

THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION FOR TOURISM AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

In this paper, we conducted a study on the local community that has a rich cultural heritage and a developed educational tourism, by analyzing the implemented development strategies and the results obtained. As part of the study itself, we interviewed experts in the field of cultural heritage and tourism and surveyed tourists and locals from the city of Târgu Jiu.

The essential motivation in choosing this topic is the need to develop sustainable strategies that combine the promotion of cultural heritage with educational tourism. The paper contributes to enriching theoretical knowledge about the intersection between cultural heritage and educational tourism, while exploring aspects of management and local economy. This topic allows for an interdisciplinary analysis, having applicability in economics, tourism, education and cultural policies.

The choice of this topic reflects the desire to contribute with innovative solutions to the problems encountered in the management of cultural heritage and to propose effective strategies that support educational tourism as a vector of economic and social growth.

Classification JEL: *O – Economic Development, Innovation, Technological Change and Growth*

1. Introduction

Cultural heritage is the tangible and intangible heritage that a group or society possesses, having been received from past generations.

Cultural heritage is represented by material culture (buildings, monuments, landscapes, archival materials, books, works of art and artifacts), intangible culture (folklore, traditions, language and knowledge) and natural heritage (including culturally significant landscapes and biodiversity).

The desire to preserve cultural heritage from the present for the future is known as conservation. Preserved heritage has become the basis of the tourism industry, as a factor of major importance for the economy of local communities.

This paper brings together both descriptive and promotional aspects of heritage and educational tourism, as well as pedagogical components, in accordance with existing methodological and scientific requirements.

Aim: With the aim of harnessing the potential of culture and cultural diversity for social cohesion and well-being, it aims to foster cultural capacity by making a wide range of cultural activities available and by offering opportunities for active participation; encouraging the mobility of professionals in the cultural and creative sectors and removing barriers to their mobility; protecting and promoting Europe's cultural heritage as a common resource, in order to raise awareness among citizens of our common history and values and to strengthen the sense of a common European identity.

Materials. In this research we used interviews with experts in the field of cultural heritage and tourism, and questionnaires addressed to tourists and locals.

Hypothesis 1: There is an obvious correlation between the strategies adopted in cultural heritage management and the development of educational tourism. Thus, the implementation of efficient strategies in cultural heritage management contributes to a high-performance educational tourism, which competes to attract as many visitors as possible, which generates an upward curve of the economy in this field.

Hypothesis 2: Among the challenges of today's society, there are also important challenges related to the development of educational tourism based on cultural heritage. We are aware that the lack of financial resources, poorly developed infrastructure and poor management of cultural heritage are obstacles to the development of educational tourism and, implicitly, strongly impact the local economy.

In this general context, the need to know young teenagers in Romania, their lifestyle, preferences, tastes, expectations towards the cultural offer in public and non-public spaces, but also their attitude towards the national cultural heritage and graffiti, as a form of expression in public spaces, has arisen. We believe that it is essential to have an in-depth picture of young teenagers and their way of interacting with cultural heritage, in order to identify the best communication tools from the perspective of developing projects, programs and policies to protect and promote the national cultural heritage.¹

Methods.

Case study: This study aims to identify and analyze the role of cultural heritage in the ongoing development of educational tourism and at the same time a real assessment of the impact that educational tourism has on the local economy.

Questionnaires: The surveys were conducted by questioning tourists, those who participated in educational excursions and members of the local community. These questionnaires targeted the perception, experiences and impact that educational tourism has on the local community and economy.

Interviews: Interviews with stakeholders, such as local government representatives, tourism operators, teachers and cultural heritage specialists. These interviews will provide in-depth insights into the challenges and opportunities in the field of educational tourism and heritage management.

Participatory observation: Personal involvement in activities aimed at promoting cultural heritage, through educational tourism activities to observe the interactions of tourists and the economic impact they have on the community.

Documentary analysis: The pertinent analysis of relevant policies, strategies and documentation in the field of cultural heritage and educational tourism at national and international levels will help us identify the theoretical and practical benchmarks on which this sector relies when talking about economic development.

Investigated subjects

As part of the study itself, we interviewed experts in the field of cultural heritage and tourism, and surveyed tourists and locals of the city of Târgu Jiu. The study was conducted between 01.03.2025 - 30.10.2025.

Cultural heritage is the tangible and intangible heritage of a group or society received from past generations. Not all elements passed down from past generations are considered "heritage"; rather, heritage is the result of selection by society.²

¹ <https://patrimoniul100.ro/studiu-privind-atitudinea-tinerilor-fata-de-obiectivele-de-patrimoniul-cultural/>

² Silverman, Helaine; Ruggles, D. Fairchild. *Cultural heritage and human rights*. Logan, William S., Chapter 2 - Closing Pandora's Box: Human Rights Conundrums in Cultural Heritage, 2007, New York, NY: Springer, pag. 33.

2. The economic relevance of heritage management and educational tourism for local communities

Cultural heritage contributes significantly to the development of educational tourism. In this context, the valorization of cultural heritage, through educational activities, contributes to encouraging tourists to learn and develop a deep cultural awareness.

Educational tourism has a positive impact on the local economy. The development of educational tourism in communities with cultural heritage leads to increased local income, job creation and improved infrastructure.

There is a correlation between cultural heritage management strategies and the success of educational tourism.

With the aim of harnessing the potential of culture and cultural diversity for social cohesion and well-being, it aims to foster cultural capacity by making a wide range of cultural activities available and by offering opportunities for active participation; encouraging the mobility of professionals in the cultural and creative sectors and removing barriers to their mobility; protecting and promoting Europe's cultural heritage as a common resource, in order to raise awareness among citizens of our common history and values and to strengthen the sense of a common European identity.

Aiming to support culture-based creativity in the fields of education, innovation, job creation and growth, the agenda aims to promote arts, culture, as well as to encourage beneficial ecosystems for the cultural and creative sectors, by promoting the skills needed in the cultural and creative sectors, and digital, entrepreneurial, traditional skills, etc.

The relevance of cultural heritage in local development

Cultural heritage represents a valuable resource for communities, with significant potential to contribute to local socio-economic development. By preserving and promoting it, not only is the historical and cultural identity of communities preserved, but economic growth can also be stimulated.

In the context of globalization and the diversification of the tourism market, tourism based on cultural heritage is becoming an important tool for the economic revitalization of rural and urban areas that have such resources.

Educational tourism – a growing sector

Educational tourism is a growing niche, playing an important role in educating young people and creating cultural awareness. The choice of this topic is motivated by the need to better understand and develop this sector, especially in areas with a rich cultural heritage.

This form of tourism offers opportunities not only for recreational activities, but also for learning and research, combining education with the discovery of cultural heritage, which attracts a specific segment of tourists.

The economic impact of educational tourism

The motivation for choosing this topic also derives from the interest in investigating how educational tourism, by capitalizing on cultural heritage, can generate economic development at the local level. This includes creating jobs, attracting investment and stimulating other economic sectors, such as the service and infrastructure sectors.

Studying this impact provides a framework for understanding how sustainable development strategies can be applied to maximize the economic benefits of local communities.

The need for sustainable development strategies

Another essential motivation for choosing this theme is the need to develop sustainable strategies that combine the promotion of cultural heritage with educational tourism. In an era where sustainable development and sustainability are becoming global imperatives, research on this theme allows the formulation of policies and solutions that ensure both the protection of cultural heritage and long-term economic benefits.

Contribution to theoretical and practical development in the field of economics and management of cultural heritage

The thesis will contribute to enriching theoretical knowledge about the intersection between cultural heritage and educational tourism, also exploring aspects of management and local economy. This theme allows for an interdisciplinary analysis, having applicability in economics, tourism, education and cultural policies.

The choice of this topic reflects the desire to contribute with innovative solutions to the problems encountered in the management of cultural heritage and to propose effective strategies that support educational tourism as a vector of economic and social growth.

Personal interest and professional experience

The choice of this topic is also motivated by personal and professional interest in the field of cultural heritage management and local economic development. Personally, I have accumulated relevant experiences through professional activity in heritage management and financial control, as well as through involvement in academic projects related to the valorization of cultural heritage. This work reflects the desire to deepen and contribute to knowledge in this field.

3. The lack of integrated strategies in the development of educational tourism based on cultural heritage

The priorities defined by the European Commission are highly relevant for the development of cultural policies at EU level and for the key themes of European cultural cooperation. These priorities are part of the general political strategy of the European Union. The priorities defined remain highly relevant for the development of cultural policies at EU level and for the key themes of European cultural cooperation.

The rich resources of cultural heritage represent the necessary premises for the development of cultural tourism. Thus, it is important that tourist attractions are prepared to receive domestic and international tourists, in terms of accessibility, infrastructure, signage, management capacity and accommodation facilities, as well as in terms of the availability, quantity and quality of information and promotion in different languages of international circulation, but also their inclusion in diverse and complex tourist products, the quality of facilities and other activities available in addition to the attraction.

The development of cultural tourism involves coordinated policies not only of the authorities, but also the involvement of other areas with an impact on the development of tourism in general and cultural tourism in particular. It also requires the active involvement of all key stakeholders, in a bottom-up process and by creating a multi-level governance system both vertically and horizontally.

Organizing and planning the activity of recording cultural heritage

Management of the recordkeeping activity includes:

- *Analysis of the recordkeeping situation in the area of responsibility:* number of assets; quantity and quality of existing inventories and records; number of new records to be developed, per collections; number of records to be redone, per collections; number of existing and necessary photographs;
- *Evaluation of priorities:* 1) assets susceptible to classification in the treasury; 2) assets on permanent display; 3) assets made of precious metals; 4) assets of special value;
- *Evaluation of existing and necessary human resources and materials:* specialized and execution personnel; forms; equipment and programs; catalogs and other reference materials, cameras and related consumables; space, financial resources and others;
- Establishment of an action plan with objectives, norms, responsible persons and deadlines;
- Periodic evaluation of the stage of achievement of the proposed ones;
- Training of employees for deficient specialties, necessary for the institution;
- Publishing results in the form of repertoires, catalogs, albums, online databases.

In Gorj County, tourism is considered of utmost importance for economic development at local, regional and national levels. In order to be able to take coherent and concrete measures, it is necessary to develop development strategies and an action plan related to certain actions that require financing from various funds. At the same time, the rehabilitation and enhancement of cultural heritage, targeted in the National Tourism Development Strategy 2019-2030, represents the main advantage in the country's competition in the field of tourism, and the main objective at the investment level.

4. Conclusions

Cultural heritage plays a crucial role in the development of educational tourism, having the ability to attract tourists and provide valuable educational experiences.

The implementation of well-defined strategies, adapted to local specificities, is essential for the valorization of cultural heritage for educational purposes. These strategies can include collaborations between institutions, innovative educational programs and effective marketing. The research results suggest the need for public policies that integrate cultural heritage into educational tourism development strategies, thus promoting a sustainable and responsible approach.

Educational tourism has a significant economic impact on local communities, contributing to increased income, job creation and infrastructure development. This impact supports the sustainable development of regions. Educational tourism programs contribute to raising awareness of the importance of cultural heritage, both among tourists and local communities. This education contributes to a better appreciation and conservation of heritage.

In conclusion, the paper highlights the importance of cultural heritage in the development of educational tourism and its impact on the local economy, underlining the need for integrated and collaborative strategies to maximize the benefits for communities and ensure its conservation for future generations.

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