

NOVELTY AND PERSPECTIVES ON THE IMPACT OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN THE TOURISM EDUCATION CURRICULUM

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Abstract

The skills required by the industry can be significantly different from those learned in tourism education, which is why assessing the needs of the industry and including it in the curriculum is important. In this work, an analysis of the specialized literature was made from the perspective of the evaluation of the curriculum, the development of innovative study programs, curriculum design and also the limits and trends of curriculum modernization to the current requirements related to the tourism industry were identified. Thus, the modernisation of the tourism curriculum is essential to adapt to the demands of the labour market and to provide young graduates with current and relevant skills and knowledge in order to be competitive on the market. Integrating technology and business games into teaching various subjects in tourism can improve learning and prepare students for the challenges of the tourism industry.

Keywords: *skills, curriculum, tourism education, tourism industry.*

1.INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an industry that is expanding rapidly and has a significant impact on the global economy. That is why training and preparing young people for careers in this industry is essential. The tourism curriculum plays an important role in this regard, and research focuses on the impact of the tourism industry on it, quality assessment in tourism, the development of innovative study programs, curriculum design, curricular frameworks and the limits of the tourism curriculum in terms of its modernization. Quality assessment in tourism is essential to improve training in this area. Research focuses on identifying quality standards and on measuring them. Research also focuses on the development of innovative study programmes which are relevant to the tourism industry and help prepare young people for careers in this field. Curriculum design and curricular

frameworks play a significant role in improving the quality of training in tourism. It is important to ensure that the curriculum and curricular frameworks are adapted to the requirements of the tourism industry and that they cover all aspects relevant to preparing young people for careers in this field. However, there are also limits to the modernisation of the tourism curriculum. These limits need to be addressed through research and resolution to ensure that training in tourism is at the industry level. For example, there is a limited number of resources available for curriculum upgrades, and there are often problems with standardisation and accessibility.

Regardless of the fact that tourism education has become more widespread, especially at the college level, discussions have focused on the curriculum and the path it should follow (Inui et al., 2006). *"Debates over tourism programs at universities appear to centre on the balance between vocational and academic focus. Tourism courses in higher education are often referred to as vocational (Busby, 2001) with educators mainly focusing on producing skilled and knowledgeable personnel for the industry. This emphasis has given short shrift to the value or meaning of tourism education."* (Wattanacharoensil, 2013).

In the tourism industry, there is a growing need for staff who went through training and education. The skills required for the business are, however, significantly different from what is taught in the tourism education of institutions, according to recent research. Assessing the needs and requirements of the industry and including industry in curriculum design represent significant problems for the schools that provide tourism education. This article looks at the prospects of education, skills and training required for those

working in the field of tourism and asks whether the programs offered in higher education effectively meet the requirements of the sector. Finding this “gap” will facilitate the creation of tourism education programs that meet the demands of the industry (Jugmohan, 2010).

The perception of the tourism industry on the tourism curriculum varies, but it is generally considered that it must be as close as possible to the requirements and needs of the field, so that graduates are prepared to face the challenges of the industry. It may include practical courses and projects which reflect real-life situations in the tourism industry, as well as collaborations with companies in the field in order to provide students with opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills gained. It is important that the curriculum is adapted to developments in the industry and encompasses aspects related to technology, sustainability, and quality management.

The focus of the pedagogical study was on the origins of tourism career in education, the need to expand the curriculum from its business-oriented origins, and the emergence of tourism as a distinct academic subject, as a field of study in specialized education, generally for people aged 16 - 18. The question of whether the study of tourism can be considered a “real” academic subject, as well as what the curriculum should and can guide, have been raised alongside this debate. The rapid expansion of existing knowledge has been one of the most observable trends for people working in tourism teaching over the past decade. This has been expressed in an expansion into the body of literature, as well as new and creative approaches to curriculum design (Fidgeon, 2010).

2. RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Some of the research directions on the impact of the tourism industry on the tourism curriculum could be: analysis of the needs of the tourism industry, assessment of the quality of the curriculum, development of innovative study programs. Research in this area could focus on the analysis of the needs and requirements of the tourism industry, in order to determine what are

the skills and abilities required for the graduates of tourism study programs. This can be achieved through questionnaires addressed to employers in the industry and by analysing the trends in the field. Other research directions could assess the effectiveness of the curriculum in tourism and its impact on graduates. This can be achieved through case studies or by interviewing graduates of the tourism study programs in order to determine whether or not they have acquired skills necessary to cope with the demands of the industry. Another research perspective could be focused on the development of innovative study programs that reflect the requirements and trends of the tourism industry. This may include, for example, programs that integrate technology and aspects of sustainability and social responsibility into the curriculum.

The need for a more complex approach to human resource management is becoming increasingly obvious in the tourism sector, and this is reflected in a new approach to education and training of the workforce. The value of education as a fundamental step in the creation of human capital has increased, (Wang et al., 2010). The needs of the tourism industry in terms of tourism curriculum may vary depending on the region and the specificity of the field, but in general, one can identify needs such as the assimilation of technical skills, communication skills, knowledge about culture and traditions, knowledge regarding sustainability and social responsibility, as well as management skills. Thus, the tourism industry needs employees who know the specific techniques and technologies in the field, such as the management of reservation systems or the development of innovative tourism products. Employees in the tourism industry need excellent communication skills in order to interact with customers, partners and colleagues. They also need to know the culture, history and traditions of the tourist destination to provide information and recommendations to tourists. The tourism industry faces challenges related to the impact that tourism has on the environment and local communities, so employees need to be aware and know various ways of managing this impact. The tourism industry staff need management skills to effectively manage projects, teams and

resources. Therefore, it is important for the tourism curriculum to reflect the specific needs of the industry and give students the opportunity to acquire the skills required to meet these needs.

3. QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN TOURISM

The word “quality” is frequently used in everyday speech, but it can have many connotations. The definition of quality includes an attribute, an essential or distinctive property; a character in terms of perfection, finesse or degree of superiority (Butowski, 2018).

The evaluation of the quality of the curriculum in tourism involves the verification of its effectiveness and relevance in relation to the requirements and needs of the tourism industry. This can be done through several methods, such as: graduate feedback, employer analysis, case studies, continuous curriculum verification. Thus, interviewing graduates of tourism study programs can provide information about the effectiveness of the curriculum in preparing them for careers in the tourism industry. Questioning employers in the tourism industry can provide information about their needs in terms of skills and abilities required by employees. The analysis of projects and real situations in the tourism industry can provide information about how the curriculum is applied in practice. The continuous verification of the tourism curriculum can be achieved by monitoring the trends and developments in the industry and by adapting the curriculum according to them.

The purpose of assessing the quality of the tourism curriculum is to ensure that it reflects the needs and requirements of the industry and that graduates are prepared to meet these needs. The evaluation can be carried out by educational institutions with tourism profile or by external organizations specialized in evaluating study programs.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF INNOVATIVE STUDY PROGRAMS

The development of innovative study programs that reflect the requirements and trends in the tourism industry involves aspects

such as: research and monitoring, consultation with employers, collaboration with educational institutions with tourism profile and tourism industry, inclusion of current technologies and trends, continuous evaluation. In this way, trends and requirements in the tourism industry must be identified through the research and monitoring of developments and changes in the field; it is necessary to consult with employers in the tourism industry who can provide valuable information about their needs in terms of skills and abilities required by employees; it is useful to collaborate with educational institutions in the field of tourism and tourism industry that can offer the opportunity to integrate practice and knowledge from industry into the curriculum; Indispensable is the integration of current technologies and trends in the tourism industry that can give students the opportunity to learn about the innovative ways of managing the tourism business. Finally, the continuous evaluation of the curriculum can provide the opportunity to adapt the study program according to the developments and changes in the tourism industry.

Process innovations often refer to behind-the-scene projects with the aim of increasing productivity, efficiency and flow. The cornerstone of conventional process innovation is the use of technology, sometimes in combination with redesigned workspaces for manual tasks. The basis of many technological advances in recent decades has been information and communication technology (ICT), which has also attracted a significant segment of interest in research with its own agendas and organizations (Hjalager, 2010).

The purpose of developing innovative study programs is to give students the opportunity to learn about current trends and technologies in the tourism industry and to prepare for effective careers in this field. This can be achieved through collaboration between tourism education providers, the tourism industry and external organizations specializing in the development of innovative study programs. Other important research directions for the tourism curriculum can also be outlined, such as: adaptability to changes in the tourism industry, integration of technology and

digitalization, cultural diversity and social responsibility, development of new fields of study, impact on the local economy and community. In this regard, studies in this area could assess the capacity of the tourism curriculum to adapt to rapid and continuous changes in the industry, including technology, consumer trends and market requirements, explore how technology and digitalisation are integrated into the tourism curriculum, as well as their impact on the skills of the graduates. They could also examine how the tourism curriculum addresses cultural diversity and social responsibility in the tourism industry, investigate the need to develop new fields of study in tourism, such as medical tourism or green tourism, and how they are integrated into the curriculum. They assess the long-term impact of the tourism curriculum on the local economy and the community, as well as the way in which they are taken into account in the development of the curriculum.

The logical sequence of the research approach could arrange the proposed research directions in a relevant manner from different optics. A first approach of particular significance is the adaptability to the changes in the tourism industry. This direction could be marked because assessing the curriculum's ability to adapt to changes in the industry represents the key to ensuring a meaningful and up-to-date education. The integration of technology and digitalisation could be further addressed in a notable way as technology and digitalisation represent important factors in the evolution of the tourism industry. The impact on the local economy and community involves studying the long-term impact of the curriculum on the local economy and community, thus being able to help make informed decisions in curriculum development. Addressing cultural diversity and social responsibility can help create a well-balanced curriculum that takes into account the global and social context of the tourism industry. The analysis of the need to develop new fields of study in tourism can ultimately be addressed as it can be influenced by changes in the industry and by the impact of the curriculum on the local economy and community.

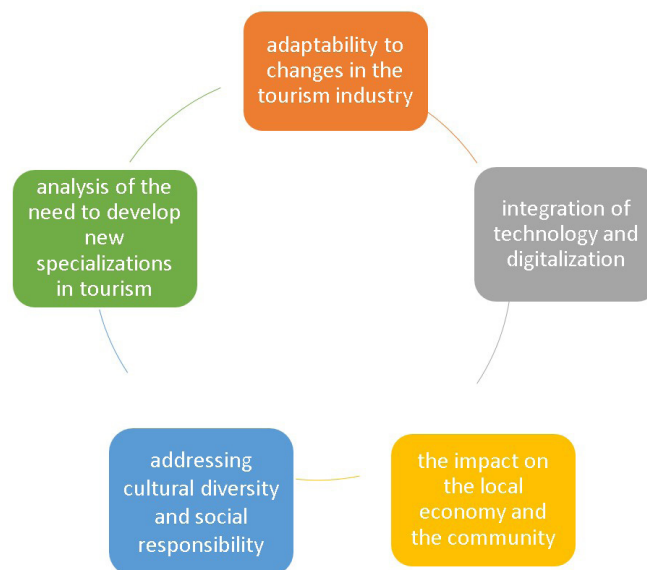


Fig. 1. Research directions

Specific problems to be developed for each research direction:

1. Adaptability to changes in the tourism industry:
 - a. Continuous assessment of the relevance of the curriculum for the current tourism industry.
 - b. Identify ways to integrate rapid changes in the industry into the curriculum.
 - c. Developing a mechanism for the regular evaluation and update of the curriculum.
2. Integrating technology and digitalisation:
 - a. Identifying key digital technologies and applications in the tourism industry.
 - b. Developing a curriculum that encourages the use and understanding of technology and digitalisation.
 - c. Assessing how technology and digitalisation affect the interaction between tourists, industry and communities.
3. Impact on the local economy and community:
 - a. Analysis of how the tourism industry affects the local economy and surrounding communities.
 - b. Identifying approaches to support the sustainable development of the tourism industry in communities.
 - c. Developing a curriculum that encourages respect for and support for the sustainable development of communities.
4. Cultural diversity and social responsibility:

- a. Analysis of how the tourism industry affects cultural diversity.
 - b. Identifying approaches to support and encourage cultural diversity in the tourism industry.
 - c. Develop a curriculum that addresses the social and cultural responsibility of the tourism industry.
5. Development of new fields of study:
- a. Analysis of the current and future needs of the tourism industry in terms of fields of study.
 - b. Identifying ways of developing new fields of study in tourism.
 - c. Developing a curriculum that encourages the development of new fields of study in tourism.

“... deliver efficient and effective tourism services, attempt a comprehensive understanding of the tourism phenomenon while at the same discharging the role of stewardship for the development of the wider tourism world in which these services are delivered” (Airey & Tribe, 2013). Airey and Tribe refer to the objective of providing efficient and effective tourism services, while trying to fully understand the tourism phenomenon and fulfil the role of preservation for the development of the entire tourist world in which these services are delivered. Thus, the efficiency and effectiveness of tourism services refers to the ability to provide, quickly and efficiently, quality services to customers, in accordance with their standards and expectations.

5. CURRICULUM DESIGN AND EXPECTATIONS OF INDUSTRY AND EDUCATORS

The assessment of the industry needs and requirements and the inclusion of industry in curriculum design is a significant problem for schools offering tourism education (Jugmohan 2010, pp. 34 – 41). The global perspective of the tourism curriculum aims to develop in students' intercultural skills and knowledge, to understand the impact of tourism on society and the environment, as well as to develop strategic and critical thinking on tourism planning, development and management. This curriculum

should cover topics such as tourism geography, tourism anthropology and sociology, ethics and social responsibility in tourism, tourism marketing and management of tourist destinations.

Curriculum definitions range from Taylor and Richards, who define it as what is taught, while Tribe sees it as an entire educational experience included in the study program (Tribe, 2002). Gunn defines it as a series of training courses that lead to the graduation, certification or obtaining of a similar diploma or attestation (Gunn, 1998; Wattanacharoensil, 2014).

Curriculum design represents the systematic process of planning and developing the content of an educational program, including objectives, content, learning methods and evaluation. Curriculum design is based on research and constant evaluation, as well as on adaptation to the needs of industry and society. Its goal is to create a relevant and effective educational program that provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to excel in their careers.

There are several design models for the tourism curriculum, among which we can also mention: the skill model that emphasizes the development of the practical skills necessary in the tourism industry, such as communication with customers, planning and organizing excursions; the competence model that focuses on developing the interpersonal skills, such as teamwork and problem solving, required in the tourism industry; the interdisciplinary model that integrates several fields of study, such as geography, economics and sociology, in order to provide a broad perspective on the tourism industry; the model of practical experiences that includes internships and practical projects, giving students the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained in real-life situations; the global model that focuses on the global aspects of the tourism industry, such as sustainable tourism and its impact on culture and the environment.

Curriculum design is an important process in creating an education program specialized in tourism that meets the current needs of the industry and that provides graduates with the necessary skills to integrate into the market. In

this process, it is important to take into account the expectations of both industry and educators. Industry expectations can be identified through programme evaluation reports, market studies, employer reports, and through a direct dialogue with the industry representatives. These may include specific skill needs such as technical knowledge, communication skills, interpersonal skills and cultural knowledge. The expectations of educators focus on delivering a program that gives graduates a deep understanding of the tourism industry as an integrated system, as well as a set of solid theoretical and practical skills. This can be achieved through a well-structured curriculum, including basic modules such as tourism economics, tourism management and tourism geography, as well as optional modules that meet the specific needs of the industry.

Continuous assessment of the relevance of the curriculum is essential to ensure that it meets the needs of the industry and that it provides graduates with the necessary skills to integrate into the market. This can be achieved through specific research methods such as market studies, employer reports and graduate studies.

Thus, in order to design an ideal educational programme in tourism, it is necessary to take into account the expectations of both industry and educators, as well as to carry out a continuous assessment of the relevance of the curriculum to ensure that it provides graduates with the necessary skills.

6. FRAMEWORKS

Numerous curricular frameworks have been presented by various academics. Tribe (2002) provided a useful framework for classification and curricular analysis with reference to the study of tourism. He conceptualized the curriculum in terms of two spatial dimensions, purpose and attitude, within this framework. The final component is divided into liberal and vocational groups. A vocational curriculum focuses on practical skills for a particular profession or occupation, as mentioned by Dredge et al. (2012). A liberal arts curriculum, on the other hand, aims to promote autonomous, critical thinking and the development of general

knowledge. The components of contemplation and action of the position dimension express the different ways in which the conclusion of the curriculum is promoted. Four important areas can be found by combining these two dimensions. (Yusu et al., 2018).

According to Dredge et al. (2012), while the vocational reflection curriculum emphasizes reflection, assessment and adjustment of skills and knowledge in the tourism industry, the vocational action curriculum aims at preparing students for performance in the workplace. Finding those fundamental rules for the best way of building a phenomenon and maintaining a healthy scepticism about these rules are the main objectives of academic reflection. On the other hand, academic work requires going higher and further to implement new knowledge and criticism of the tourism industry. Although students can follow many educational pathways through each of the four areas on their own, Dredge et al. (2012) noted that the four should be combined into a curriculum model.

Curricular frameworks are governmental or organizational structures that establish educational standards and objectives for various fields of study or curricula. They serve as a guide for curriculum development and student performance evaluation.

Some examples of this could be: the National Standards for Education that set the objectives and content for each level and field of study in public education; The National Curriculum of Studies that establishes the objectives and content for each level and field in public education; The European Curricular Framework that provides a common perspective on the objectives and content for various subjects in education in the European Union. These are just a few examples, and curricular frameworks vary by country or region. Their aim is to ensure the coherence and quality of education, as well as to provide students with the necessary skills and knowledge to be prepared for professional and personal life.

The main areas of the body of knowledge that would be acceptable to both academics and tourism industry practitioners are the following: Tourism Geography, Tourism Marketing, Tourism Economics, Tourism Destinations Management, Cultural and Tourism Heritage

Studies, Tourism Behavioural Studies, Environmental Studies and Sustainability in Tourism, Information Technology in Tourism.

Their importance is evident from the fact that Tourism Geography provides an understanding of the tourist space and relationship between tourism and the environment, Tourism marketing is crucial for attracting and retaining customers, Tourism Economy examines the economic impact of tourism on a region or a country, Tourism Destinations Management focuses on planning and sustainable development of the tourist area, Cultural and tourism heritage studies research the role and importance of culture and heritage in tourism, Tourism behavioural studies investigate the motivations and behaviour of tourists, Environmental studies and sustainability in tourism assess the impact of tourism on the environment and its sustainable approach, Information technology in tourism is essential to improving efficiency and the tourist experience.

7. THE LIMITS OF THE TOURIST CURRICULUM FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF ITS MODERNIZATION

A first limitation of the tourism curriculum in terms of its modernization is given by the lack of interdisciplinary approach. Thus, the tourism curriculum may not provide an integrated perspective on the impact of tourism on different areas, such as the environment, economy, society and culture. The second limitation is marked by the neglect of technology, where the tourism curriculum may not include modern approaches to information technology in tourism, which is becoming increasingly important in the field of tourism. The third limitation is the absence of the development of practical skills. The tourism curriculum may focus too much on theory and not provide enough opportunities to develop the practical skills required in the tourism industry. The fourth limitation may refer to the lack of attention paid to diversity. A potential scenario could be that the tourism curriculum does not include approaches to diversity and inclusiveness in tourism, which are important to guarantee a sustainable and inclusive tourism industry. The fifth limitation involves neglecting ethical issues,

where the tourism curriculum may not include detailed discussions about ethical and social responsibility issues in tourism, which are crucial to guaranteeing responsible and sustainable tourism.

8. NEW TRENDS IN TOURISM EDUCATION IN THE COMING YEARS

“... tourism curricula should embrace a future orientation ..., offer students the chance to emerge as “future-shapers” equipped for the present but also able and willing to make a difference in the future, ... to be creative and innovative or even visionary and utopian” (Marinov & Dogramadjieva, 2013).

As the above quote expresses, educational programming in the field of tourism should be future-oriented, its purpose should be to prepare students to become “trainers of the future,” ready to act in the present, but also endowed and justified to contribute to the creation of a better future through innovation, creativity, and even through utopian visions.

The new trends in tourism education in the coming years can therefore mean the integration of technology, more specifically, the use of digital technology and artificial intelligence to improve learning processes and provide a personalized experience; the experiential approach, which emphasizes learning through experience and exploration, instead of traditional teaching; case studies and practical projects that allow students to apply knowledge and skills in real situations, providing an insight into the field of tourism; development of soft skills, which means a development of interpersonal skills and communication skills, as well as of other non-technical skills, which will become increasingly important; the focus on sustainability expressed through the sustainable and responsible approach to tourism, thus becoming a central element in the tourism education of the future.

9. PERSPECTIVES OF THE TOURISTIC CURRICULUM

The tourism curriculum can be analysed from several perspectives, these including: the

humanist perspective, an approach that emphasizes the importance of the personal development of students through learning about the culture and diversity of tourism; the technological perspective which focuses on how technology influences and supports the tourism industry, through planning, organization and management processes; the economic perspective that emphasizes the importance of tourism as an economic sector, analysing its impact on the national and world economy and how tourism resources can be optimized and managed; the ecological perspective which analyses the impact of tourism on the environment and the ways in which it can be managed in a sustainable manner; the social perspective with an approach focused on how tourism influences and is influenced by society through relationships between tourists, local communities and cultures. All these perspectives are important in developing a complete education in the field of tourism, offering students an integrated understanding of this complex and dynamic field.

10. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, we can note that the modernization of the tourism curriculum is necessary in order to adapt to the market requirements and help to train competent specialists, the inclusion of technology and digitalisation in the curriculum can help to better prepare the educable for the tourism industry. It is important to pay additional attention to the development of soft skills, as well as communication and teamwork, to be prepared for roles in the tourism industry. Also of particular importance is the inclusion of practice and practical projects in studio programs, which can give students the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom, but also the incorporation of interdisciplinary modules, such as marketing, management and culture, can help to better understand the role of tourism in the economy and society. Studying cases and case studies in the tourism industry can give students a realistic perspective on the

shortcomings and opportunities of this industry. Last but not least, the modernization of the tourism curriculum can contribute to the training of specialists able to address complex problems and propose innovative solutions for the tourism industry.

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