

## YOUTH AND EDUCATIONAL TOURISM

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**Abstract:** *this article highlights one of the most fast growing types of tourism in global tourism market – youth tourism, gives statistics of youth travelling around the world. Moreover, article depicts meaning of educational tourism and its specifics.*

**Keywords:** *youth, tourism, education, education tourism.*

Today youth are a significant group in the world. According to the statistics, the number of youth between the ages 15 and 24 is 1.1 billion and they constitute 18 percent of the global population. Geographically, the largest population of youth is concentrated in Asia and the Pacific. Approximately 60 percent of youth live in Asia, 15 percent in Africa, 10 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the remaining 15 percent in developed countries and regions [1]. Day by day, youth are becoming more active in tourism and travelling that according to the statistics of WISE Travel Confederation, the number of youth travelling around the world estimated 270 million people in 2015 and it is forecasted to be 300 million in 2020 [2, p.10].

Education has become one of the most important purposes of youth travel, because youth want to study and open the world at the same time. Education helps young people prepare for adulthood. Learning occurs more intensely during childhood and adolescence than during any other phases of the life cycle. Education involves the development of physical or cognitive skills, the acquisition of knowledge, and the shaping of values, attitudes, and beliefs. Education is central to development and to the improvement of the lives of young people globally.

The term educational tourism refers to any "program in which participants travel to a location as a group, with the primary purpose of engaging in learning experience that is directly related to the location" [3, p. 28]. Its aim is to improve the education process, to enrich the educational experiences by providing scholarships abroad, tourist packages that include camps, excursions, language classes for any level of knowledge, including training on certain fields or on categories of interest. It also includes summer schools, and theme camps that are organized nationally and internationally.

The educational tourism offer is varied and includes programs for children and young adults, as well as for their parents and grandparents, for pupils, students, graduates, post-graduates, young employees; and they provide academic and training studies for admission at prestigious universities from all over the world, as well as the integration in an interactive, highly qualified environment, acknowledged internationally. In addition, the programs allow leisure options, cultural diversity and various fun activities with colleagues of other nationalities in attractive locations.

This form of tourism is increasingly developing in Romania due to the requirement imposed by society to know at least two foreign languages and to get familiarized with various cultures. We are becoming more and more aware of these requirements as we go through different stages of educational training and subsequently as we start to build a career.

Educational tourism has developed because of the knowledge and education needs manifested over time by various civilizations and not because of pleasure, as we tend to believe. For example, in Great Britain, tourism was a key factor in educating the population and was given an educational role since ancient times.

International camps are the best schools for children and young people because this new information is assimilated like in a game, facilitating learning through similarity, imitation and repetition. The participants in these programs can be housed in university campuses, at families selected by the school, in student apartments or hostels and hotels, depending on age, preferences and type of program. The programs include educational, social, cultural, sports activities and trips and could take place through intercultural exchanges, meaning the host country will also organize these types of programs in the countries where the young people come from.

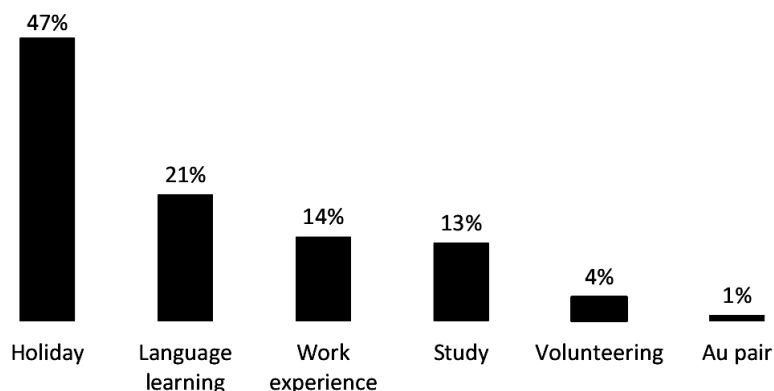


Fig. 1. Travel purpose of youth [4]

As it is clearly seen from the Picture 2, language learning is a second main purpose of youth travel with 21 percent after holiday and study estimates 13 percent in 2013.

With educational tourism youth are curious about learning host countries language. Language travel, defined as travel abroad to improve language skills and today it has become a structured and important part of global youth tourism market. Approximately 3,000 language travel providers, 50 related language travel associations across the globe, 16,000 education agencies and 2 million students travelling solely for the purpose of language acquisition every year [5].

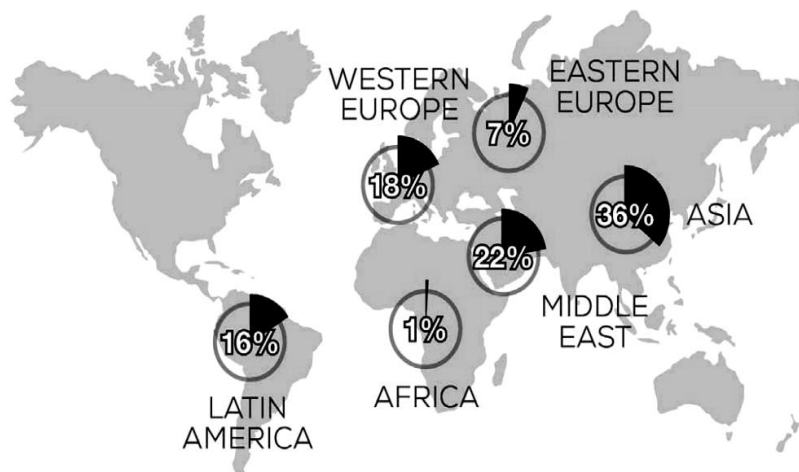


Fig. 2. The percentage of language learning students by regions [6]

These trends indicate continued growth for youth tourism in the future, particularly as demand grows from new emerging markets and young people continue to view travel not just as a form of leisure but also as an essential part of their personal development. The current research also continues to underline the high value of youth and student travel, as young people spend far more than the average tourist on their major trips. The growth rate of youth travel spending has also exceeded the growth in global tourism spend per trip over the past five years.

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