

## **Tourism as a tool for improving global education and international cooperation**

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to assess the importance of tourism as a tool for improving global education and international cooperation. As a global economic phenomenon, tourism is one of the industries that contribute the most economic growth and the development of the world economy, where it also enables international cooperation by developing tourism and various activities at the global level. Tourism constitutes an important and influential sector of the economy, creating multiple uses and benefits. This sector, among other things, creates income, creates new jobs, influences the creation of international relations. The method. The empirical research was carried out on the basis of literature reviews by observing and analyzing the existing literature on the theory of sustainable tourism in the context of tourism and its importance. The conclusion. Tourism is considered as an economic activity and quite complex, becoming a powerful means of economic development of a country, therefore attention should be paid to global education, making the community aware of long-term sustainability and committing to international cooperation. Tourism today has grown into a special phenomenon. Based on its massiveness, it is accepted global industry. The global nature of tourism trends is expressed as the international transfer of ideas, information, capital and people of different cultures.

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**Keywords:** *Economic activity, Economic development, International cooperation, Sustainable tourism, Tourism.*

### **1. Introduction**

According (UNWTO) Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes. These people are called visitors (which may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or non-residents) and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which involve tourism expenditure.

International tourism: International tourism comprises inbound tourism and outbound tourism, that is to say, the activities of resident visitors outside the country of reference, either as part of domestic or outbound tourism trips and the activities of non-resident visitors within the country of reference on inbound tourism trips (IRTS 2008, 2.40(c)).

Tourism is now a source of significant income both in countries in the region and internationally. Tourism management is a challenge for all countries that have developed the field of tourism because they must constantly improve, follow global trends, and bring innovations, thus creating opportunities for international cooperation.

So, apart from tourism being an income generator and an opportunity for international cooperation, it is also a challenge at the same time.

Researchers in the field of tourism made it clear that good tourism planning should include benefits in all aspects of the community, including sociological aspects (e.g. promoting community stability, family solidarity, cultural identity), economic (e.g. employment, income), environmental (e.g. protection/conservation), (Sharples & Telfer, 2002).

Planning is a necessary activity for achieving the goals of sustainable tourism development. Tourism planning is a process of comprehensive evaluation of analysis and related issues, including not only the definition of goals, but also the development of alternative methods and actions for further decision-making.

In particular, the author Gunn (1988) has said that "Tourism planning as a concept looks to the future and is concerned with the expected consequences, where it is the only way that the advantages of tourism can be taken into consideration. Tourism planning should be strategic and integrative life".

According to the authors Getz and Jamal (1994), "Collaborative theory provides insight into a dynamic and flexible process, which envisages joint decision-making through the involvement of many interested parties within a temporary or long-term structure. The process requires direct dialogue between participating parties, who have the potential to negotiate, make joint decisions and reach consensus about strategic planning, goals and actions in tourist destinations".

In addition, identifying the different perceptions and attitudes of interest groups towards the development of tourism in a community should be taken as the first step in tourism planning in order to ensure trust, cooperation, harmony and mutual benefits for all those who are involved (Kuvan and Akan, 2012).

## 2. Literature Review

The activity of tourism as a massive social-economic phenomenon, has found its reflection in some of the last decades in the entire globe. During this short period of time, tourism has developed with a dizzying intensity and turned into one of the most widespread social features of modern humanity. At the same time, tourism is characterized by a very complex and important economic category, with extremely dynamic development and rapid and deep qualitative and quantitative changes, covering almost all spheres of social development of a country, and not only (Zenelaj, 2013).

Sustainable tourism is essentially all those tourist activities that take into account the current and future economic, social, environmental developments and that pay special attention to the needs of all participants in these activities such as tourists, tourism industry subjects, the community, the environment and ecology etc. This issue, taking into account these many influences and of different natures, needs a proper planning, development and operationalization, as it is a dynamic and changing process.

A key to the sustainable development of tourism in a community is the involvement of interest groups Byrd (2009). Researchers show that the participation and cooperation of interest groups are the key factor for the development of sustainable tourism (Yu, 2011). Without the support of interest groups, it is almost impossible to develop tourism sustainably (Andereck & Vogt, 2000; Andriotis, 2005; Gursoy, 2002).

Although there are debates in the perspectives and definitions of sustainable tourism, it is known that achieving sustainability in the context of tourism requires a strategic orientation towards tourism planning and increasing the participation of multiple stakeholders in the tourism planning process (Simpson, 2001).

The paradoxical nature of tourism, the desire for people to experience new places that change the original nature of the country as it becomes more developed (Buder, 1980) has simultaneously provided useful opportunities for people to experience the varieties of life, while leads to dramatic and often damaging effects on landscapes and cultures around the globe.

### 2.1. *The Role and Importance of Tourism*

The importance of the tourism industry in the world economy due to its potential and size has been considered to be essential (Hunter, 1997). The importance and role of the tourism industry in the national economy of countries and in the world economy, taking into account the potential, scope and size it possesses, is inalienable for the economic development of each country where it is considered to be essential in economic growth and in raising income for each economy.

The new millennium is bringing innovation in all spheres of life, therefore also in tourism. The international economic integration processes that are being realized through globalization are strengthening the role and giving completely different dimensions to the typification of a country's economy, but also on an international scale. Global economic and social flows are creating contemporary international development environment and conditions, in which case tourism is presenting a special sphere in the integration processes between different countries, peoples, cultures, religions, etc. Currently, tourism is becoming more and more attractive, not only in the economic field, but also in the life of humanity in general (Tahiri & Kovači, 2017).

The role and importance of tourism in the world economy, as well as the importance of the fair and sustainable use of natural resources, has been clearly emphasized by the World Tourism Organization (WTO), which has presented a broad action plan regarding the development of sustainable tourism. through the declaration called Agenda 21, for the Travel Industry or for Tourism presented at the Rio Conference in 1992. In 1999, the WTO has further developed in the global aspect many elements that determine the right development of sustainable tourism and that are related to the code of ethics for the responsible and sustainable development of international tourism that included nine articles defining the basic rules for all participants in the development of tourism such as: local or central governments, tour operators, travel agencies, tourist entities, as well as the communities and also the tourists themselves. In this context, it has been observed that tourism can effectively contribute to sustainable development. The author David in his book "Ecotourism" rightly points out that;

"... Sustainable tourism operates within its natural capacities and contributes to the regeneration of resources for the future, restores the productivity of natural resources; takes into account the contribution of people and communities to the development of tourism, traditions and lifestyles, recognizes the fact that these people should have an equal share in economic life in the benefits that tourism brings, and be guided by the wishes of the local population and communities in the host areas" (Fennell, 2014).

During the development of tourism and the concept of sustainability, which arose as a need of time and necessity during the evolution of ideas, many alternative definitions of the term sustainable tourism have arisen, which we find in the extensive scientific literature and in the various debates numerous academics. A modern definition that is worth mentioning and that serves as an example for modern definitions is the following: "Sustainable tourism is tourism of any kind that has practical design, is proactive, engineering and as a management process, which reduces negative environmental impacts." Buckley (2002).

However, tourism is a single resource and the industry cannot be isolated from other resource activities. Therefore, tourism has to share the same resources with other users and tourism must be inclusive for sustainable development to be successful. (Gunn, 1994; Murphy, 1998).

Tourism today represents the main components of government debates on environmental, economic and social issues. Tourism plays and has played a primary role in preserving and improving the natural and cultural heritage of different countries and regions (Hunter, 1995).

### 2.2. *Global Tourism Trends*

Tourism is one of the most influential sectors in economic development and job creation in the world, and plays an important role in empowering women, youth and other social groups. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the travel and tourism sector had an economy size of USD 9.2 billion, which is

about 10.4% of the global economy; and was responsible for 334 million jobs, accounting for 10.6% of world employment.<sup>1</sup> More than half of the employees are women. From 2015–2020, one in five new jobs created are from the travel and tourism sector.<sup>2</sup> Tourism growth in 2019 was around 3.5%, higher than the overall economic growth rate in the world, for the ninth year in a row.<sup>3</sup>

In the same year, the countries most visited by tourists were France, the USA, Spain and China, while those that showed the greatest rate of growth were Saudi Arabia, Kyrgyzstan and Tunisia. On the other hand, the USA and China were the main sources of tourism (based on the number and expenditure realized) in the world.<sup>4</sup>

Since 2020, tourism has experienced an unprecedented challenge, becoming one of the sectors most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. According to UNWTO estimates, foreign visitor arrivals had decreased by 73%.<sup>5</sup>

In 2020, the travel and tourism sector has suffered losses amounting to almost USD 4.5 billion, the contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has decreased by 49.1% compared to 2019 and 18.5% of jobs in the sector are lost.<sup>6</sup> The UNWTO estimates that losses from international tourism revenues were around USD 2 trillion for 2020 and 2021.<sup>7</sup>

The latest data from the UNWTO show that in 2021 the number of tourists in the world was 1 billion less than before the pandemic period. Whereas in 2022, although the number of international tourists in the world increased significantly, compared to 2021, this number remains 54% below the number of tourists in 2019.

Below, the main global trends in the tourism sector in the last decade are presented. The definition of visitor flows and the determination of strategic orientations, to a large extent, has been done in the spirit of these trends.

**Table 1.**  
Trends in the tourism sector.

Experience	Tourists are increasingly interested in experiencing tourist destinations that are unique and authentic. Tourists are not content with just a visit as simple observers. They are more interested in learning about the culture and history of the destination, having adventures that will be remembered for a lifetime, establishing direct contact with the local community, as well as developing interactive activities that engage all their senses; all this to make their experience unforgettable. In other words, the experiential aspect has become something essential in contemporary tourism.
Digital transformation	Destination research, inspiration for future vacations and bookings are mostly done through online platforms (booking.com, trip advisor, trivago, Airbnb - just to highlight some of them). All this transformation offers opportunities for the entire tourist experience to be more manageable. The digital transformation and in particular the popularization of social media has also provided opportunities for consumers to share their impressions and evaluations more easily. Although this reduces the control of tour operators in the published information about their services, this should nevertheless be taken as an

WTTC (2020). Raportet e impaktit ekonomik. Shih: <https://wtcc.org/Research/Economic-Impact><sup>1</sup>

UN Women (2019). Raporti global për gratë në turizëm. Shih: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2019/11/announcer-second-edition-of-global-report-on-women-in-tourism>

WTTC (2020). Udhëtimi dhe turizmi – ndikimi ekonomik global 2020. Shih: <sup>3</sup>

<https://wtcc.org/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/2020/Global%20Economic%20Impact%20Trends%202020.pdf?ver=2021-02-25-183118-360>

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WTTC (2020). Raportet e impaktit ekonomik. Shih: <https://wtcc.org/Research/Economic-Impact><sup>6</sup>

UNWTO (2022). Vlerësimi i ndikimit të COVID-19 në turizëm ndërkombëtar. Shih: <https://www.unwto.org/impact-assessment-of-the-covid-19-outbreak-on-international-tourism><sup>7</sup>

	<p>encouragement for them to address the concerns of visitors and thus improve their products and services.</p> <p>Innovation and digitalization have also transformed the provision of services by businesses, not only through online booking platforms, but also through the promotion of contactless technologies upon arrival at the destination, as consumers are now looking for safe and hassle-free travel experiences. .</p>
Security	<p>Security is one of the most vital aspects in the promotion and development of tourism. The success of a tourist destination depends on the country's ability to provide a safe environment for visitors. This issue has become extremely important in recent years with the spread of terrorist acts and with the spread of pandemics, especially the latter.</p> <p>It should be noted that in addition to physical security, nowadays data protection and integrity, food safety and health in general are determining aspects to convince tourists to visit a country. Furthermore, a safe environment is expected at all steps of the tourist experience (transportation, accommodation, food services, tours, etc.). Therefore, a strong coordination of the value chain is required to guarantee safety.</p>
Stability	<p>The concept of sustainability has become part of the agenda in recent decades. While at the beginning the focus was on the environmental pillar, later the confrontation of some destinations with over-tourism situations has led to raising awareness of social concerns as well. These developments have been more pronounced in unbalanced destinations, where local residents have suffered from the negative impacts of uncontrolled growth; the sentiment created in some cases has even led to protests.</p> <p>Regarding environmental sustainability, in the last two years, especially since the Paris Agreement, there has been an intensification of commitment to address climate issues and calls for decarbonization of the sector have increased; at the same time, efforts have been increased for the development of the sector to be in harmony with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which affect all spheres of sustainability. As a result of this frustration, more and more efforts are being made to develop practices that promote sustainable behavior that protects the environment and local residents, while not sacrificing tourism revenue. Sustainability is relevant especially in Kosovo, given that there are many protected areas, which in case of non-implementation of sustainable interventions, are at risk of degradation.</p>
New markets	<p><i>Asian Markets: The rapid pace of economic development, market openness, and travel facilities have made Asia one of the largest sources of tourism in the world. At the country level, China is the fastest growing source of foreign tourists, and as of 2012 the largest spender in international tourism.</i></p> <p><i>Millennials: fueled by experiential travel and social media, millennials have become a category of tourists who play an important role in shaping world tourism.</i></p> <p><i>Solo female travelers: the interest and number of solo female travelers is gradually increasing, especially in recent years. For example, the average google search for this category has increased significantly over the years. Many tour operators are now nurturing this segment of tourism, empowering many destination women to take leadership roles in the tourism offering.</i></p> <p><i>Pensioners (65+): pensioners are quite intensive travelers and an essential segment of tourism in the world. On average, they make up about 20% of international tourism. One of the reasons why they travel is the free time they have available. They aim to understand more about the history of the countries and have opportunities for socializing.</i></p> <p>Digital nomads: this segment consists of profiles who are users of digital technologies and innovations, who recently, mainly work from home. Many destinations around the world (including various islands) are aiming to attract this potential segment.</p>
Slow and local	The pandemic has inevitably brought restrictions on travel, forcing vacations to be

travel	spent domestically for many travelers interested in familiar, predictable and reliable destinations. Rural areas and outdoor spaces that offer opportunities to enjoy with family, relatives and friends, as well as to enjoy local gastronomy, have become very popular.
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### 2.3. *The Impact of Globalization on Tourism Trends*

The beginning of the new millennium is characterized by the affirmation of globalization as a world trend, which has its powerful influence in all spheres of the socio-economic system, including tourism. It can be said that there is no business entity that remains spared from the effects of permanent changes that occur in all areas of the environment, whether at the national or international level. Every enterprise, in some way, is connected to international economic movements and thus faces new trends in business, new services and products, new knowledge, new ideas and new lifestyles. Thus, facing this fact, they deal with the creation of ideas for undertaking activities with original ideas in order to be as competitive as possible in the market, which has an international character. These circumstances of the permanent internationalization of economic entities motivate globalization to actively enter other domains of life as a contemporary phenomenon. (Tahiri & Kovaçi, 2017).

Globalization, as an objective necessity, also imposes changes in the paradigm of all aspects of business and in this context, tourism is one of the most important areas in which globalization affects. It can be said that globalization and tourism are two closely related and mutually conditioned phenomena. The internationalization of business activities and political relations as well as the international expansion of communication systems influence global trends to be immanent and give tourism the characteristic of being an "industry without borders". The process of globalization has encouraged the development and popularization of tourism in all its visible forms, while tourist movements are seen as a catalyst for global processes. Tourism is known as a massive phenomenon, which with its extremely heterogeneous character, under the influence of rapid and major changes in the international environment, is increasingly turning into a cultural and civilizing need of modern man. (Tahiri & Kovaçi, 2017).

### 3. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to understand the importance and role of tourism, which serves as a tool through which international relations and cooperation are created for a common goal and the improvement of global education to gain as much new knowledge as possible and to learn about the benefits that we can have it in the future thanks to tourism.

Tourism explains the various aspects of economic activities based on the tourism market, the characteristics of this market, the research of this market, as well as presents its general importance for the country's (state's) economy, its impact on ecology, and explains and precedes the contemporary trends in the development of tourism at home and on a global scale.

Tourism is also considered as a cell that opens many doors and opportunities for young people by creating new jobs, collaborations, creating new experiences, including education at a global level for this field that is so attractive.

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