include one or several activities, techniques, or methods that ultimately create an authentic experience related to fun, entertainment, learning, and individual growth.

The objectives of recreation include: introducing new habits for using time, stimulating the development of expressing feelings, emotions, and positive attitudes, rescuing the nation's cultural values, and fostering personal and social well-being (Sangotuña et al., 2022).

It is necessary to emphasize the relationship between recreation and animation, as they are very similar terms aimed at ensuring the enjoyment of tourists or visitors within destinations, providing them with physical and mental balance. However, while recreation manifests as the practical activity of leisure, animation appears as the management and dynamization strategy that makes this experience possible. Tourist animation is defined as the art of combining various recreational, intellectual, and social actions, projecting the culture of a country, destination, or region, to add greater value to the market (Romero, 2019). Thus, Isidor & Cuamea (2023) consider it a resource that should be used in destinations due to the interest it generates in tourists, involving culture and the experience of unique moments through fun.

It can be said, then, that recreation is a participatory and dynamic process characterized by the active involvement of the individual. Its purpose is to generate pleasure, entertainment, and act as an educational strategy that fosters learning through conscious interaction with the environment. Meanwhile, tourist animation is the art and strategy of designing recreational, social, and cultural

actions that encourage visitor immersion in the destination's identity. Its objective transcends mere entertainment, seeking market differentiation. Under this conception, both drop out to be isolated elements and become a fundamental vehicle for awareness. Recreation-animation fosters visitor immersion in the destination, assuming the responsibility of educating the visitor about the value of the host environment. It is at this point that the recreational strategy inevitably converges with sustainability. Good destination management is required for recreation-animation to be sustainable.

Destination management involves directing, coordinating, and supporting the integration of different resources, activities, and agents involved, through adequate policies and measures. The tourist destination management process is based on the strategic planning of the destination, a foundation for decision-making and the projection of strategies focused on stakeholder satisfaction (both actors and tourists) based on the principles of integration and sustainable development, contributing to destination competitiveness, responding to social aspirations, and protecting the cultural and natural environment (Rodríguez et al., 2020).

Based on the above, sustainable recreation-animation management can be called the strategic, ethical, and integrated process of planning and coordinating experiential experiences that fuse active participation with a destination's identity. This discipline articulates recreational techniques and socio-cultural actions to transform leisure time into a driver of human well-being and economic development, without compromising the integrity of the environment.

Sustainable recreation-animation management linked to mining tourism in the Moa destination

The issue of identity is considered from a social perspective that develops a sense of community linked to the territory, making cultural heritage something considered an expression and representation of a site (Libri et al., 2023).

It is agreed that industrial heritage is an indissoluble part of the culture, history, and national identity of peoples, hence its importance as a development engine (Proenza & Ávila, 2021). Industrial tourism is defined as the activity carried out by visitors seeking knowledge of industrial zones or heritage from a cultural approach. It consists of adding value to those resources that were or are linked to industry, providing an idea of the processes of a specific production.

Industrial tourism emerged in the United States and England in the 1960s, then spread to other countries, including Spain, where it reached its maximum expression in the mining tourism sub-modality in Galicia. Some of the most attractive plans to learn about Galicia's mining and geological past are the Fontao tungsten and tin mines (Vila de Cruces, Pontevedra), the Toelo Route (Moeche, A Coruña), the Vilaoudriz Route (Lugo), and the Brués mines (Ourense). Interest in mining tourism with a recreational tourism focus is increasing, allowing the enhancement of various mining resources that were being forgotten and providing a development path for many industrial localities.

Mining tourism could be considered a key activity for the region, generating a symbiosis between two sectors, productive and services, to generate complementary income for mine owners and the local communities where they are located (Millán & Dancausa, 2012). In Cuba, the main products currently marketed are associated with sun and beach, historical-cultural, and nature tourism, through tour operators and national inbound agencies such as Ecotur, Cubatur, Cubanacán, and Gaviotatur. From a historical perspective, industrial heritage in Cuba is primarily related to mining and productive processes linked to the sugar, tobacco, and coffee industries (Proenza & Ávila, 2021). Mining being a main factor supporting the national economy.

Moa municipality, known worldwide for its nickel and cobalt production, began its industrial development in the 1950s exploring its ore deposits with high contents of iron, nickel, cobalt, and other minerals. The main value lies in the fact that they lie close to the surface and can be exploited in open-pit mines, at a relatively lower cost than extraction from underground depths (Hernández & Revé, 2011). Moa

has lithological, structural, relief, and natural resource singularities of heritage value that deserve to be managed for their heritage value (González & Infante, 2007). However, the territory lacks management in enhancing their value.

This information was verified by applying a survey to the population and government members of Moa. A Likert-type scale was used to construct the survey where: 1 (Strongly disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neither agree nor disagree), 4 (Agree), and 5 (Strongly agree). Below are the items negatively evaluated by the population, stating dissatisfaction with the innovative promotion by leaders in the territory's tourist management, also showing a lack of knowledge about courses and training activities for tourism professionals in the municipality. Another aspect of ignorance was consulting the population in decision-making for tourism development in the municipality. The items on innovation and development strategies received the worst ratings, showing the inhabitants' total disagreement regarding the diversification of the tourist offer in Moa (Table No. 1).

Items	Rating
Leadership: Leaders or figures in the municipality promote innovation and creativity in tourism management.	2-3
Training: You are satisfied with the training and capacity-building activities aimed at promoting tourism development in the municipality.	3
Participation: There are channels for the participation and consultation of the local community in decision-making for tourism development.	3
Innovation: There are initiatives and programs that foster innovation in the tourism sector of your locality.	2
Development strategies: There is sufficient diversification in the tourist offer and promotion of innovative tourism products in our municipality.	1-2

Table 1. Summary of negative items from the survey applied to the population of Moa.

However, aspects positively evaluated were related to job generation in the tourism sector, the social impact of tourism, and tourist safety in the community.

Characterization of the main geosites of Moa municipality

In the Official Gazette of the Republic of Cuba, number 84, the Ministry of Energy and Mines declared as geosites with tourism potential in the Moa municipality: Merceditas I Chromite Deposit, Camariocas Banded Gabbros, Cabañas River Opals, and Yaguaneque Gabbro-Rodingite Dykes (MINEM, 2022).

Needing to highlight the lithological, structural, relief, and natural resource riches of the region, an inventory of the main geosites of the Moa destination was carried out through the research by González & Infante (2007), who characterized the Moa geosites, and the study by Guibert & Sierra (2024), who performed an in-depth diagnosis based on scientific, educational, economic, conservation, and added values of each site. Then, it is stated a brief summary of their characterization and value:

- Cabañas River Opals is a geosite of scientific and educational value composed of enormous irregular bodies of opals, represented by in-situ blocks with more or less concentric layers of opaline material of different shades.

- Camariocas Banded Gabbros possesses scientific, economic, and educational value. Defined by levels of banded gabbros, which reflect the composition and structure of the lower oceanic crust.

- Merceditas I Chromite Deposit has heritage, scientific, educational, and cultural value. It constitutes the largest refractary chromite deposit in Latin America. Formed by lenticular bodies of chromitites that encompass tabular gabbro bodies aligned parallel to the orientation of the lens.

- Yaguaneque Gabbro-Rodingite Dykes have historical, educational, and scientific value. It consists of an outcrop of gabbro dykes intruding into much more melanocratic pre-existing gabbros, allowing appreciation of the rodingitization metasomatic process.

To design the proposal for the tourist recreational activity plan with a sustainable focus for Moa municipality, it is necessary to define which activities to develop in each geosite.

For this, one must start from understanding these activities. The description by Van Rompu (2019), Sosa (2017); Muñoz, Milla & Tiznado (2017) and Jiménez et al. (2020) of the selected activities was adopted:

Guided tours: a pre-established route including a series of points of interest to learn about specific information on flora, fauna, and especially geological formations.

Trekking: a sports and recreational activity consisting of long walks or routes, oriented towards contact with nature.

Hiking: along part of the route, walking along existing paths and trails in open natural environments, allowing exercise while enjoying the view and learning about different types of landscapes.

Speleology: dedicated to studying and analyzing cavities and the living beings that inhabit them.

Sustainable tourist recreation-animation activity plan for the Moa destination

Based on the criteria developed above, the authors recommend that the government, together with MINTUR and the community, implement the following activity plan to take advantage of existing resources and a new activity as a development path.

Objective 1. Strengthen the value of responsibility through outdoor activities.

Proposed tourist activities: Hiking and trekking in all geosites of interest.

Tasks to be performed:

- Identify suitable hiking and trekking routes for different skill levels.
- Verify that routes are safe and accessible, avoiding risk areas.
- Establish points of interest along the route that include relevant historical mining or geological elements.

Materials to be used:

- Topographic maps and compasses
- Backpacks with water, food, and a first aid kit.
- Appropriate mountain footwear and clothing suited to weather conditions.

Objective 2. Foster awareness about the importance of conserving mining heritage and its associated ecosystems.

Proposed tourist activity: Speleology at the Merceditas I Chromite Deposit.

Tasks to be performed:

- Provide a prior talk on safety rules and basic speleology techniques.
- Supervise visitors follow instructions and maintain safety.

Materials to be used:

- Protective equipment and exploration tools (helmets with headlamps, additional flashlights, batteries, and first aid kit).
- Informational brochures and area maps.

Objective 3. Foster knowledge about mining and mining processes.

Proposed tourist activity: Guided tours to the Yaguaneque Gabbro-Rodingite Dykes.

Tasks to be performed:

- Create a monthly schedule of guided tours with agreed dates.
- Adapt the visit strategy according to age group.
- Implement a rest break dynamic to relax visitors.

Materials to be used:

- Personal protective equipment (helmets, reflective vests, safety glasses).
- Informational materials (brochures, maps, explanatory panels).

The implementation of the sustainable recreation-animation activity plan in Moa enables the enhancement of mining and geological resources of high heritage value that previously lacked management. By exploiting the geosites, industrial history is transformed into educational and recreational tourism products. The results demonstrate a diversification of the local economic tourism supply, reducing exclusive dependence on nickel and cobalt extraction, and generating new jobs for the community. Also, the development of modalities, such as nature tourism, mining tourism, and adventure tourism is achieved through activities that foster greater environmental awareness and the rescue of local traditions.

CONCLUSIONS

Moa municipality has geological and mining heritage of high scientific and heritage value, such as the Cabañas River Opals and the Merceditas I Deposit, which currently lack effective enhancement for public enjoyment. The proposed recreation-animation activity plan, including hiking, trekking, speleology, and guided tours, constitutes a strategic tool to diversify the municipality's tourist offer under a sustainable approach. The implementation of this plan not only contributes

to the preservation of industrial and natural heritage but also acts as a driver of local development by generating new jobs and improving the quality of life of the inhabitants, mitigating the impact of industrial environmental degradation. It is concluded that the long-term viability and sustainability of this proposal depend strictly on the articulation between the Municipal Government, MINTUR, and the local community, by establishing marketing strategies and proactively mitigating environmental and social risks.

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