

# Education in Tourism

Subjects: **Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism**

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Learning and gaining knowledge by traveling have been present in human history for centuries. Education does so well in tourism because it is accompanied by human curiosity about the world. Tourism can teach natural, social, and historical sciences. It is an important tool for learning about the past that influences the present and the future, especially if it is a difficult past such as the memory of the Holocaust. Tourism can help to draw conclusions about the past as long as it contributes to the acquisition of specific knowledge.

educational tourism

tourist information

the Holocaust

## 1. Tourism and Information

One of the many functions of tourism is educational. Tourist travel is a kind of lesson [\[1\]](#)[\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)[\[4\]](#)[\[5\]](#)[\[6\]](#)[\[7\]](#)[\[8\]](#)[\[9\]](#) and one of the most attractive forms of education. Travel even involuntarily teaches on many levels. It is worth noting that tourism does not start only upon embarking on a trip. The journey begins much earlier—already at the stage of searching for information. Information is a key word for education in tourism. Currently, a major source of information is the Internet. Thus, the image of the destination to which the tourist will be heading is already formed at this stage. Consequently, education should start in the virtual space if one wants to achieve its goal.

For years, the Internet has been considered one of the basic sources of information. As emphasized in the literature [\[10\]](#)[\[11\]](#)[\[12\]](#)[\[13\]](#)[\[14\]](#)[\[15\]](#), it is one of the most common consulted sources in tourist matters, ranging from technical information related to the trip to the widely sought general knowledge about a specific value or the entire destination, which is of interest to a potential tourist [\[16\]](#)[\[17\]](#)[\[18\]](#). Until recently, it was thought of as a place where one can supplement the knowledge acquired in a traditional way [\[16\]](#). Today, it has become the main and first source from which a tourist obtains data of interest [\[19\]](#).

Many managers of a tourist product, destination or heritage, realizing the importance of the Internet as a source of information, publish their data solely using this channel of information distribution [\[16\]](#), expecting to reach the widest possible audience. In this way, the Internet not only provides the sought-after knowledge, but also shapes the image of a destination or a single value [\[20\]](#)[\[21\]](#). It can, therefore, be concluded that the Internet is an exceptionally useful tool for disseminating information to facilitate tourist consumption [\[22\]](#)[\[23\]](#)[\[24\]](#).

The traveler requires different information from the Internet at different stages of the journey. The availability of predeparture information can influence travel planning [\[25\]](#). By presenting and providing information as needed, the Internet influences the expectations of resources, usually determining the choices and at least indirectly affecting

its perception even before the tourist has undertaken the journey [26][27][28]. It also influences the behavior of the tourist at the destination [29][30][31]. Many customers admit that the destination or resource image found on websites directly influences their decisions [32][33][34]. The way the digital information is presented shapes feelings and impressions related to the value [35]. However, it is worth noting that the content, depending on its quality, may facilitate or hinder the choice of destination [36][37]. An important factor here is the quality of information [38], as well as its level of detail. The decision to travel depends on whether the information corresponds to reality or how accurate it is [39][40][41][42]. It is also considered the most important reason for its distribution [43][44] because one of the basic attributes of information posted in the virtual space is its credibility [40][42][45][46]. This is why it is so important to develop detailed, possibly complete, and comprehensive information posted on websites for better functioning of tourism [41][47]. This responsibility rests with the destination or value managers whose function in shaping the image based on high-quality information cannot be overestimated.

The quality of information is one of the main factors attracting and retaining potential customers [48][49][50][51]. The technical side of information transfer is also important: the ease of navigation, or more broadly, the user-friendliness of websites providing content, affects the tourist's decision regarding the choice of destination [51][52][53][54][55]. The virtual space shown on websites allows tourists to reach the information in a simple and friendly way [56][57][58][59]. It is important to take into account the limitations resulting from technological, demographic, or cultural conditions when such websites are created [60][61]. Success in tourism, which is measured by satisfaction, depends on good-quality information adapted to the needs of recipients, as well as its topicality and relevance.

The search for information has become a significant stage of decision making, and it was initiated by the Internet as a publicly available source of information. A well-informed tourist is more aware of the value of the cultural heritage of the region they intend to visit and can more easily find the products they are looking for [20].

The information posted on the Internet links the tourist with the destination they intend to visit [62]. Today, information is necessary for a well-prepared tourist trip to bring full satisfaction from visiting a selected place [42]. Websites presenting the features of a value create a virtual tourist experience, and tourists pay attention to those sites that reflect in the best possible way the existing heritage [63][64]. It is worth emphasizing that the Internet is excellent for crossing borders; this is usually the first channel for seeking information in different languages [65]. The global reach of information shortens the distance between the value and its recipient (the tourist).

Information is also important for cultural heritage tourists. As emphasized in the literature [66], four in 10 tourists choose their destination on the basis of the cultural offer, which includes places related to heritage, as well as museums, theatres, and historical or archaeological sites, related to industrial heritage, music, or gastronomy [66]. For this group, appropriately adapted, up-to-date, detailed and easily accessible information is particularly important in preparing a tourist trip [67].

When assessing the importance of websites in the development of tourism, one needs to pay attention to the costs of obtaining information, such as time [68]. The obtained information allows reducing the degree of uncertainty when

planning a trip [69]. Among the cheapest and most effective tools for obtaining information on heritage are websites; hence, their role in shaping tourism, as well as the image of heritage and destinations, cannot be overestimated.

The heritage image on the Internet manages the destination [70][71][72] because it influences the virtual space and, thus, the success of a destination in tourism [73][74][75]. The image acquired by tourists affects their behavior during the visit [76]. This is especially important for heritage. A comprehensive image has become possible thanks to technology [77]. Visual elements, such as photographs, strongly influence the final image of a destination [78]. In addition to the photos, websites use animations and videos to enable people to interact virtually with the value through 3D virtual journeys. This can stimulate a real visit, and a virtual experience can lead to a real-world experience [79]. Contemporary tourist information in the virtual world is transmitted in various ways: textual, visual, audio, or audiovisual, as well as other platforms using tools affecting senses [80]. The content of webpages and the narration related to it are two main sources of constructing tourist images. In the case of heritage tourism, the tourist image leads to the ideological reinforcement of the present by telling the story of the past [81], no matter how difficult the past is. All this leads to the conclusion that the Internet is one of if not the most useful tools when searching for information [16].

## 2. Internet and Education

The Internet in tourism, although initially treated primarily as a marketing tool [55][82][83][84][85][86], has quickly become a means for providing knowledge [82], encouraging tourists to look for this unique value [54].

IT can support effective learning; thus, the information manager should focus on the various needs of recipients of website information [87][88][89].

As already mentioned, the literature emphasizes the fact that tourists expect to find practical information on the website [56][57]. It should also educate and evoke emotions; therefore, it is important that the designed websites take into account its reception by tourists [90].

Information seeking serves to reduce the risk of making wrong choices [91]. A more committed group expects more detailed information relevant to the heritage attributes to understand it better. It should be emphasized that this group usually already has some knowledge about heritage [69]. Therefore, information on the Internet should be adapted to the needs of various recipients—from casual visitors to qualified teachers who are looking for knowledge that complements the didactic process [92].

Although this publication deals primarily with information provided to potential tourists through websites, it should be mentioned here that, for example, smartphones and applications offered are an important tool for managing information in the virtual space. These are sources providing information on heritage resources, in addition to offering suggestions relevant to the user. Mobile phones offer recommendation systems (RSs) that suggest information according to the recipient's preferences previously gathered. One mobile RS is ACUX-R, which recommends the points of interest (POI) according to the user's visiting profile and their preferences, presenting

them in a practical way [93]. The ACUX-R system is based on the ACUX (Augmented Cultural User Experience) typology for classifying visitor of cultural destinations. It is a multi-profile classification of the visitors based on their preferences. In order to meet, in the most adequate way, those different preferences, eight profiles were proposed: archaeologist, art seeker, leisure seeker, religious seeker, naturalist, traditionalist, gourmand, and viral seeker. The proposed division reflects the scope of all possible tourists engaged in cultural and heritage tourism [94]. Mobile phones with apps—as with websites—are more and more important tools for e-learning, helpful in creating new models of acquiring knowledge and presenting heritage from different points of view [59][95].

## 3. Tourism and Education

Travel and learning are not new concepts. Travel for knowledge has been present among travel motivations for centuries. The origin was the Grand Tour—trips undertaken by young British aristocrats from the 17th to 18th centuries [96]. The purpose of the trip was to gain knowledge, learn languages, and learn about the history and culture of the countries visited. It is emphasized that the trips were meant to satisfy tourists' curiosity about previously unknown regions.

Beginning in the last decades of the last century, there has been an increasing need for knowledge and education, as well as a significant increase in educational travel and tourism. Krippendorf [97] pointed to changes in the tourism market, where the passive form is replaced by a desire to expand horizons and be creative. The new tourists [98] are better educated and seek knowledge of the world around. One trend is to treat education as an essential part of the leisure [99]. Getting to know, i.e., acquiring knowledge, is becoming an essential component of a tourist trip.

In his definition of educational tourism, Ritchie ([3] p. 18) emphasized that it is a tourist activity undertaken by those who are undertaking an overnight vacation and those who are undertaking an excursion for whom education or learning is a primary or secondary part of their trip. This can include general educational tourism and adult study tours, as well as international and domestic university and school students' travel, including language schools, school excursions, and exchange programs. Educational tourism can be independently or formally organized and can be undertaken in a variety of natural or human-made settings.

An educational component is included in many forms of tourism, e.g., heritage cultural tourism. Cultural tourists have a tendency toward learning and education as they have higher educational qualifications [100]. Education always accompanies heritage tourism. It is emphasized that travel allows people to learn and appreciate human history. Garrod and Fyall [101] pointed to tourism's ability to educate through heritage. Moreover, without education and knowledge, the experience of heritage tourism is virtually impossible. Lastly, it is worth mentioning the concept of creative tourism, which develops through active knowledge acquisition and participation in educational events [100].

Tourism in recent years has been a continuous process of acquiring knowledge, constantly requiring education, which can be obtained thanks to the Internet. This technology helps in distributing and facilitating access to

information and creating environmental and cultural awareness [84].

Learning is at the heart of tourism. [102]. In this case, people learn consciously by comparing values, norms, customs, and experiences of new environments and cultures. Travel provides practical skills, knowledge, and wisdom. The learning process can have a positive effect on cross-cultural understanding and respect [103], which is invaluable, especially in the case of a difficult legacy such as that of the Holocaust.

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