

## Recreational Activities to Promote Horse Riding As a Complement to Agrotourism

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### Abstract

Horse riding as a recreational activity focuses its attraction in the world of horses. It is a practice that has achieved growth and projection within physical activity and leisure time in different places around the world, since it helps to exercise multiple parts of the body and clear the mind. However, there are few countries that promote it, mainly because it is too expensive; which has caused its particularities not be known. The goal of this paper is to propose activities to promote horse riding as a complement to agrotourism in Calixto García municipality. For this, theoretical methods such as analysis and synthesis, historical-logical, structural systemic were used; empirical data such as scientific observation, interviews and specialist judgment. Likewise, techniques and procedures were applied to complement the research. As a result, the foundations laid for the theoretical-practical deepening of the topic under study and activities were developed to promote horse riding in the municipality of reference, since it is a faithful exponent of this sport at the national and international level and remain as a traditional peasant culture. From the reflection carried out, the need to carry out actions to disseminate and maintain the practice of this sport as a recreational activity is demonstrated, given that it represents benefits, both, for those who practice it and for the community in general.

### Keywords

recreation; horse riding;  
agrotourism



## I. Introduction

Recreation is considered by society as a sociocultural process and an essential phenomenon of human activity, which not only represents a didactic resource but also an end in itself due to its benefit in practice, given the benefits it represents for society, both, physical and mental health. In everyday language, recreation is synonymous with entertainment, fun, effortless activity and, sometimes, it is underestimated because it takes place in a time of little social value, unproductive, and it is presented as a voluntary activity (Suárez Torres, 2019; Torres, 2019; Español, 2019; Fernández and de Armas, 2020; Espinosa and Gómez, 2021; among others).

In the period between the second half of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, the stage of industrialization, the objective conditions that give rise to the concept as a manifested necessity. There are different forms of recreation, so it is not the activity itself that defines it, but the attitude with which each person assumes it (Español, 2019)

Consequently, any activity can be considered recreational, if people dedicate themselves to it by their own decision and in their free time, with no other purpose than the pleasure of performing said action. That is why the concept of recreation has a close connection with the conception of leisure or free time, as well as its relationship with work depending on the type of activity, the perception of freedom, among others.

In the specialized literature, scientific works by several authors that address the topic are identified (Márquez, 2019; Alba and Requena, 2020; Español, 2019; Reyes, 2022; and others), with diverse conceptual approaches seen from various angles depending on the area of knowledge where they apply. Its meaning is not only based on a pleasant way to spend time, but on a positive way in which human beings take advantage of leisure or free time in a positive way along with the benefits it brings to health, based on its value as a being and member of society.

This social phenomenon is considered as a right of the people so that it ensures its economic-social conditions for its development and enjoyment, which plays a role in cultural and social self-development through leisure time. It is the practice of activities of that are carried out in free time and take as a framework of action a facility that may be a sports field or another appropriate place for its performance. As long as it satisfies the needs of the activity to be performed; which favors the physical, social, intellectual development, adventure action and competitiveness of individuals.

On repeated occasions, the word recreation is confused with one of its contents: games. But it also contributes to the multilateral rest of individuals involved in recreational activities that provides partial or total physical preparation depending on the recreational activity and the incorporation of habits such as responsibility, honesty, collectivism, discipline, self-control, etc. It provides through practice, observation of nature and society; the linking of sports, cultural and technical knowledge in a context of deepening the scientific conception of the world.

Within recreation, horseback riding can be mentioned, which is generally done outdoors. Which has allowed it to achieve great popularity; since it is a very healthy activity that promotes muscle conditioning and represents cardiovascular benefits (Pedrola-Pons, 2019; Pérez Palao, 2019), and as part of agrotourism. It also constitutes an option that allows the diversification of agricultural activities, the essence of which It is seen in the set of activities organized by farmers as a complement to their main activity.

This practice has been considered in recent years as a strategy, according to which, the development of communities gains the necessary relevance to achieve the mobilization of people towards spaces that offer them the opportunity for unique and novel experiences, to be in direct contact with the environment, the exchange of horses, livestock, popular culture and traditions of the rural community in general (Chat and Argelia, 2018; Cárdenas et al, 2019; Rodríguez Alonso, 2019; Weeks et al, 2021; Pérez Anzardo and Cardet, 2022). Today, equestrian activities are the best way to gain and retain the interest of riders and attract a potential audience for the values that are linked to it. The particularity is that anyone can do it, regardless of whether they are an expert in horse riding or an apprentice, without limitations of age and abilities; since the human being throughout his evolution has sought to develop different activities that allow him to fully develop. In favor of this, horse riding has a recreational, healthy outlook and it is designed for the well-being of each person.

It is a motivating, social, fun, instructive and even spiritual and relaxing activity, in addition to being therapeutic. It unites people of all kinds and above all allows a close relationship with horses, which have accompanied man since ancient times. In Cuba, there are experiences in the field of physical culture and medicine, whose objective is to provide maximum attention to different population sectors, to promote health, prolong life expectancy and maintain integration into society. However, horse riding as a recreational activity is a discipline that requires large amounts of time and money, which makes it difficult to practice in the country. Its visibility in the media has been practically reduced to the transmission of the occasional international event.

Disconnected almost completely from the National Institute of Sports, Physical Education and Recreation (INDER), the majority is unaware of the features that distinguish this discipline and, above all, its presence and development in the country. Likewise, the existence of the Havana Equestrian Club, an institution that brings together and develops its practitioners, is little publicized (Villa, 2018). At the same time, there is a need to form a culture of free time in the population, the full enjoyment and diversification of healthy recreational activities, based on the capabilities of each community, which finds ways of realization and expression in the different layers of society. society.

In the literature consulted, it was found that there is insufficient research on the topic covered by this research, aimed primarily at schools and health centers, where the methodological indications of each activity are presented. However, the works found for the rural community context and as part of agrotourism, without distinction of the different age groups, are meager; and are mostly related to equestrian tourism as a specific modality. In the municipality of Calixto García, where the research is being carried out, a special area for practicing the discipline with just three horses was opened on December 12, 1982, in the town of Cruce de Mir. It has developed high-performance athletes who represent both the municipality and the country in national and international events, despite the difficulties faced in carrying out this discipline. However, in an unstructured interview with INDER professors, athletes and riders in particular, it was found that this recreational physical activity is not sufficiently publicized, there are not implemented actions to promote its management.

The pursued objective with this article and that it will allow a solution to the identified problem is to develop recreational activities to promote horse riding as a support for agrotourism in the Calixto García municipality. Which allows encouraging its practice and development; as well as the incorporation of the community and both, national and foreign visitors, for the benefit of local development and the permanence of this peasant tradition.

The scope of the research presupposes the study of trends and the state of the art of the subject under study, as well as the proposal of recreational activities for the practice and development of horse riding in the Calixto García municipality. Moreover, it will contribute to promoting this sport as a recreational activity that will benefit both practitioners and the community in general, due to its physical, therapeutic, recreational benefits and in pursuit of local development.

## II. Research Methods

An analysis of several methodologies presented by different authors was carried out to promote horse riding as a recreational physical activity (Pedrola-Pons, 2019; Fernández et al, 2020; Lupe Miranda and Licuona Luna, 2020; among others). Additionally, they are more abundant in countries that show a high degree of economic and social development, which is why they are operational because of their management, and encourage or motivate the carrying out of such research

They all start from the need that human beings have for recreation and enjoyment of their free time, which is why they present an area of opportunity to offer various alternatives based on the available resources, among which endogenous, natural, historical, and cultural resources are rescued. cultural values and new recreational options, as well as currently existing demands; However, they are not part of horse riding as a recreational activity for the community that guarantees its permanence as a sport with psychological and mental benefits.

For the development of the research, the use of theoretical and empirical research methods was combined; among the former, historical-logical, analysis-synthesis, and induction-deduction stand out. Among the empirical methods are information collection techniques such as interviews, group work, and analysis of regulatory documents, among others. All of them made it possible to reveal trends, regularities, and establish relationships with the phenomenon under study, based on the information obtained during the research process, which allowed conclusions to be reached

### **III. Result and Discussion**

#### **3.1 Horse Riding in Cuba: Calixteña Horse Riding**

The history of horse riding in Cuba dates back to the beginning of the 20th century. Horse riding is probably the only sport in Cuba that overcomes the usual economic barriers, since it is a self-financed practice; its operation is not subject to the meager state budgets. This is due to its protection by the National Company for the Protection of Flora and Fauna, which is directed by Guillermo García Frías, Commander of the Revolution who shows a marked interest in traditional practices of the Cuban countryside such as the breeding of purebred horses. This company, in addition to holding horse auctions in which they invoice hundreds of thousands of dollars, develops a National Genetic Program aimed at racial improvement, breeding, reproduction and development of national and imported species (Leyva Castro, 2010).

The practice of horse riding, in the Calixto García municipality, began in the Rancho México Horse Riding Club since May 1982. It was the idea of the manager of the Sports sector in the territory Orlando Proenza Vera, together with the horse riding Coach Alfredo Díaz Vera, who decided to coordinate with the Calixto García North Livestock Company and with the Provincial Directorate of Havana City in Lenin Park, to carry out this discipline. From At that time, a training base was made with 42 apprentices, including young people between 10 and 15 years of age.

Currently, the municipality has one of the five equestrian sports centers in the country, with results in national events and dozens of trophies and medals that can be seen in the small Museum of Club Rancho México, which is why it is considered the capital of the horse riding in Cuba (Leyva Castro, 2010). Calixto García is a territory that, due to its tradition in the matter, the achievements fulfilled in events, its natural environment and installed capacities, has the potential to develop horse riding as a complement to agrotourism (Pérez Anzardo, and Cardet Fernández, 2022),. However, it can stated that there is little lack of promotion, systematicity and support of factors based on healthy recreation for the benefit of the locality. This situation can be solved through the creation of a proposal of activities to promote horse riding as a physical-recreational activity in the Calixto García municipality.

#### **3.2 Activities to Promote Horse Riding as a Complement to Agrotourism, in the Calixto García Municipality**

The activities carried out to promote horse riding as a recreational activity in the municipality under study have been insufficient, a group of actions is proposed for its implementation and development, based on common criteria of the authors studied, in order to promote horse riding as a recreational activity. For the application of the activity, people must take into account that they are aimed at all types of audiences, ranging in age from 10 to 65 years of age, without discrimination of sex.

**Meeting #1:** Coordination meeting. Community factors led by the recreation technician who assists them and specialists in equestrian sports participate in it.

**Objective:** Discuss the results of the diagnosis of the current state and the need to increase the proposal of activities to promote horse riding in the Calixto García municipality.

**Executor:** sports coach.

**Time:** 2 hours.

**Date:** according to prior planning.

**Content:** Diagnostic results from the instruments used.

**Method:** Explanatory.

**Media:** Technology and media according to the proposal of activities to promote horse riding in the Calixto García municipality.

### **Actions:**

1. Analysis of the diagnosis, based on the results of the instruments that were applied: observation, interview, survey, review of the Sports Combine documentation, main regularities.

2. Analysis of the objectives and contents of the proposed activities. It is adopted as an agreement: Carry out joint advertising and information on planned activities in the community.

**Evaluation:** Through participation in the activity.

### **Activity 1**

**Title:** Getting to know the horses

**Description:** In this activity, the familiarization of the personnel who participate in the activities with the horses will be carried out.

A specialist will explain how to ride, saddle (put the equipment on the horse), clean the animal, where and how to caress it, in short, everything necessary for the treatment and correct execution for the next activities to be carried out. .

**Objective:** Get familiar and create a bond between participants and horses.

### **Activity 2**

**Title:** Riding horse riding

**Description:** This activity is very important, since it is one of the most used exercises in relation to the taming and training of horses, so the game must begin with an instruction from a supervisor. The riding consists of conditioning the horse for the previous exercises to be developed with the use of a rope placed in the animal's mouth piece and the other end of the rope held by the performer, and a circle is made by the horse with its different airs.

**Objective:** Learn the fundamental basic for the control and training of the horse, creating a bond between horse and rider.

### **Activity 3**

**Title:** First Steps.

**Description:** In this activity, participants will receive classes to learn how to ride from specialized personnel and the steps of how to get on the horse, how to place the hands and aids to develop the basic gaits of the animal are specified.

**Objective:** Learn the fundamental basic s of riding and controlling the horse.

### **Activity 4**

**Title:** Horseback riding excursion

Description: In this activity, there will be an excursion to the Rancho México farm, in which the participants will be in close contact with nature, guided by a professional, which will allow the participants to interact and learn about the area and the management of the animals.

In addition, basic knowledge of the mechanics of the horse's three natural gaits will be revealed: the walk, the trot and the gallop. Likewise, the basic aid mechanisms will be explained, such as command voices, handling of the reins, use of the legs, basic driving rules, among others.

Objective: Promote motivation and encouragement among participants, where harmony, bonds of friendship and knowledge of general elements for horseback riding reign.

Development: The meetings will be held on weekends (Saturdays after 3 p.m., Sundays after 10 a.m.). The route will be prepared prior to the activity to be carried out.

### **Activity 5**

Title: Jumping demonstration

Description: This activity will be developed visually, that is, expectantly, since a competition will be held between professional riders as a spectacle and to promote the sport. In this activity, a circuit will be carried out by the riders in a friendly manner where the team that obtains the riders with the best positions will win.

Objective: To achieve knowledge of this sport as such and the motivation to practice it.

Development: The meetings will be held on weekends at 8:00 AM. The list of teams to participate will be prepared. It is noteworthy that it will be held on the track in the specialized area for horse riding.

### **Activity 6**

Title: Career interrupted

Description: It consists of seeing who reaches the finish line first, but with the following conditions: each horse must stop at the signage placed in the arena and must correctly answer a question that the person in charge of the activity will ask the participants, whoever wins arrives at the goal sooner.

Objective: Improve stress; achieve motivation and a recreational environment where both sexes can act.

Development: The meetings will be held on Saturdays at 10:00AM

### **Activity 7**

Title: The circuit

Description: It will be carried out by even teams of more than 3 members. In this game, participants must complete a numbered circuit placed on the track with obstacles (bars on the floor) in a time estimated by the activity guide. The team wins. with shorter times of its participants.

Objective: Achieve a pleasant recreation between the teams.

Development: The games will be held on Saturdays at 8:00AM

### **Activity 8**

Title: Pick your point

Description: It can be developed individually or collectively. In this game, different obstacles will be placed on the track in various positions without a logical order so that each player can develop their circuit in an ideal time, where each obstacle will have a value. The one who obtains the most points in the circuit will win.

Objective: Achieve harmony among all competitors who register to participate in the activity.

Development: The games will be held on weekends starting on Saturday, May 9 at 8:30 a.m. To carry it out, it is necessary to point out that both sexes can participate.



### **Activity 9**

Title: Couldn't fall

Description: In this game there will be two even teams where the riders will carry a ball with a spoon in their mouths where they must turn over a cone placed at a distance of 20 meters. Win the team that end first.

Objective: Promote motivation and encouragement among participants with the solidarity meeting, complying with the established rules.

Development: The meetings will be held on weekends. In the morning time

### **Activity 10**

Title: Barrel Race

Description: It is a type of race that can be done by any type of rider; The speed at which it is carried out will depend on it. The main objective is to learn to lead the horse, whether trotting, walking or galloping.

Objective: With this activity, the riders will achieve greater control of the horse in changes of direction

Development: The meetings will be held on weekends. In the morning time

Each of these activities will be developed to the extent that knowledge and familiarization with the horses is achieved, as well as with the utensils and instruments for the protection of the animal and the rider. With this proposal of activities to promote horse riding in the Calixto García municipality, the riders and general public who participate will learn the most basic and general aspects about horses and horse riding, which will favor their personal development. It is also intended to offer participants the possibility of getting started in the world of horse riding, both from a technical or sporting point of view, as well as from the recreational aspect and enjoyment of their leisure time. It will allow the acquisition of a certain equestrian culture and an important background in the management and care of horses, as well as encouraging the practice of this sport in such a way that the competitive culture that has remained in the municipality for more than two decades is kept alive.

## **IV. Conclusion**

Horse riding is a recreational activity that promotes both physical and mental health, in addition to allowing a close relationship with nature. Likewise, research regarding the topic under study is insufficient and is mainly evident in highly developed countries, which leaves gaps for new studies in order to encourage the practice of this sport as a recreational activity. Consequently, the lack of a proposal for activities to promote horse riding as a recreational activity and complement to agrotourism, as well as the lack of dissemination by the media, and the little support from institutions, prevent its management and implementation. in practice. The proposal of activities to promote horse riding as a recreational activity has the quality of combining several techniques and methods that favor the occupation of the leisure time of young people and adults, that takes advantage of the existing potential in the municipality and that has horse riding as a recreational outdoor activity. Through the application and implementation of the proposal to promote horse riding, the permanence of this sport in the municipality and its development as the intangible heritage of the town is achieved.

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