

EDUCATION THROUGH TOURISM-A SOLUTION OF SOCIO-CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GLOBALIZATION

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Abstract: *A brief analysis of main tourism educational offerings of higher education institutions in Romania reveals that, in general, those faculty curricula are deficient in terms of link with practice activities. In line with this reality, many employers in the area highlight the fact that young graduates have not acquired the skills necessary to apply theory in practice. On the other hand, participation in internships and practicing on their own various forms of tourism (ecological, cultural, religious, etc..) can contribute to the development of competencies, skills and positive behavior patterns that determine the formation of a winning mentality, creative individuals, innovators, with the strength of creative behavior models for their peers.*

Key words: *education, tourism, culture, identity, competencies*

JEL classification: *I25, L83*

Introduction

In the context of the knowledge economy, education is an important vector for creativity and innovation. Of course, to the extent that education is properly carried out on different levels, combining theory with practice through the curriculum.

Regarding the training of professionals in tourism, academics and practitioners opinions are divided. The analysis of various educational offers of higher educational institutions in our country shows that tourism disciplines are present in curriculum, accordingly ARACIS standards, but in the theme of each discipline, there are no details on how to combine theory with practice in this important sector for economic development. This is because tourism contributes to the material and spiritual needs of people, positively influencing the size and structure that consumption, physical and intellectual capacity recovery by rest, recreation, exercise, medical spa treatments etc..

However, *tourism is the most important and enjoyable way to spend free time* and use of vacation, holidays, week-ends, after retirement. In fact, tourism contribute to the enrichment level of training, knowledge of people, both tourists and host populations through contact with new cultures and civilizations.

Also, tourism is a major factor in promoting a peace climate, cooperation and understanding between nations. It involves meeting different people as religion, lifestyle, income, etc. On the other hand, the contact between people from different regions of a country can lead to a better understanding of each different style of life and a better appreciation of the specific problems of particular regions.

Therefore, tourism education is an important link to national education. Also, studies show that practicing various forms of tourism determines the development of positive behaviors, creative and innovative, which contributes to society development in general. In this respect, occurs and develops a new form of tourism: educational tourism.

Socio-cultural dimensions of tourism

Tourists play the role of cultural information vehicle, both of those from their own country, entering the host country, and those from visited country when return to their country of residence. In appreciation of its cultural side are taken into account the following nine **components of tourism environment**:

- *Language*. Ability and willingness to learn and use a foreign language gives the possibility to be interested and appreciate the culture of another country;
- *Traditions* that characterize a destination or a country is usually an element of interest to tourists who seek to know as much about the life and habits of the population of the country visited;
- *Handicraft* is a source of interest for tourists who want to know the origins of popular artistic inspiration from visited country. Handicrafts objects are bought by tourists and as a reminder or a representation of places visited;
- *Cuisine*. In most cases, experience a traditional cuisines at the tourist destination for visitors is a source of satisfaction and one of the most popular activities;
- *Art*, whether it is specific to a country or a culture or heritage reflects the spiritual heritage of the host community;
- *Historically*, spoken, written, printed in construction and architecture of a region, major events;
- *Activities and technology* – of a specific region, or as refers to past or present are a source of interest for tourists as it provides information on the economy and living standards of residents of tourist destinations;
- *Dominant religion* in a country influences conceptions of life but also has a tourist connotation by festivities and rituals organized by the host community. The spirituality of a people as a whole becomes accessible to tourists;
- *Architecture*. Provides architectural peculiarities of the material elements of cultural attributes in a given area. A particular architectural style is associated with a particular community or country or some concept of community aesthetic.

Tourism can be an alternative to the old culture, crafts, traditions, holidays, authentic locations (host population), by organizing local festivals with proper management. Thus increases chance to develop sympathy, tolerance and understanding between people. All these events can lead to the acquisition of income with minimal effort while satisfying the needs of tourists, resulting in sustained economic growth, creating jobs and reducing migration from some areas, especially rural areas.

It is true that in this context, the evolution behavior of the host population may pass through several states of euphoria from increased revenues due to the presence of tourists, in their toleration under the material benefits they bring, irritation due to the presence of too many tourists, to hostility, residents and tourists considering because of higher taxes, prices and crime, and finally acceptance, changes to the presence of tourists being accepted by the local population.

- contact opportunities - reciprocal attitude / behavior - social motivation / purpose of the trip - cultural characteristics			
Positive effects		Negative effects	
Social	Cultural	Social	Cultural
- establish a positive attitude - increase self-esteem of hosts / visitors - attenuates the	- cultural information exchange - develop a sense of pride for their culture but also	- lack of communication between communities - is installing the hosts feeling of	- culture shock - visitor culture imitating - culture commercialization - disrespectful

negative perception and prejudices - positive lifestyle changes	tolerance and respect for other cultures - cultural heritage protection	inferiority and superiority of the visitors - difficulty in establish friendship - egocentrism - negative modification of lifestyle - over-population - increase criminality - segregation, tension, hostility, violence	attitude and politeness, tranquility disturbing
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Figure 1. Social and cultural tourism effects

Source: Tourism, The State of the Art: The Travel Research Association Conference no. 6, 1998

Although tourism is beneficial overall, however, there are situations where peaceful and friendly host populations may react with hostility against tourists who constantly violate traditions and customs of the countries they visit.

Another effect is the loss of tourism hospitality due to the large number of tourists in a given area. In this case, the relationship between host population and tourists became a commercial one, tourism is transforming from a charity into a business activity. As a result, the practice of being hospitable to tourists or disappeared, or the resident population has taken protective measures to avoid being injured by his own generosity. If the areas are isolated, the arrival of too many tourists can cause local people to move to another area are not disturbed. To combat this phenomenon, governments have established rules of visiting these areas.

When cultural and socio-economic characteristics of tourists are very different from those of the local population, the results of their meeting can be good but can be explosive. Thus, tourists can seem as successful people, rich and sophisticated which determine the young population from the areas visited to want to look like her, trying to borrow behavior by imitating their values and ambitions. Effect of wealthy tourists on the host population may materialize in the latter's willingness to work hard or to achieve a high level of education to be the height of the tourist lifestyle. On the other hand, in many cases, failure, failure of local people to achieve the same level of development at the tourists can create frustration that can turn into hostility and, sometimes, aggression. But the saddest result of imitation is that those members of the resident population who react in this way remain, usually with dreams and ambitions that can not put into practice in their countries, leaving them disillusioned and unhappy with their lives. In attempts to residents with tourists like many of the customs and traditions are losing grounds. Moreover, in many developed areas, in extreme cases, tourism has completely destroyed the livelihoods of local people.

However, through tourism, which creates a special interest in this form of culture, it helps to keep these habits and save them from loss, from forgetfulness. In this way, tourism is a tool of this century nobleman who enjoys an international agreement. At the same time, **the socio-cultural, tourism can be affected by:**

- Change local identity and values;

- Marketing local culture, making tourism the local culture in commodities when religious traditions, local customs, festivals are reduced to the expectations of tourists resulting in so-called "reconstructed ethnicity";
- Standardization of destinations to meet the needs of tourists;
- Adjusting to cultural tourists by selling different products;
- Cultural conflicts due to economic disparity of locals and tourists, the latter spending more than a tourist destination site than usual;
- Local irritation because, often, tourists, out of ignorance or negligence, fail to respect local customs and moral values;
- Provide low-paid jobs of local people, lack of training, while foreigners are better paid jobs and benefits on a different level in the hierarchy of management.

However, merit social links between tourists and indigenous peoples which derive from a better understanding and goodwill among nations, was extrapolated as a major social benefit derived from tourism.

Tourist higher education or education through tourism

Many of the negative effects of tourism can be avoided by educating tourists about the natural resources and human value. When tourists rushed into everyday life and homes of the hosts, communication problems arise, differences in social, cultural, etc. It is therefore necessary tourist education. As such, *tourism has an educational component* as it involves intercultural exchange and understanding between people of different races, religions, cultures. **Educational motivation of tourism** includes:

- Participation in summer schools, winter schools, courses on culture, traditions of a country, which is opportunity meeting people from different countries, different cultures, and exposure and promote their traditions. On this occasion, representatives of city hall lectures, architects, historians, scholars on topics of interest to students. Foreigners attend classes through which teaches folk dances, crafts (pottery, carved wood, painted icons, etc.) Which reinforces the level of training;
- Participation in fellowships paid from own sources / government / private (NGOs) which causes an increase in the level of culture.

Tourism education is absolutely necessary because, on the one hand tourists are tempted to change their behavior, believing that they are on holiday, and on the other hand, they were considered by the host populations as rich people, are subject to robbery, violence, manipulation, theft, illness, etc. Therefore, governments, tour operators, airlines and service providers have a duty to visitors and residents to take appropriate action and inform to ensure that these risks are known. But not only these organizations and institutions have this purpose, but with specific tourism education institutions.

Thus, educational institutions in our country that train specialists in tourism must offer to beneficiary the opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills and abilities specific to tourism. In this respect, discipline programs (travel and beyond) must find ways to create tourist products, ways of efficient their marketing, modern methods of management and resource allocation in order to sustain tourism firm offers a lucrative tourist ways of managing relationships with all interested, but especially with clients, effective communication techniques and tactics with employees, suppliers, customers, partners, customer loyalty methods, ways to ensure tourism quality, methods human resource management, etc.

Beneficiaries during the studies are taught to apply the principles, norms and values of professional ethics within the company where they will be employed to develop its relational stock in a positive way and to continuous training in order to ensure a viable career in tourism field.

Of course, at first glance, it appears that there is a correlation between labor market requirements and curricula of higher education institutions, but many times, lack of financial resources is causing most of the beneficiaries of higher education can not participate effectively in many activities in the practical application of theory seminars organized, being forced to work to pay studies, and on the other hand, those who participate in courses and seminars can not apply knowledge in practice due to lack of financial resources by practicing various forms of tourism. This situation leads to the necessity of life along the specialists in travel by various means and methods of learning. Thus, specialists in tourism and not only can continue and improve specialized training by attending various educational programs offered by various short-term institutions, companies and organizations.

Tourism education can be both traditional and online education market because there are institutions offering educational programs and traditional on-line. Thus, there is an educational travel company site Mara Travel Group, which provides international camps for juniors, language courses abroad, tourism services, expert advice to study abroad. The emergence and development of this offer derives from the need to educate Romanians to become good citizens of the European Union, to be familiar with the different European culture, with English, in particular, but other European languages, to develop competencies, skills, models positive behavior, proactive efficient European market. Another company Mirunette International Education, working in tourism education and last year had a turnover of 1.1 million, up 60% from 2009, present since 2004, reveals the importance of this form of Travel to the Romanian economy.

Practicing some forms of tourism: cultural tourism, religious tourism, meetings, etc., are all ways of educating individuals. Thus, a definition of cultural tourism emphasizes just that tourists learn about the history and cultural heritage of others or way of life, about their thinking. The "learning" element is the central feature of cultural tourism. "Cultural" reasons of tourism include also search "novelty" and "education". The learning reason permits making differences between accidental tourists visiting tourist sites and tourists with specific cultural reasons that may be considered "culturally motivated tourists." An example of cultural tourism in Europe is provided by the event "A European Cultural Capital." The idea to designate a different city each year as "cultural capital" of Europe was launched in 1983. The origins of this event were purely cultural. The event aimed at bringing together citizens of Member States through culture. There were two main purposes: to make culture accessible to an audience of European cities and to create the image of a European culture as a whole. After 1990, the phenomenon of cultural tourism has become an economic rather valence, in that event Glasgow has been an economic success, primarily because of tourist receipts. As such, cultural tourism is not just a way to educate the masses (tourists and residents), but also a way to growth and promote the image of places and localities. Involving local people and the business community has become so crucial, and stimulating educational initiatives and cultural networks.

However, Bourdieu (1984) argues that to understand and appreciate cultural products, people must have a competency / cultural capital that allows them to recognize and interpret these products. This expertise is gained through growth, education and other forms of socialization.

Between the two notions education and cultural tourism is a closely linked. The definition of culture as an act of cultivation (Williams, 1983) emphasizes the strong connection between education and culture. Subsequent growth of the educational system offered the most effective means of transmitting cultural capital. The link between tourism and culture in education is strong. Increase foreign language teaching schools that offer both courses and a sample of local and national culture is a sign of

this relationship. Increase educational opportunities in Europe in the last 30 years, was one of the main factors stimulating cultural tourism.

In terms of *religious tourism*, nowadays, millions of people hit the road to the great pilgrimage centers located throughout the world. Religion was and is one of the reasons that lead people to start traveling. The popularity of the religious phenomenon in recent decades has made the pilgrimage to occupy an important part in international tourism and economic dynamics. Compared with other tourist activities phenomenon of religious tourism is an area little researched by specialists who believe that the market and marketing system is the least studied in the field. Only recently researchers, travel agencies and governments have significantly increased the number of passengers departing from sacred sites for religious reasons. Now the sacred places are seen as tourist attractions that can make profit due to passengers wishing to culture and history enthusiasts. There is a whole tourist literature promoting the sacred places, cathedrals, churches, mosques and pilgrimage routes. Promote these religious sites result was reflected in the large number of people who bought these destinations. After research revealed that they are not always driven on the road to spiritual reasons, some are eager for new experiences. The large number of suppliers who made the offer religious tourism packages in the industry to grow.

Educational tourism has emerged from the need to know several languages, familiarity with different cultures, cultural borrowing. This form of tourism aims of improving education, to improve the educational experience by offering scholarships abroad, offers tourist packages that include camps, excursions and language courses for all levels and specialization. The desire to assimilate the concepts, techniques, technologies, strategies and implementing them in their environment of origin and development of new technologies has generated not only the development of tourism education and tourism but creative. Many of the educational offerings that currently exist in our country (since 2004) aims to study foreign languages. For example, the study of English at Cambridge in the UK and Oxford Brookes University. There are programs offered by the Oxford offers programs such as "English and culture" in which in addition to daily English lessons are organized participation in shows, theaters, cultural visits and activities "International Student Lyceum" in which young people over 16 years entered the business world, management and culture (film, theater, photography, media, leadership, environment). They also offer education for Spanish, French, Italian, German, Russian, Portuguese and Chinese, but also to develop skills in other fields: fashion, riding, extreme sports, wine industry, tennis, arts (dance, drama, music, etc.).

As such, *the role of educational tourism* is that the places, people and events in fields such as literature, history, culture, religion, based on complete theoretical school through practical applications and welding education fulfilling the child and adult. Therefore, some entities acting in tourism with state institutions have developed educational tourism projects, encouraging teachers to make practical applications to museums, memorial houses, but also to visit various natural resources.

Tourism development through education

At first glance, it is difficult to rate relationship between two important coordinates socioeconomic measurable in any economy: tourism and education, but it is clear that this relationship is interdependent and proportionate. Changes in the tourism industry facilitate today a type of education, which means learning through direct experience, lifelong learning and the ability to use theoretical procurement practice. In fact, tourism has been awarded an educational role since ancient times by great civilizations. Thus, development of tourism contribute to the provision of tourist

destinations that tourists and provide a degree of knowledge areas, settlements, their history, positive models of behavior, patterns of heroes, successful models, etc.

The contribution of tourism to increase awareness can be achieved by:

- Contact with new cultures, traditions and customs;
- Avoid conflicts of social / environmental
- Respect for the specificity and local traditions;
- Respect the environment by moving within protected areas;
- Teambuilding's practice;
- Attention, care, volunteering, sensitivity, respect.

Increasing number of tourists in a region increases employment, infrastructure development, the educational offer for the preparation of specialists in this field. Thus, through summer schools, the language courses in educational institutions abroad, in camps and trips or educational tours organizing theme, individuals generally can strengthen knowledge, to develop practical skills and positive attitude, creative and innovative.

In some cases, tourism helps increase awareness about the value of local heritage, encourages social involvement and pride of the host population and a resulting interest in its preservation.

On the other hand, the educational process as a result of development of society in general, helped develop a new category of tourists made up of young students, professors, diplomats and officials who went to "travel knowledge" of new lands and experiences. For example, in the Elizabethan period, universities and state offered outstanding individuals - scholarships and travel authorization. Preferred route was going through the whole continent with destination Italy. So, the tourists were passing through Paris, Frankfurt, Florence, Rome, Naples, Venice, and Vienna. This route has become a cultural landmark in English society and there is no noble or wealthy young family who has not traveled this route. In fact, all forms of tourism have developed the desire for knowledge and education manifested over time by various civilizations.

Tourists educated are those who create positive effects in that they are aware of the values they encounter in their travels, participates in the development areas, without disturbing or negative change in local life.

Conclusions

In conclusion, through tourism, people make contact with different cultures, civilizations, the desire to learn, know, being reciprocal of the tourists and the host population. According to this theory, as tourism becomes an educational process which helps to maintain peace and sometimes even inspire oppressed peoples to change their political regimes.

Tourism contributes to the preservation and transmission of local traditions, the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, cultural, historical, representing the chance to protect the local heritage, the revitalization of native cultures, the arts and traditional crafts.

Moreover, tourism is a factor of social promotion, to improve habitat to maintain "savoir faire" – guide for creating handicrafts, for agricultural production, for the development of local lifestyle, is an open mind, is an evolution of mentalities.

Thus, tourism seen from the perspective of modern European individual, can be, through education, great chance in the vast process of unification, allowing people to get closer, to know each other, to discover other peers novelty of life and culture, to better understand those with whom they live, to fight this together, to save the natural and cultural heritage in the hope of maintaining and transmission as shown in the present (even improve, restore it, if possible).

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