



TOURISM INNOVATION AND TOURISTIC EMOTIONAL FACTOR – PREMISES FOR EVOLUTION?

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Abstract *Tourism, with its varied implications on people's lives from an economic, social, cultural viewpoint and regarding the natural environment, has the power to transform society, as a whole, through initiatives that innovate not only tourism, as an industry, but also the way of reporting the tourist experience, as a manner of actively participating, discovering the new and discovering oneself, as an individual. Many tourist experiences are those that have produced positive changes in the tourists' minds and which, later on, have been integrated as a value reference system into their lives. Sustainable tourism can answer to the newly-discovered trends regarding sustainable development, reaching both the economic side by material benefits obtained as a result of tourist destinations, as well as the emotional side of the traveller by promoting eternal values like beauty, kindness, artistic spirit, naturalness, simplicity; all these are essential elements of the tourist's experience which can finally influence his/her decisions, way of living and being.*

Key words:

Sustainable tourism,
tourism innovation,
sustainable
development,
human evolution

1. Introduction

First of all, we can talk about tourism innovation which can reflect a humanity progress only if it is part of the sustainable development complex, as the sole realistic trend capable of saving the planet, of ensuring the natural environment which is so necessary for tourism and, last but not least, of maintaining the chance for carrying out all human activities.

Sustainable tourism, as a key element of sustainable development, is an alternative to practicing *classical* forms of tourism, such as mass tourism, instance in which the tourist has, more often nowadays, the possibility of choosing whatever he/she wants from a tourist experience, situation that can offer him/her new perspectives, new ways of spending leisure time. Sustainable development is the framework for the evolution of sustainable tourism, the two concepts supporting each other through their specific features. The modern character of these trends places tourism on top of worldwide choices regarding tourist packages, being a natural response to human evolution and, implicitly, to the evolution of society that acknowledges the effects of economic and individual activities over the environment in which they live and on which they totally depend. Moreover, the initiative of sustainable tourism is attractive for the tourists who prefer holidays where they can be active, involved, connected to the new environment that they enthusiastically and willingly

discover, wanting to become acquainted with the authenticity of the selected tourist destination. The effects of practicing this type of tourism, on an individual level, as compared with the ones gained from mass tourism have a particular value due to the genuine connection between the tourist and all the things that imply culture, traditions and specificity in a tourist destination, establishing a strong emotional connection as a result of which the sole beneficiary is the tourist. After acknowledging what he/she has received, he/she will return in the places to which he/she feels attached to and will want to (re)discover them, each time from a different angle – that of his/her own evolution.

2. Literature review

A considerable amount of time was spent on sustainable development debates; it is a complex concept which can be simply defined (Brundtland Report, 1987) as *the development meeting the present needs without compromising the possibility of future generations to achieve their own requirements.* (Notre avenir à tous - Our common future - within the United Nations). This report also draws the attention on the limits of economic development; the speed to which the resources are consumed is bigger than the capacity of resources regeneration, thus a conflicting relationship between these two aspects arises, which can produce

various imbalances on a tourism level. If the laws of economy referred only to the connection between needs and resources, later on (HasnaVancock, 2007) brings into discussion the 3 pillars of sustainable development, which *involve the simultaneous exercise of the economic prosperity, of environmental quality and of social equity known as being the three sizes*. Furthermore, Vancock places emphasis on man's evolution, as a self and environmentally responsible entity, thus *durability is a process involving a development of all the aspects of human life, which affects subsistence*. Man, as the cell of society, is again the main factor of becoming aware of the consequences that sustainable development has over himself/herself, being the one that beneficiates from it, *sustainable development is associated with quality of life[...] Sustainable development is the upper stage of the evolutionary and accumulative process "Growth-Development-Progress"*(Stănciulescu and Bulin, 2012). Moreover, the stage of human development can be proved through the degree of awareness and self-consciousness, as Alexander (Spirkin, 1983) asserts *awareness, understood as the evaluative aspect of consciousness, is the highest level of regulation of human activity on the basis of accepted values, moral and other social standards. Awareness also presupposes a person's ability to analyse the motives of his own behaviour and choose the most rational means of achieving his aims in accordance with the moral standards accepted in society*. All these arguments strengthen the idea of the tourist's human quality who chooses the type of tourism appropriate to his/her inner structure, to his/her aspirations, values and requirements, briefly his/her choices, including the touristic ones, expressing who he/she is.

Whereas sustainable tourism is concerned, it can be defined as *a form of tourism whose mainly aim is to involve local community in tourism initiatives with long-term benefits providing support for economic, cultural, social residents* (Stănciulescu and Diaconescu, 2015). Furthermore, *sustainable tourism requires a careful understanding of the relationship between the local community and environment, and also stresses the connection between political, economic, cultural community* (Hall and Richards, 2000).

3. Excellence and Innovation in Tourism (UNWTO Awards)

If the first part of this paper focused on tourism demand and on how a responsible tourist should behave, the article continues, integrating the image of tourism, by presenting the best practices as offers and initiatives in tourism.

World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), part of the United Nations, is an agency that promotes good

practices in tourism, by accentuating responsible and sustainable tourism, promoter of economic development and natural environment conservation. UNWTO encourages the implementation of the *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism* for the development of the socio-economic involvement of tourism, with a minimum of negative effects and supports the tourism that reaches *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*.

UNWTO generates market knowledge, promotes competitive and sustainable tourism policies and instruments, fosters tourism education and training, and works to make tourism an effective tool for development through technical assistance projects in over 100 countries around the world.

UNWTO's membership includes 157 countries, 6 Associate Members and over 480 Affiliate Members representing the private sector, educational institutions, tourism associations and local tourism authorities. (UNWTO).

The main programmes carried out by UNWTO are: Destination Management & Quality Programme; Education and Training; Ethics and Social Responsibility; Information Resources & Archives Programme; Institutional Relations and Resource Mobilization; UNWTO Knowledge Network; Tourism Market Trends; Resilience of Tourism Development; Governing Bodies; Statistics and Tourism Satellite Account; Sustainable Development of Tourism; etc. Proiectele implementate de UNWTO: Agora; Consulting Unit on Tourism and Biodiversity; Hotel Energy Solutions and Protect Children.

Some of the *UNWTO Ulysses Awardees for Innovation (2015)* are:

1. UNWTO Ulysses Award for Innovation in Public Policy and Governance: Domestic Tourism Promotion Initiative "Y tú, qué planes?", Commission for the Promotion of Exports and Tourism - PromPeru (Peru)
First Runner-up: The Use of Open Innovation in Co-Creating Vienna's Tourism Strategy 2020, Vienna Tourist Board (Austria).
Second Runner-up: Fragrances and Tastes of Lošinj, Mali Lošinj Tourist Board (Croatia).
2. UNWTO Ulysses Award for Innovation in Non-Governmental Organizations: Visit Amsterdam, See Holland, Amsterdam Marketing (The Netherlands).
First Runner-ups: Conserving Wildlife and Empowering Communities in Namibia, World Wildlife Fund for Nature (Namibia) and Taste of Fethiye, The Travel Foundation (Turkey).
Second Runner-up: Promotion of Local Culture in the Sundarbans Impact Zone in Bangladesh through Cultural Ecotourism and Entrepreneurship, Relief International – UK (Bangladesh).

3. UNWTO Ulysses Award for Innovation in Research and Technology: Visit Europe iPad App, European Travel Commission.

First Runner-up: Key Figures: Amsterdam as a Convention Destination, Amsterdam Marketing (The Netherlands).

Second Runner-ups: Building a Community of Conscious Globetrotter Making a Positive Impact through Ethical and Responsible Tourism, Freedom – Explore Experience Empower (Australia) and China Tourism Economy Monitoring and Early Warning System, China Tourism Academy (China).

● *Domestic Tourism Promotion Initiative “Y tú, qué planes?”*, Commission for the Promotion of Exports and Tourism - PromPeru (Peru) is the winner of Award for Innovation in Public Policy and Governance.

¿Y tú que planes? aimed: promoting the inbound tourism by launching economic tours to travel across the country's inner regions; domestic tourism with long holidays for public sector workers; encouraging peruvian families to visit sites across the country; very affordable tourist packages which are available for travelers, both domestic and foreign, in the long holiday.

Over two millions of Peruvians will travel during Easter Holidays to different parts of the country, thus generating over US\$ 250 million in revenues, the National Chamber of Tourism (Canatur).

According to a study by Peru's Export and Tourism Promotion Commission (Comisión de Promoción del Perú para la Exportación y el Turismo, PromPerú), in 2013 the majority of international tourists, some 61% of the total, travelled to Peru for recreational reasons, while 14% visited to see family and friends. Business tourists continue to represent a significant share of the pie at 13%, while the remaining 12% selected other reasons for visiting. International tourists stay on average 10 days and spend \$99 daily, an increase from \$84 in 2012, making the average spend \$990 per trip.

● *The Use of Open Innovation in Co-Creating Vienna's Tourism Strategy 2020*, Vienna Tourist Board (Austria) was first runner-up at this category.

GLOBAL Vienna 2020. Vienna positions itself as a global player to score in the global tourism market, in keeping with the motto “Vienna welcomes the world” (UNWTO, 2014).

SMART Vienna 2020 blends the qualities of Vienna as a city that embraces a culture of sustainability and excels at smart urban technologies and intelligent mobility solutions in order to present it as a “smart tourism city” – a city that offers both visitors and residents an exciting yet relaxed, authentic, comfortable and “green” urban experience.

PREMIUM Vienna 2020 embodies a strategy of quality leadership that makes the experience of being a guest

of Vienna unique and builds on the image of Vienna as a city of elegance and exquisite *joie-de-vivre*.

● *Fragrances and Tastes of Lošinj, Mali Lošinj Tourist Board (Croatia)*

- This project connects various public-private partnerships; supported the concept of health, vitality, biodiversity, sustainable development and responsible tourism;

- The core principles sustainability and responsibility; there is a center of excellence, ensuring education programs for children to adult and lifelong learning programs;

- first aim - educating the citizens about the importance of environmental protection, protection of health and plants, how plants can be used in aromatherapy.

- there has been used questionnaires to measure the satisfaction of our guests and citizens with destination tourism in general and the Fragrances and Tastes of Lošinj project specifically, to measure the satisfaction of citizens, they believe that only a satisfied destination citizen can be a good host!“

● *Visit Amsterdam, See Holland, Amsterdam Marketing (The Netherlands)* - the winner for innovation in non-governmental organizations.

The main characteristics for this initiative:

- unique cooperation between Amsterdam Marketing, the regional, local and provincial authorities, the local and regional tourist boards, and entrepreneurs in the tourism, culture and transport sector;

- developed marketing model with respect for the different goals of all public and private partners, the politicians, the inhabitants and a keen development concept in which roles and responsibilities were clearly defined;

- merging the individual interests into clusters, based on well elaborated research;

- a joint marketing proposition for the city and region, and targets and goals which projected a clear benefit for all participants.

● *Conserving Wildlife and Empowering Communities in Namibia, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) for Nature (Namibia)*

In August 2011, Namibia, Angola, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe signed a treaty to pool their resources and reach across their borders in the name of conservation. This cross-border collaboration addresses the urgent threats of poaching and climate change and potentially allows wildlife to expand its range

WWF will use the experience gained by supporting Namibia's successful conservancy program to help communities and governments manage their resources better, assist in the development of the area as a tourist destination, and help create corridors that give wildlife the freedom to roam. As communities begin to improve

the management of their own resources, there will be more opportunities for jobs and sources of income.

WWF's work in Namibia focuses on supporting their communal conservancy program - a successful model for balancing the needs of people and wildlife. We partner with local communities to help them manage their natural resources and ensure a future that includes healthy wildlife populations and sustainable economic growth. Today, there is a direct relationship between the health of wildlife populations and prosperity of local communities. As a result, poaching has declined dramatically and there are now restored populations of numerous species. Building off of the success of the conservancy program, we now partner with governments and other entities to conserve biodiversity across large landscapes made up of conservancies, national parks, other state-managed protected areas, and private land.

- *Taste of Fethiye, The Travel Foundation (Turkey)*

Project aims include:

- helping hotels in the Fethiye region buy produce from local farmers;
- helping local farmers to better understand the needs of hotels, and plan their production cycles accordingly, and help them to market their goods successfully.

Achievements:

- 2011 - workshops were held for farmers in the region, including advice on planning, collaboration of production and marketing to reduce waste and reduce costs. Written guidelines were also produced;
- in 2012 summer season, 32 local food events were held at hotels to help raise the profile of the produce, and the hoteliers supporting the local producers;
- in 2013 by switching to more sustainable agricultural practices, farmers have managed to reduce costs by 30% and achieve a 26% increase in profits;
- in 2014 878 tonnes of diverse, high quality, competitively-priced, fresh fruit and vegetables sustainably produced by 29 Taste of Fethiye farmers across six villages;
- in 2014, 254 tonnes of the produce was sold (via wholesaler) to hotels in Fethiye, and the remainder to other customers (via wholesaler);
- in the first three years of the project 2,109 tonnes of fresh fruit and vegetables have been produced, generating £510,923 in revenue.

- *Building a Community of Conscious Globetrotter Making a Positive Impact through Ethical and Responsible Tourism, Freedom – Explore Experience Empower (Australia).*

- Freedom is a brand new social enterprise, inspired by the belief that responsible tourism can eliminate poverty if social entrepreneurs and local communities have access to a more efficient and direct channel to

markets through technology. Empowering others to become strong, self-sufficient agents of change .

- Freedom aims to engage people in purposeful travel by leveraging technology and curating existing resources, guidelines and partnerships to make conscious travel easy.

- Leadership is not management. It is the purposeful use of collective wisdom, awareness, creativity and human skill to face difficult problems, drive change and unlock unseen potential by simply traveling responsibly and enjoying authentic experiences.

I have considered that I must present some of the globally recognised initiatives as regards best practices in tourism. I have selected, in particular, those projects that have adapted best to the principles of sustainable development, plus other nominations, in order to keep the balance and to compare different versions.

¿Y tú que planes?, *Vienna's Tourism Strategy 2020* and *Visit Amsterdam, See Holland, Amsterdam Marketing (The Netherlands)* are projects applied on and appropriate for the urban areas in which there are no crucial matters regarding environmental degradation or poverty, Vienna and Amsterdam being highly developed towns from an economic viewpoint.

Analysing the statistical data presented in the case study *¿Y tú que planes?*, the development of domestic tourism is benefic because it allows residents and other people with lower income to enjoy long vacations at favourable prices. Local economy is indeed supported and it attracts medium and long-term investments in Peru, which can lead to obtaining some social benefits by creating more jobs, by developing local infrastructure, diversity of tourism-related services, the development of tourism businesses and other types of businesses.

In the case of *Vienna's Tourism Strategy 2020*, the globalisation which is promoted as one of its strategy pillars, as well as the other dimensions that support the strategy, have brought benefits more than significant for its economy and labour market. In 2013, it recorded 12.7 million overnight stays – by approx. 4.8 million more than just ten years previously, which corresponds to an increase by 60 percent over 2003. Convention tourism contributed to this outstanding performance with no less than 1.4 million overnight stays only in 2013. Over the past ten years, the number of conventions has more than doubled. The economy and labour market benefit enormously from this success. The tourism and leisure industry inter alia guarantees around 84,000 workplaces. Every million Euros spent by guests during their stay in Vienna create eleven new full-time workplaces. Vienna's attractiveness is also exemplified by its dynamic accommodation market. Based on all presented data, although reaching the social side of sustainable development by creating

workplaces, returning the money to local population etc.; these projects can have negative effects on tourist destinations through pollution caused by overcrowding the area, by massive construction to the detriment of the natural environment, by increasing globalization and thus gradual dissolution of cultural specific features (traditions, local habits) through conflicts that can be generated between the local community and tourists. Emphasis is not laid on education and openness to alternative tourism, these destinations are suitable for classical tourists, willing to pay more and preferring to engage less in their future tourist experience, to benefit from a comfortable tourism, with a pre-determined average route, discovering what all tourists are looking for, the authenticity factor being underrepresented if we refer to their intentions.

Analysing the projects whose contexts vary widely and the type of tourists, *Fragrances and Tastes of Lošinj*, *Taste of Fethiye*, *The Travel Foundation (Turkey)* and *Conserving Wildlife and Empowering Communities in Namibia*, *World Wildlife Fund (WWF) for Nature (Namibia)* have common and new elements as compared with urban tourism, e.g.:

- The efficient usage of local resources, especially the ones that present local specific characteristics, like in the case of *Fragrances and Tastes of Lošinj*, being created a sustainable model through which, with the help of local resources, one can support tourism, and tourism, in its turn, increases the quality of life
 - Resources conservation is essential for the survival of the very poor communities in (Namibia) and also for the ones that want to maintain their standard of living or want to improve it (*Taste of Fethiye*, *The Travel Foundation*) and thus it is created a sustainable development pattern which supports local economy by maintaining its wild specificity - fauna and flora (Namibia), but also the creation of a sustainable needs chain, between the hotels' need for high quality products (demand) and the people's need for taking advantage of the local production/offer
 - Educating communities in order to better respond to the demand for tourism, and to protect and support as a local population by reducing resources waste and costs
 - Educating children and youngsters in the cultural and local activities is vital for the continuity of traditions and project sustainability (*Fragrances and Tastes of Lošinj*)
- Concerning each person's freedom of acting, wherever he/she might live, regardless of his/her race, religion, area of activity, there is a project called *Building a Community of Conscious Globetrotter Making a Positive Impact through Ethical and Responsible Tourism, Freedom – Explore Experience Empower (Australia)*. It is the version with a high degree of universality and globalization for a problem still present in all countries in the world - that of applying the

principles, values and projects that comply with the sustainable development specificity. The way of construction of this project, its innovative character and accessibility, gives it a special recognition, perfectly adapting not only to sustainable tourism, but also to the tendency of human evolution, by raising awareness through education and formation of values such as altruism, openness to new, adaptability, naturalness, simplicity; it is achieved a significant impact on human development of those participating in it and, last but not least, in winning some unique experiences through authenticity and emotional connection.

4. The emotional factor in tourism experience and human evolution

It must be made the distinction between the emotional factor as a tool to influence tourists to purchase a touristic package again, to become faithful in visiting a certain destinations, to which he feels deeply connected, and the emotional factor as the trigger for revelations, for discovery of answers, for (re)discovery of himself by strong impressions on the spiritual level that provides new and deep insight of life.

Education is also part of the emotional experience of an individual, being the way in which messages enter and remain in the mind and soul of a man. Responsible tourism is supported by education and its application is of great importance for modern society on its way to elevating the general and the tourism needs

Refining the consumption needs it depends on human quality of the individual, and, in terms of tourism, it depends on choosing experiences that actually sculpts the inside structure of the individual through communion with nature, opening the mind to understanding and becoming flexible regarding the new culture and traditions, active participating in local events and in solving the identified problems. Thus, the tourist evolves, and developing his intuition, he will know what to look for and where to look when he'll visit a destination, will recognize and choose what he has inside already and will remain open to learn, also.

Emotional factor is met especially in relationships between people, the connection between the tourist and local community is an example through the resident's stories, life experiences, hardships, failures or successes that can inspire and impress the tourist who listen them. By empathetic spirit and a good capacity to listen, the tourist receives narrated experiences as being his own, animated by the emotional factor, feeling joy, sadness, peace or love. These experiences, if they are experienced in a deep and conscious way, always remain as a souvenir for the tourist, being the precious milestones in his evolution.

Analyzing the types of tourism presented in this material, tourism practiced in urban areas has a

different emotional impact by practicing more of the mass tourism (Peru, Vienna, Amsterdam) where prevail comfort and luxury, visiting the anthropic landscape, greater dependence on travel agencies and hotels, increased tourist passivity. As an emotional trigger of human evolution, urban tourist destinations, by their standardized offer, usually does not cause inner changes and does not encourage introspection or meditation. This trend is caused by mass tourism capacity to promote predominantly urban fun activities that distract the individual from his inner nature.

Regarding sustainable tourism as an alternative to mass tourism, offers the frames in which tourist can gain the authentic emotional experiences, which are designed to guide him throw out his live. Especially tourism in areas such as Namibia and Australia shows that quality, and besides the modalities presented here for tourism contribution to human evolution, there are the promotion of cooperation between tourist and residents, between actors in tourism by building partnerships and networks where everyone can learn. Also it can be developed altruism, empathy, sensitivity, maturity and consciousness.

5. Conclusions

The revealing experiences for human becoming are mostly the ones in which the individual is in connection with the surrounding world, with the beauty of nature, with the diversity of people, through their culture and habits, connecting with all that is alive.

Sustainable tourism is the best form of tourism that can respond to the need, yet fully unconscious, of a human transformation model which can be compatible with the model of sustainable development. I believe that the triggering factor concerning education through tourism is the emotional one; the change cannot be made without a deep genuine connection between the tourist and the visited environment. Thus, it is important what tourism can provide to man, the way it educates his/her preferences and chooses to respect his evolution, but also his tourist requirements, which may differ depending on the tourist's life experiences and maturity. Tourism innovation is the mirror for man and society's *current* evolution.

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