

THE SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TOURISM EDUCATION AND TOURISM INDUSTRY

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Abstract

The relationship between tourism education and the tourism industry has changed over time. In previous decades, there has been less emphasis on how people travel in their own country or to another country for leisure purposes than today. However, not all countries are equally interested in these topics at present, one of the reasons being the differences in culture between nations. Tourism education is a field that has seen rapid growth and expansion in recent years. While the tourism industry is booming, tourism education is also transformed by new perspectives on how to teach students about tourism. This paper explores the relationship between tourism education and the tourism industry. Tourism is one of the largest sources of employment in many countries. Its industry plays an important role in the economic development, as it generates income and spreads wealth in all communities. Tourism education is a fast-growing field. It is important to understand the relationship between tourism education and the tourism industry, as well as the effects of the modernization of tourism programs. The upgraded curriculum will be more relevant to the life and career of students, but it will also provide a better understanding of how tourism fits around the world.

Keywords: *education in tourism, tourism industry, modernization, symbiotic relationship.*

1. INTRODUCTION

A major service sector is mirrored by tourism, a sector that requires skilled and high-performance staff for an intensive workforce indispensable in order to provide high-quality services, thus improving tourists' experiences (Crispin & Robinson, 2001; Yedla & Ajoon, 2022).

The tourism industry aspires to the possession, within the field of interest, of some students who acquire both practical and professional skills, and tourism education has an extremely high importance in their preparation. The tourism industry is making extensive use of the workforce and the educational activities within tourism offer students the chance to put into practice the

information learned throughout the courses. In this way, learners can develop their personal and professional skills. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the importance of the educational activity in tourism, to present both the industry and tourism education with their due importance and role in the tourism sphere, but also the close connection between the educational environment and the tourism industry (Christou, 2002).

Industry is defined by a production process and a generic product. So, it is useful to prove that such a process and generic product exists. This generic tourist production starts with raw inputs, develops through intermediate inputs and outputs, until it becomes a final output, more precisely the experience of the tourist itself.

The tourism industry includes, according to the definition offered by the Glossary of Tourist Terms of the World Tourism Organization, all the units that have as their main activity, the activity characteristic of tourism. More specifically, the tourism industry represents the total number of enterprises that provide direct goods or services in order to facilitate leisure activities away from the everyday environment (Yermachenko & Korzhylov, 2015).

The structural elements of the tourism industry could take the form of the following diagram:

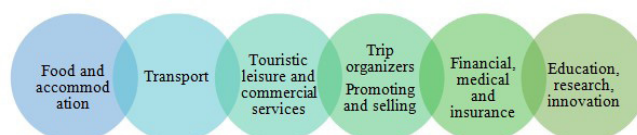


Fig.1. Structural elements of the tourism industry

Thus, from the interdependence of these structural components from a socio-cultural point of view, it appears that the end consumer presents a set of values represented by the

tourism product and has as main purpose the satisfaction in the best conditions of the touristic needs and desires of the population.

It is precisely this interference that gives value to the tourism product through complexity and heterogeneity, achieving a unitary whole necessary in supporting and capitalizing on this industry. In this regard, a brief description of the structural elements of this industry, the role and the importance of this time is useful.

Food and accommodation are considered the basis of the tourist product, indispensable components during travels.

Food can be harnessed both individually and in association with accommodation services and requires a wide range of types of food establishments to meet as many needs as possible.

The accommodation services, through the accommodation units, have the role of a temporary residence of the consumers, ensuring both hygiene and rest conditions, as well as possibilities of enjoying leisure time within the accommodation unit.

The infrastructure is represented by transport, a basic component in the design of the touristic product, through the fact of access ways, means of tourist transport and means of public transport, telecommunications installations etc., which have the role of ensuring easy access to the tourist areas, of guaranteeing comfort and all the facilities necessary for the modern life of tourists. With its production, a series of economic activities are generated, which presents us with the importance of transport for the economic sector of services (Woods & Sciarini, 2006).

Leisure services are the basic motivation of the trip expressed through recreation, entertainment, pleasant leisure, at various exhibitions, fairs, amusement parks, botanical or zoological gardens, etc. intertwined with different trade activities.

The travel organizers represent the intermediaries of the touristic activity and have a special importance for both direct providers and consumers, an importance given by ensuring the smooth running of the trading, the travel organizers being thus the main facilitators of the sale-purchase process.

The promotion and sale of tourism products and services is carried out by tour operators by ensuring a diversity and availability of the offer of tourism products and services on the tourist market. Most of the time the promotion of products is done by companies specializing in advertising. These companies are also closely engaged in the study of the tourism market, consumer trends and the study of the targeted customer segments.

Financial, health and insurance organizations are necessary for travellers throughout the trip and are expressed through banking services such as transactions, currency exchanges, medical services, in case of health problems occurred during the stay and last but not least insurance services of different types such as luggage insurance, health, etc (Airey & Tribe, 2005).

A vital role in the tourism sector is represented by tourism education, which has the capacity to manifest both directly and indirectly within the aforementioned sector (Yelda & Ajoon, 2002). Since the 1960s, a succession of significant changes in society, tourism and education have led to the emergence of tourism education, but also to its spread on a global scale (Kırlar-Can et al., 2021). Thus, the need for qualified and efficient personnel in the field of tourism led to the emergence of a professional education in tourism.

Vocational education is an important element in the repression of unemployment and in the improvement of economic growth. Thus, during the 1980s, there was a boom in professional courses and programs in this field.

On the other hand, tourism education has emerged as a necessity in supporting the tourism industry, by providing labour indispensable to the satisfaction of the needs and desires of consumers. It appeared in the first instance in the form of professionalization courses that delivered a series of skills in the field of tourism, after which, later, tourism education gained an important place in the educational industry through the practical and theoretical training of the educable, on different levels and types of specializations.

Tourism education is a process that provides the educable with a set of principles and skills

necessary for analysis, interpretation and evaluation in tourism (Kırlar-Can et al., 2021).

2. CORRELATIONS BETWEEN TOURISM EDUCATION AND THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

Historically, the relationship between tourism education and the tourism industry is a complex one, characterized by a lack of trust. However, both increasingly recognise the mutual benefits brought about by the development of a more cooperative relationship, but also the importance of bridging the gap that existed between them. The need to satisfy both industry and academic stakeholders has particular implications for the provision of tourism education, unlike in areas such as geography or history, being considered more traditional (Cooper et al., 1992; Airey, 2005).

In order to accept tourism as an economically and environmentally viable activity, students must be educated in this regard opposition to many forms of tourism and its development has increased in recent years around the world, opposition reflecting the growing awareness of some of the most negative effects of tourism that can spill over to the industry (Cooper et al., 1992).

Industry and education must ensure that the tourism industry is acceptable, but also strengthen the human resources of the industry, which is why they must work together in a symbiotic partnership. Therefore, the need for educators and trainers in the field of tourism to strengthen the links with the industry and provide continuous education for those who already work in the field of travel and tourism is poorly supported (Cooper & Westlake, 1998).

Over the past 40 years, there has been a rapid increase in the supply of higher education in tourism, but despite this increase, there is still uncertainty about the content and nature of tourism diplomas, as well as the adaptation of tourism education and the needs of the tourism industry. Although there has been some discussion about the design of the suggested curriculum and higher education in tourism, the effectiveness of these discussions in meeting the needs of the industry has been neglected.

It is claimed that tourism education offers opportunities for awareness and a desire to get involved in the tourism industry, with suggestions on how to do this by introducing relevant considerations into textbooks, courses and industry situations. It explores the potential of tourism education to encourage recognition by the tourism industry and its ability to contribute to a more harmonious and peaceful world (Airey & Nightingale, 1981a).

Tourism education is relatively new and remains at an early stage of its evolution. Education for tourism focuses on the process that provides a set of principles and skills necessary to evaluate and analyse, that is, to develop the capacities of the student and encourage the understanding of conceptual problems in order to contribute to professional and intellectual development. While training and education have evolved independently from a theoretical point of view, practical training and education are strongly maintained: higher level education, for example, training in practical skills is considered essential by industry and this is reflected in the integration of an industrial year or professional stage in most of the course structure at grade level (Cooper & Westlake, 1998; Rovelstad, 1982).

3. ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTS OF TOURISM EDUCATION ON THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

Table 1. Importance and levels of the Education Background

STD	Educational resources	CVB
1.60	Previous experience	1.29
1.65	College Graduate	1.72
2.55	Lifelong learning	2.00
2.73	Postgraduate	3.04
7%	High school level	18%
7%	Post-secondary level	12%
40%	Undergraduate level	68%
34%	Master level	8%
2%	PhD level	4%

Source: Hospitality Administration and Management Commons, International and Area Studies Commons, Recreation, Parks and Tourism Administration Commons, Sustainability Commons, Tourism Commons and the Tourism and Travel Commons.

According to this study, respondents were asked to assess the importance of education levels and the highest level they followed (Table 1 presents the rankings). The level of education obtained was similar in both parts, with a more advanced level of education for the state's tourism directors.

The percentage of respondents who have a college degree or other higher education is 76% and 80%, respectively. In conclusion, they benefit both from jobs and from a high level of appreciation for their university studies (Airey & Johnson, 1999).

The directors were asked to list five previous positions, as both groups indicated that previous experience was an important tool for their evolution. The CVB directors stated that their previous positions were in the field of sales, tourism management, public relations officials, consultants, research directors, political party

officials, mayors, house of commerce officials, etc. Instead, state tourism executives listed positions in advertising, education, hotel management and sales, etc. The difference between the two groups is that CVB directors have more managerial experience than state tourism directors (Amoah & Baum, 1997).

There is no real agreement between the government, industry and academia on what actually constitutes the tourism industry – they only agree that tourism is extremely diverse in terms of the range of sectors it represents, it also encompasses the variety of organisations it incorporates.

Tourism covers several industrial sectors and therefore there are different interpretations of employment categories at different skill levels, and therefore the specifics of the needs of each industry subsector are significantly different (Cooper & Westlake, 1998).

Table 2. Attitudes regarding travel diplomas and undergraduate curriculum

Statements	Respondents	Attitudes					Chi-Square Test
			Agreement	Neutral	Agreement	N/a	
A degree in tourism is beneficial for managing a tourism business.	Travel Educators	Frequency	1	4	32	0	0.007
		Percentage	2.7%	10.8%	86.5%	0.0%	
	Travel Managers	Frequency	30	55	113	2	
		Percentage	15.0%	27.5%	56.5%	1.0%	
The curriculum of a bachelor's degree in tourism is relevant to the needs of the tourism industry.	Travel Educators	Frequency	2	6	29	0	0.027
		Percentage	5.4%	16.2%	78.4%	0.0%	
	Travel Managers	Frequency	19	70	104	7	
		Percentage	9.5%	35.0%	52.0%	3.5%	

Source: Jia Wang, Helen Ayres & Jeremy Huyton (2010) *Is Tourism Education Meeting the Needs of the Tourism Industry? An Australian case study*, *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 22:1, 8-14, DOI: 10.1080/10963758.2010.10696964

According to the statistical data in Table 2 it was noted that there is a difference between the point of view of educators and that of industry professionals regarding the benefit of the degree in tourism (0.007). A difference was also identified

between the views of the two parties on the importance of the tourism curriculum (0.027).

The results of this research study are consistent with the conclusions of Airey (1998), who found that tourism education was criticized

by industry that it does not adequately prepare people in order to be employed in the field. Negative attitudes on the part of the tourism industry regarding diplomas and curriculum directly and indirectly influence employment in the field of tourism. This study explains why, in the industry survey, more than half of the respondents indicated that their travel organizations/companies employed less than 20% of people who graduated in tourism (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2004).

The results of this study reveal considerable discrepancies between the views of industry professionals and tourism education on the relative value of tertiary diplomas for tourism and on the relative merits of various previous subjects at the university (Airey & Nightingale, 1981b).

This research points to a gap between the provision of education and the needs of the industry. A curriculum of cooperation between industry and education needs to be well established to ensure a closer relationship between academia and industry.

John Dewey stated about education that "All waste is because of isolation" in his work "School and Society". The so-called waste from tourism education is due to the lack of practical learning. If graduates of tourism education cannot apply their knowledge and skills in a practical way and are also unable to meet the needs of the tourism industry, then tourism education is really useless (Halloran, 1991).

Undoubtedly, tourism education must be based on a solid relationship with the tourism industry.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this paper identified the relationship between tourism education and tourism industry, as a criticism in the development of tourism education.

In the future, the increase in the supply of tourism courses and the increase in the number of students seem to be in a continuous development, while tourism education is improved. There is still a need to overcome concerns regarding the quality and teaching of

courses. While there is an obvious quality and standardization benefits associated with this trend, concerns arise that innovation will stagnate, tourism will continue to be oriented towards an imperative vocational, and rigid prescription will discourage the application of the principles that fit local contexts (Cooper & Westlake, 1998; Busby, 2005).

Given the progression of the relationship between education and industry, both should benefit as following: industry will profit from a professional workforce led by competent managers, and education will begin to develop and gain credibility (Cooper & Westlake, 1998).

Finally, it is important that industry and education work together as partners to improve the image of the industry among potential employees. The traditional role of the public sector in the training of tourism managers and the frontline staff of the future could change through budget cuts, so industry and education need to better cooperate with other tourism "stakeholders," such as the community and the consumer.

The main objective, therefore, remains the development of tourism education in close accordance with the tourism industry, which presents itself in an increasingly dynamic way, thus reducing the sensitivity to change, but also the establishment of a stable environment, attracting and maintaining in this way a capable and efficient workforce.

One of the most reforming experiences that an individual can practice is education, the opportunity to learn. Through education, regardless of its level or type, it will transform the person participating in the educational process in a highly positive way.

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