

## Educational Tourism: Tribute to Fashion or New Educational Opportunities? Turismo educativo: homenaje a la moda o nuevas oportunidades educativas?

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**Received** 02-12-20 **Revised** 02-25-20 **Accepted** 06-13-20 **On line** 06-29-20

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### Cite as:

Zatsepina, M.B., Kriskovets, T.N., Vorobyev, V.K., Kolobova, L.V., Grigor'eva, N.V., Fedulov, V.I., Stolyarova, A.N. (2020). Educational Tourism: Tribute to Fashion or New Educational Opportunities?. *Propósitos y Representaciones*, 8 (SPE2), e642. Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.20511/pyr2020.v8nSPE2.642>

## Summary

The relevance of this article lies in the need to study educational tourism as one of the ways to motivate students in educational process. The article discusses new technologies in the educational process, which must be made more saturated and practically applicable. Visualization and the ability to implement the acquired knowledge can interest students and increase their interest in learning the information included in the curriculum. The purpose of the study is to analyze the importance of educational tourism for students. Research methods: As research methods, the following ones were used: questionnaire survey of participants of educational tours and free-style interviews with teachers and organizers of educational tourism, allowing identifying such characteristics of educational tourism's value for students as awareness of participants about the project, previous personal experience, interest and satisfaction with the project. Research results: the article considers the importance of educational tourism from the point of view of its participants like students, accompanying teachers, from the point of view of the organizers of the tourist and educational project. The novelty and originality of the research lies in the fact that educational tourism is considered as an alternative to educational activities, which allows not only to make a trip, but also to acquire new knowledge, skills and abilities during it, which will be learned much better than just memorizing the material from the book. It is shown that the value of educational tourism can be assessed if there is knowledge about its components such as interest and personal experience of its participants, satisfaction or dissatisfaction with certain elements of the educational tour, awareness of the project possibilities, features of the organization and implementation of the tour. It is revealed that educational tourism performs not only directly educational, but also socially significant functions for society. The study shows that the project participants perceive the educational component easily and without difficulties and there is a high interest of students in educational tours. It is revealed that the accompanying notes a positive dynamic in the interest in the educational process after participation in the project. Both its participants and its organizers perceive the possibility of expanding the project positively. It is determined that the greatest difficulty in the organization of educational tourism is caused by the lack of support of state structures, which in turn causes difficulty in entering new sites where the project can be implemented. It is shown that the educational component of the project is positively evaluated by both direct consumers and teachers in terms of the correctness in the construction of the narrative and semantic parts. It is shown that to the positive aspects of educational tourism can be attributed the emotional involvement of participants in the educational process during the excursion service, as well as increasing the level of their interest in further study. Practical significance: the data obtained in this work can be used in social psychology, pedagogy, age psychology, pedagogical psychology, as well as for further theoretical development of this issue.

**Keywords:** Educational Tourism; Educational Programs; Tourist and Educational Project.

## Resumen

La relevancia de este artículo radica en la necesidad de estudiar el turismo educativo como una de las formas de motivar a los estudiantes en el proceso educativo. El artículo analiza las nuevas tecnologías en el proceso educativo que deben hacerse más saturadas y prácticamente aplicables. La visualización y la capacidad de implementar el conocimiento adquirido pueden aumentar el interés de los estudiantes y su interés en aprender la información incluida en el plan de estudios. El propósito del estudio es analizar la importancia del turismo educativo para los estudiantes. Métodos de investigación: Los siguientes métodos se utilizaron como métodos de investigación: encuesta por cuestionario de participantes en giras educativas y entrevistas de estilo libre con docentes y organizadores de turismo educativo, lo que permitió identificar características del valor del turismo educativo como la conciencia del proyecto por parte de los estudiantes, experiencia personal previa, interés y satisfacción con el proyecto. Resultados de la investigación: el artículo analiza la importancia del turismo educativo desde el punto de vista de sus participantes, como estudiantes, profesores acompañantes, desde el punto de vista de los organizadores del proyecto turístico y educativo. La novedad y originalidad de la investigación radica en el hecho de que el

turismo educativo se considera como una alternativa a las actividades educativas, lo que permite no solo hacer un viaje, sino también adquirir nuevos conocimientos, habilidades y habilidades durante el mismo, que aprenderán mucho mejor que simplemente memorizar el material del libro. Se ha demostrado que el valor del turismo educativo puede evaluarse si hay conocimiento sobre sus componentes, como el interés y la experiencia personal de sus participantes, la satisfacción o la insatisfacción con ciertos elementos de la gira educativa, el conocimiento de las posibilidades del proyecto, las características de la organización e implementación del recorrido. Se revela que el turismo educativo desempeña funciones no solo directamente educativas sino también socialmente significativas para la sociedad. El estudio muestra que los participantes del proyecto perciben el componente educativo fácilmente y sin dificultad y hay un gran interés de los estudiantes en los recorridos educativos. Se revela que las notas adjuntas son una dinámica positiva en el interés del proceso educativo después de participar en el proyecto. Tanto sus participantes como sus organizadores perciben la posibilidad de ampliar el proyecto positivamente. Se determina que la mayor dificultad en la organización turística educativa es causada por la falta de apoyo de las estructuras estatales, lo que a su vez causa dificultades para ingresar a nuevos sitios donde se puede implementar el proyecto. Se ha demostrado que el componente educativo del proyecto es evaluado positivamente tanto por los consumidores directos como por los maestros en términos de precisión en la construcción de partes narrativas y semánticas. Se ha demostrado que los aspectos positivos del turismo educativo se pueden atribuir a la participación emocional de los participantes en el proceso educativo durante la excursión de servicio, así como a su mayor nivel de interés en futuros estudios. Importancia práctica: los datos obtenidos en este trabajo pueden utilizarse en psicología social, pedagogía, psicología de la edad, psicología pedagógica, así como para un mayor desarrollo teórico de este tema.

**Palabras clave:** Turismo Educativo; Programas Educativos; Proyectos Turísticos Educativos

## Introduction

Educational tourism in the Russian Federation at this stage of development is considered a relatively new phenomenon, although in fact it is not. Current educational tourism is a rapidly developing sector of the tourism industry, which is recognized in various parts of the world. The modern sphere of educational tourism covers all types of training and education that are carried out outside the permanent residence. Scientists treat this type of tourism as follows: tourist trips, excursions for the purpose of education, satisfaction of curiosity and other cognitive interests; (Lebedev, 2012; Pogodina & Solomin, 2007; Chebotar, 1997; Baibarin, Mashkin & Shelengovskiy, 2016) educational tours made for the purpose of performing tasks defined by the educational programs of educational institutions (Zorin & Kvartalnov, 2003; Lunin, 2009; Pecheritsa, 2014) trips for education (General, special, additional), for professional development - in the form of courses, internships, without engaging in activities related to income from sources in the country (place) of temporary residence (Mishurova & Lysenko, 2004; Ponomareva, 2015); trips made for the purpose of education and / or training abroad (Germanova, 2011; Arefyev & Stepanov, 2011; Zakarjaeva, 2011); travel, which are trips to places of temporary residence for the purpose of obtaining additional knowledge, education and qualifications, which are carried out outside the permanent place of residence for two to three months (Chernevskaya, Dudchenko & Krasulina, 2017). Some authors note that educational tourism as travel for training, professional development is relatively new in international tourism. The most popular are the trips to study the language, especially in the UK and other English-speaking countries. A huge amount of information passes through a person's consciousness, the flow of knowledge increases every time, which means that their (knowledge) assimilation is much more difficult (Cherdymova et al.,

2018a; Baranov et al., 2019; Cherdymova et al., 2019; Putilina et al., 2019). Tourism here acts as an auxiliary means to achieve the goal set by man.

In educational travel, each individual can satisfy his or her own preferences. The study of education, its influence on the formation of personality can be attributed to one of the most important problems that sociology studies. A comprehensive sociological study of education implies an analysis of many aspects of education: General behaviors, specific and innovative methods, performance, the degree of return from the individual and the combination with other branches of human activity (Babkin, 2008; Alexandrova, 2002; Malashenko, Orlov & Fedulin, 1995; Pushkareva & Pushkarev, 2010; Efremov, 2009).

Tourist cluster in the modern world has become one of the most popular types of services. The opportunity for self-development, self-improvement, obtaining various types of education abroad, exploration of the world, made tourism one of the informal types of education. (Zhukova, 2006). Initially, tourism or travel also meant movement for the purpose of trade and conquest of territories and peoples. Nowadays, such a phenomenon as tourism is mostly associated with entertainment, which is more or less a symbol of social status (Chernevskaya, Dudchenko & Krasulina, 2017; Bayanova et al., 2019).

One of the latest trends in education is its integration with tourism activities. Educational tourism occupies a leading position on a par with such types of tourism as rehabilitation (medical), gastronomic and recreational. This type of tourism is an effective interaction of the tourist potential of a region, a particular city or location with educational practice. It is also worth noting that the trip associated with educational tourism has a much more emotional impact on the entire educational process, especially on the development of new knowledge, compared with the study time, which is occupied by classical lessons (Cherdymova et al., 2018b; Afanasieva, 2018; Kargapoltseva et al., 2019). In turn, the orientation of educational tours can be different: getting new knowledge, professional development, etc.

The need to facilitate such a multi-level process is one of the priorities of the education system. The tourism industry is an intermediary in this case, aimed at achieving the maximum social and economic effect (Bystrov, 2013; Kovaleva & Rybashina, 2014; Chudnovsky, 1998).

We will proceed from the fact that educational tourism is educational tours made in order to fulfill the tasks defined by the educational programs of educational institutions. For us, the fact that educational tourism is one of the ways to motivate students to the educational process is of research significance. Tourism here acts as an auxiliary means to achieve the goal set by man. In educational travel, each individual can satisfy his or her own preferences (Pushkareva & Pushkarev, 2010). In terms of its importance, educational tourism has proved to be more popular than before. An adequate combination of educational practice and tourist elements allows for a partial renovation of the classical educational process, while there is an increase in the interest of students in the educational process, achieving higher results and the formation of their social skills.

Educational tourism could be referred to as an approach for pursuing education, carrying out research activities and knowledge acquisition. This sector is acquiring popularity these days and is a fast-growing sub-sector in the travel and tourism industry. As far as academics are concerned, this sector has vast scope and is changing the dynamics of the sector constantly; it is more of a perspective type of tourism. Educational tourism is also called by other names such as job development, career enhancement or self-actualisation experience. The idea is that apart from self-improvement, travel can be relaxation, learning can be more fun than ever and there is no age bar restricting people from learning by travelling (this does not include people who wish to travel for educational purposes but are unable to travel due to health problems).

Educational cruises, school trips, seminar vacations, study abroad experiences and self enhancement vacations are few examples of educational tourism. Knowledge can be imparted in

a much better manner apart from sitting in one corner and reading books. Practicality is far better than theory. Educational tourism does not depend upon weather; a proper infrastructure should be in place and you are good to go! The main focus is to apply the knowledge and skills learnt within the classroom environment in a totally diverse environment, like the “International Practicum Training Program”. The structure of educational tourism recognises three aspects – the science of tourism, the science of education and the aspects of the external environment. Implementation of educational excursions that provide good opportunities for the development of students by enhancing their research and observation skills to broaden their experience is the most popular form of educational tourism. It helps in developing a scientific approach towards the world and a responsible and conscious attitude towards nature and the environment.

### **Educational Tourism: Fuelling Aspects and Trends**

The current scenario of education is on a better scale. The concept of informal learning is more appreciated than formal learning. The increasing awareness and importance of education is driving the education industry towards growth. New education styles, new information and research techniques and good exposure to science has enabled the growth of the educational scenario across the world. This is the main aspect that fuels the growth of the educational tourism sector, owing to the advantages of “education with travel”. The thirst for knowledge has also increased thereby encouraging people to travel across the globe to gain knowledge of different concepts and technologies that they had studied earlier. This propels the spread of educational tourism across the world. Moreover, individuals try to enhance their technical knowhow and competency outside the classroom environment. They opt for travelling to other regions, meeting people with experience and knowledge and grasping information as and when possible. This adds to the growth of the educational tourism sector.

Educational tourism generally involves study tours. In the tourism industry, it is considered as the most advanced form of travel. This can be attributed to knowledge acquisition and skills enhancement. Lifelong learning, learning with fun and self-improvement are the common aspects between the “many” forms of educational tourism. The various forms or new trends in educational tourism include school excursions, student exchange programs, senior seminars and environmental tourism.

### **Educational Tourism: Challenges**

For every gain there is always a spend associated with it. Despite being a fast-growing sector in the tourism industry, there are certain challenges that could limit the spread of the educational tourism sector. Political changes can have adverse effects on this sector. Moreover, a bigger challenge is to maintain the quality of education and learning, the involvement of high costs needed for the establishment of research facilities and lack of government support. The sole purpose of this type of tourism is to give equal chance to people of any age, religion, class or society/nationality.

### **Educational Tourism: Worldwide Presence**

United States can be given the first rank with regards to education as it provides and strives to maintain the best educational facilities, encourages educational tours and spends on quality learning and research. United Kingdom comes second followed by Australia. Germany, France and Japan are also excelling in the educational tourism sector, but they face a major common problem – the language barrier. Developing countries have shown reasonable growth in this sector.



## **Educational Tourism: Organisational Support**

Global travel companies anticipate a lucrative growth in the educational tourism sector. Though nascent in certain areas of the world, many travel companies are conducting educational tours, thereby promoting the importance of education and contributing to the growth of the educational tourism sector. Companies such as Exodus Travels, Intrepid, Topdeck, Bright spark, Globus Student Discoveries, World Strides, American Council for International Studies (ACIS) and Lindblad Expeditions are emphasising on student enhancement through educational tours by imparting technical as well as environmental knowledge.

The educational tourism sector might become a big educational paradigm, adding value to the society by increasing the level of education and generating new economic opportunities. Educational tourism will also give equal chance to the ageing population as education has no barriers with respect to age. The content of educational tours and expeditions should necessarily be subject oriented and result oriented providing people with a full knowledge pack.

This comprehensive report equips readers with lucid information and analysis on the sector. Future Market Insights' experienced travel and tourism analysts bring to you accurate and unbiased information to help you make crucial decisions with confidence.

The report offers a 360° view – bringing to the fore key drivers, restraints, opportunities, and challenges prevailing in the sector. To offer readers actionable insights, detailed information on historical trends, current scenario, and future projections is provided in the report.

The report specifically focusses on the leading companies operating in this sector, highlighting their key developmental strategies. A holistic analysis of the leading players is highlighted to help decision makers understand the overall competitive landscape.

## **Materials and Methods**

The questionnaire survey reveals the main characteristics of educational tourism's value for schoolchildren as participants' awareness of the project, previous personal experience, interest and satisfaction with the project. Moreover, this data will allow making further changes in the project, in connection with the preferences of potential consumers.

A free interview with participants, accompanying and parents allows you to determine the degree of satisfaction with the educational project from the point of view of the educational process. The teaching staff also gives an objective assessment. It is possible to assess some points at the stage of organizing educational tours. A free interview with the project organizers gives an idea of most of the nuances associated with the organization and implementation of educational tours, from collecting documentation and establishing contacts with contractors or partners, to receiving organized school groups and accompanying them along the route.

The object of the study is schoolchildren as a social group, represented by children and young people aged 6 to 18 years, receiving education in secondary educational institutions. One of the defining features of the group is the active development of personal characteristics, the formation of value-oriented system and cognitive processes.

Large groups of participants were younger students 9, 10 and 11 years, which was 19.8 %, 32.1 % and 23.7 %, respectively. In addition, children of 12-14 years old took part in the project, but their number was small in relation to younger participants. An important aspect in studying the value of educational tourism in any of its manifestations was the desire and ability of potential consumers to travel and receive education outside of their place of residence.

## Results

According to our research, almost half of the respondents (49.6 %) like to travel, almost a third of the respondents do not like to travel (29.8%) and 20.6% of the respondents found it difficult to answer the question – *whether they like to travel?* At the same time, the desire to travel does not partially coincide with the opportunity. The study showed that most of the respondents travelled 1 time a year (51.1 %), less than one-fifth of the surveyed students answered that they travelled 2 times (16%) and 3 times (12.2%) a year. Among 20.6% of respondents when was asked the question *how often do they travel* the decision caused difficulties with a specific answer. An analysis of the reasons for the journey showed that 54% of students answering the question *what do they like most about traveling*, noted the change of situation. Almost 33% of students enjoy the road to the point of arrival, 41.5% of students like fun and surprises in travel, as well as almost 20% of respondents like to travel because it is an opportunity to stay with family and friends, and only 21.1% appreciate travel for the opportunity to learn something new. *Other* is also noted, among which there are such answers as *locals, sights and a chance to see a famous person*. The assessment of students' awareness of educational tours showed the following results. To the question, *whether they know what educational tourism is*- with a slight difference, a third of respondents said they knew what it was. 36.6% of students answered that they knew, a third of respondents - 32.8% gave a negative answer and a third (30.5%) found it difficult to answer. It can be concluded that the awareness of students about educational tourism is at a low level, which is an obstacle to obtaining new knowledge in the process of travel. For those who positively answered the question *whether they knew what educational tourism was*, we asked a question, with a request to write what it is in their opinion. The respondents' opinion was distributed as follows: 43.3 % believed that it was *when they were sent to study in another place*, 13.3 % were inclined to the fact *that this was a trip in which they learned something new*, 20.5 % believed that educational tourism was *a study combined with excursions*, 16.9% meant by educational tourism *training in places of interest*. The personal experience of the project participants, i.e. the participation of students in such projects before, has a significant value in determining the value of educational tourism. The study found that 42 % of current participants had previously participated in educational tours or programs, 37.4 % did not participate in such events, and 20.6 % of respondents found it difficult to answer the question. There is a tendency for those who went on various educational trips to prevail over those who did not attend them.

Analysis of satisfaction level with participation in educational tours and programs allows you to focus on certain stages of the project organization in order to increase the evaluation of the project among potential clients. Practice shows that students often do not know what project they are coming to a particular city for. The level of awareness about the project will make it possible to focus on the communication component in the preparation of new trips, in order to maintain interest in the project among consumers and provide up-to-date information. In the framework of the study, it was found that the level of awareness of participants was 64.9 %, which was acceptable, but not sufficient. Some respondents (24.4%) did not know what project they came to another city as part of. Part of the students (10.7%) found it difficult to answer this question. This is a significant indicator for the tourist and educational project and its image.

To find out what moments of the educational journey are most stored in the memory and consciousness of the participants of the educational project, they were asked to write what they liked and did not like in the tours, programs or projects in which they participated. The analysis of the overall impression of the project was based on the assessment of the main criteria that formed the basis of the project: the organization of travel, the work of guides, etc. Assessment was proposed to be given on a 5-point scale. The results of the study showed that the majority of respondents were satisfied with all the criteria related to the project. The exception is accommodation (less than 15% were dissatisfied, because there were problems with water supply and electricity), with the work of the accompanying were unsatisfied 5.4% of participants. Food

was rated as good by 84 % of students. Educational components were rated more than well by 87% of students.

Focusing on the above-mentioned, the aspects that caused the most approval among the participants were highlighted. It can be noted that most of the project students appreciated excursions to enterprises (45%), an unusual program (32.1%), as well as the guides, who easily and clearly taught all the material (22.9%). Among those who did not like the project, and there were few of them, the following reasons were expressed: too long excursions (31.6%), little time spent in some museums (15.8%), not enough interesting on the train (47.4%) and inconvenience in the hotel (5.3%).

Determining the reasons that sent students to take part in the project proved to be diverse. We received the following answers to the question *Why did they take part in this project* -9.9 % said that their parents insisted on it, 16 % admitted that they went because everyone went, 19.1 % took part in the project because they liked to travel, 13.7 % wanted to try something new, 28.2 % wanted to take a break from school and 13% gave other reasons. To the participants' question - *Why did they choose this program* we received the following answers: 71% of respondents did not know about the possibility to choose a topic within the project, 16 % told that their homeroom teacher insisted on the selected topics, 10.7% of the group (the whole class) made decision about the topic and only 2.3% liked the thematic focus of the upcoming trip. An important marker of success (and profitability of the project) is the desire of respondents to participate in it again. Visits revealed that 61 % of participants wanted to participate again, 9% did not plan to participate again in the project and almost a third of respondents had not yet made a final decision and found it difficult to answer the question *whether they want to participate in the project again*.

## Discussion

In addition to the students who took part in the project, for a more complete analysis of educational tourism's value and problems and prospects identification for its development, an interview was conducted with another category of participants in the tourist and educational project-accompanying ones. This category included both teachers (direct class teachers) and parents of the students themselves. The greatest interest for the study is the fact that educational institutions are interested in taking part in tourist and educational projects. In interviews with teachers (accompanying the groups), it turned out that the experience of participation in such projects was already available, but it cannot be defined as positive either from the point of view of the organization or from the point of view of the educational component. Along with the organizational aspects in terms of movement, accommodation and food, problems were identified with the organization of the educational component of the projects. Most of the interviewed teachers noted that the excursion program did not fully meet the stated parameters and did not bear the educational meaning. Considering the possible channels of communication, it turned out that the potential consumer was not provided with proper information support. The information was not up-to-date when it was received by educational institutions and at the time of the decision making to participate in the project. The initiators of the trips are often teachers themselves, rather than students or their parents. On the part of students or their parents, there were no prerequisites for participation in the project. Speaking about the organization of educational tours, it should be noted that on the part of educational institutions there are a number of difficulties, most of which are associated with the design of accompanying documentation. The opinion of the majority of respondents is focused on the fact that the preparation of documentation, coordination with all authorities (in the field of formation at the local level) is very energy consuming.

From the professional point of view of teachers, the educational component of the project was organized in an optimal way, corresponded to educational standards, and students easily perceived all the material. The results of the trip were positive, all respondents noted that the students showed interest in the submitted material, perceived the information without any difficulties, conducted an active dialogue with the guides, gave maximum feedback.



The dynamics of students' progress after participation in the project, according to teachers and parents, was positive and pronounced. Mostly teachers noted that the results were positive. Such aspect as feedback between the client and the organizer is one of the most important in the system of further relationships. Considering the long-term perspective of cooperation, representatives of educational institutions noted that they kept in touch with the organizers after the completion of the project and were interested in new proposals.

## Conclusion

We can conclude that the tourist and educational project has a positive impact on the educational process, contrary to the popular belief that such trips are not educational, but are regarded as an alternative leisure. The price-quality ratio of the interregional tourist and educational project is estimated as acceptable, and most of the participants expressed their desire to participate in the tourist and educational project again. Speaking about the educational and interactive components of the project, both the organizers and participants of the project noted them as corresponding to the topics of trips and the age group of students. The accompanying in the project note an increased students' interest in the subject of study, both during the trip and after it. Among other things, the specifics of organizing and implementing educational tours for students impose a number of bureaucratic procedures that slow down the process of preparing the program for admission of its participants. Assistance in this matter will greatly facilitate and accelerate the process of organizing educational tours in the region.

Representatives of several travel agencies that regularly receive and send organized groups of students, emphasized the need for educational tourism for the region and the need to attract state support to ensure the further functioning of the educational project at a higher level.

They assess the significance of the project not only from the point of view of attracting investment, but also from the point of view of its necessity in the context of educational practices and the educational process. Feedback from customers makes it clear that educational tourism is becoming more popular and requires certain investments in it, both financial and human.

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