

**University (PhD) Dissertation These**

**TOURISM AND LEARNING**

**– THE TOURISTIC BEHAVIOUR OF SECONDARY SCHOOL  
STUDENTS IN A PROVINCIAL TOWN –**

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## Setting objectives and the circumscription of the topic

Our dissertation focuses on the youth age-group. We examined them in the context of their experience-consumption during tourism, touristic socialization and learning connected to tourism. **Tourism** is an important phenomenon of our age, the summer months are characterized by a sort of migration. The essence of this phenomena is taking advantage of services while gaining experience – out of domicile (see Michalkó 2001), and it has a bigger and bigger role in the postindustrial societies of our age (see Schulze 1992, 2000, 2003). However, experience-consumption is not only a way of entertainment, but an experience that has a personal meaning as well, since its significance lays not only in lifting us up from our everyday world (see Pusztai 1998), but it also gives us an opportunity to fit in a new, a different environment, to get acquainted with the surrounding world. Our starting point was the book entitled „Experience Society” by Schulze (1992). Being a tourist can make even those slices of our lives visible that are less seizable otherwise (see Urry 2007). The tourist – consciously or by chance (see Rátz 1999) – searches for the alternatives he is accustomed to, looks for contrast experience (see Bauman 1999), relaxation and engagement (see Braun 1993), and gains experience (see Szíjártó 2000) etc.

The erudition increasing effect of travelling is not recent (see Bitskey 2004, Éles 2007, Puczko and Rátz 2002, Virág 2008). It can also be regarded as one of the oldest ways of **learning**. If we start from the fact that the biggest attractive force of travelling is curiosity (see Kolakowski 1998), this statement is extremely important in terms of our topic, since curiosity is one of the most essential elements of learning and lifelong learning as well (see Durkó 1984, Forray and Juhász 2008b). However, the type of travelling that we choose has a major influence on the extent of our personality’s enrichment and it also widens our knowledge and competences (see Fülöp 2000, Löfgren 2004), which means that we are different from each other even when we are tourists. For this reason, our dissertation has been trying to explore the socio-cultural background factor.

The reason why we have chosen this age-group is that gaining experience is extremely important for the **youth**, since due to the characteristics of their age, they are considerably oriented by experience and they are open to experience new things (see Schulze 1992, Scitovsky 1990). It is also remarkable that on an international scale youth tourists amount to 20 percent of

the demand side of tourism (Gibb 2007). We can also see that in relation to the beginning of a new era, at the age of adolescence, (see Gábor 2006, Zinnecker 2006), young people get independent at an earlier age than before, and this independence is in connection with their consumption and their freetime primarily. It is also shown by the fact that the youth go out alone earlier and earlier, and they make consumer decisions (see Bauer and Szabó 2005, Bauer et al. 2005), and this is also true for their participation in tourism.

The major **questions of our research** were aimed at examining how tourism as a popular freetime activity – in the form of memories and activities gained by experience – forms the personal development and knowledge of the youth, what it gives to them, focusing on the travelling features of secondary school students. During our work, we have bestowed special attention to touristic socialization, participation in consumption, and spending freetime while on vacation in the context of learning, and we even made an attempt at setting up some kind of a typology in connection with them.

The **aim** of the dissertation and the **practical** significance of the topic can be seen in that the young age-group – in our dissertation the undergraduate secondary school students' age-group in Eger – is examined in a 'tourist role', and through this, we can study their decisions concerning their freetime, the different ways they spend it, and their motivations in a tinged way, and because of that, we hope that our work may be suppletory for researchers of the youth and others interested in this area. We hope to enrich the existing results of pedagogy, since we can say that youth tourism is among the less-researched fields in Hungary from sociological point of view. The indirect significance of our investigation takes shape in that the youth of our age will become the tourists of the future, and during lifelong learning, in every field of life, the individual 'learns' something continuously, even without noticing it. While spending his freetime – and during tourism too -, he enriches his personality, widens his competencies or strengthens his skills (see Forray and Juhász 2008, Juhász and Ludányi 2008, Komenczi 2001).

### **Theoretical background**

The theoretical background can be divided into three big stages, the aim of which is systemic, conceptual clarification. We have examined the literature of this field through foreign and domestic works, studies, and writings published in scientific journals (see Kozma and Sike 2004). In this respect, the sociological relations of tourism theory, books on pedagogy, and the literature of a wider scope are published primarily, showing the multidisciplinary nature of this paper.

Beside that, we also made an attempt at exploring empirical studies related to this topic. At the end of the dissertation, the possible perspectives of the topic are collected, and we also worded recommendations on how to increase the youth's participation in tourism.

We started the theoretical overview by introducing and analyzing the phenomena of tourism, and we did not leave the critical approach of mass tourism out of consideration either. The point of tourism theory can be grasped through the system of tourism, and for this reason we have also given a short description of the systemic approach of tourism, focusing on the **subject** of it. Throughout the section, we have outlined the fundamental conditions of taking part in tourism: motivation, freetime, and the discretionary income. The analysis of motivation was very useful for making tourist-typologies more tinged; in connection with the discretionary income, we examined consumption habits, and we were searching for the relation between tourism and social status specifically. The analysis of it was regarded essential, because during the empirical research we tried to make a survey of the travelling habits of the families of secondary school students, we wanted to know how much their lifestyle is influenced by travelling, and what kind of effect it has on the youths' taking part in tourism. In relation to the consumption habits, we have also investigated the connection between tourism and the change of values.

In the section entitled „The youth in tourism” our aim was to form a conception of the young age-group as tourists. As tourism is connected to freetime, and it is some kind of a consumption itself, we have taken the characteristics of their lifestyle into consideration first – stressing freetime and consumption habits – considering the most important features of the so called beginning of a new era in the life of the youth. After that we have given a detailed description of the antecedents of travelling of the youth, and presented and analysed international and domestic research results.

In the third theoretical section of the paper (Learning opportunities during tourism) we have examined the role of experience while being a tourist, the media of touristic socialization, and the different ways of learning in the context of tourism. As the summer freetime activities organized by the schools are not really typical of students at the age of 17 and 18, from among the socialization media, we have focused our attention on the determinant role of journeys with the family and have taken into consideration the significance of the social capital (see Coleman 1998). We have also made an attempt at getting to know the travelling features of Hungarian people living in the same household with the help of a second analysis. Since tourism and

learning are related to freetime among other things, we also paid attention to gaining experience and learning through the reception of travel experience during freetime. Considering that qualification has an important role in doing self-studies or not (see Durkó 2002), we also examined the role of cultural capital (see Bourdieu 1978) in the context of tourism.

### **The methods and process of empirical research**

The target group of our research was made up of 12th form students who live or study in Eger. Our empirical research made an attempt at getting a more detailed picture of the travelling habits of young tourists, focusing on touristic experience consumption, travelling socialization, and learning. Our aim was to get to know the motivation for travelling, the organization of travelling, all the activities done while being a tourist, the use of the journey, the experience gained, the reason why certain journey were cancelled etc. Beside these, we also wanted to explore the sociocultural factors in the background.

The base-lump of the research was made up of students attending the 11th form of secondary schools maintained by the local government or the church in Eger, in the 2006-2007 academic year, altogether 1971 people. We fixed the size of the sample at 25% of the base-lump, that is 492, almost 500 people. The aim of sampling was to find the appropriate schools, and within those, the appropriate classes. We tried to do our survey in parallel classes of the schools, and we also took into consideration the actual division of students in the different types of education so we may suspect with good reason that regarding youth tourism, the opinion and experience of students taking part in the survey represent the thoughts and experience of secondary school students studying in Eger appropriately.

The collection of data was done in the form of surveys, and the examination of the cross-section was carried out in the autumn of 2007. Our motives behind choosing this date was that at the beginning of the schoolyear, coming back from the summer vacation, the memories are still much more vivid, so we were focusing on the 2007 summer vacation primarily. The survey used for our examination can be divided into 3 sections. The explanatory variables (the qualification of parents, the financial situation of the family, the knowledge of a foreign language, the use of internet, freetime etc.) were followed by the questions regarding vacation with the family and vacations organized themselves. We touched upon the following groups of questions: the motivation and aim of travelling (visiting relatives, relaxation, recreation, widening of knowledge etc.), the organization of journeys (organized individually or by a travel agency), the experience

gained during the journey, the use of travelling, opportunities of learning (both in a wider and narrower sense), the opinions regarding vacation, the reasons why certain journeys were cancelled etc. When setting up the survey, we also took into consideration the possibility of getting information even from those students who have never travelled alone.

The questionnaire had to be filled in by themselves, in the course of the form-master's class, and in the presence of an interviewer. In the polling we were assisted by the students of the Eszterházy Károly College, majoring in cultural management (specialized in tourism). After the inquiry, the number of questionnaires that could be evaluated was 417. We recorded the survey forms in the SPSS application, and for making estimates and analyses we also used this database. We also compared our results with other nation-wide data that were available.

### **Major conclusion**

1) We can say that similarly to nation-wide tendencies, in the case of Eger students who were interviewed, it is the parents' qualification that determines what type of education they attend, that is the higher the parents' **qualification** is, the more probable it is that their children go to high schools. The connection between the mother's qualification and the choice of program type within the school is even stronger. However, in many cases the father's qualification was the determining factor. For example, the father's qualification determines the financial situation of the family primarily, and this financial situation determines – indirectly to the father's qualification – the language exam certificates and the use of internet too. While having a language exam certificate depends both on the financial situation of the family and the choice of school, the intensity of internet use is much more related to the financial situation of the family.

2) The young age-group's participation in tourism is influenced by the family's cultural and social capital, that is the journeys of the youth are strongly influenced by the travelling habits of the **family**. The socializing effect of journeys with the family could be seen, among other things, in the organization and opinions of travelling, since the attitude towards travelling was different in the case of those students who travel as a part of their lifestyle.

In our survey we also analyzed the **cultural capital** – beside qualification and the choice of program within the school – through cultural consumption. We examined the cultural consumption of the family from the point of view of their motives when going on vacation, since we wanted to know if the possibility of learning has a role when deciding about the target place of their journeys. We can say that the mother's qualification was the determining factor in this.

The higher qualification the mother has, the more attention is paid to possibilities of learning, and in our survey it could also be seen in the pupil's choice.

In relation to the social capital it can be ascertained that if the family regards spending freetime with travelling important, and what is most important of all is the 'how', it has an effect on the child's decision as well when he has travelling as an option to other things. Beside this, we wanted to examine the influence of the family through the role of siblings, or more precisely, the elder siblings, but due to the low number of participants in the survey, this number should be handled with care when comparing with other data, but we can say that the elder brothers and sisters have a role in the younger child's decision when choosing travelling as the means of spending freetime.

We divided the families into Losonczy's (1977) **consumer types** and we found that in the case of those secondary school students who attend high schools in Eger and for those whose families strive for going on vacation every summer, and as a result they often go on vacation, and together with all those students whose families have already integrated skiing as a part of their lifestyle, the motivation for earning money gives the opportunity of consumption that can even be regarded as prestige-consumption. If money is considered to be a tool within the family, and object-centricity is important, we may suppose that the families of those secondary school students belong to this group who choose travelling less probably because of its being less tangible, less lasting.

3) It can be laid down as a fact that the secondary school students in Eger plan to spend their summer vacation with travelling consciously and most supposedly Eger's being a county seat and touristic centre has a role in this decision since the presence and behaviour of tourists has an effect on local population's relation to tourism (see Rátz 1999) because we have found a significant number of journeys from this age-group, especially in the form of individual travellings. **95 percent** of those who took part in our survey have already travelled without parental, school or other surveillance. As regards the average age, the first journey with their own company took place **by the age of 16** mostly, and is typical of high school students primarily. Beside all this, the fact that students save some money up for summer vacation, and they even undertake jobs to reach their goal, also shows that the youth **prepare** for travelling somewhere during the summer **consciously**.

4) According to the secondary school students, their social **skills and competencies** which were aimed at getting to know their friends and schoolmates better, being able to cooperate with them better, and being more self-reliant have also developed while spending their vacation with travelling, moreover, they also gained experience. Its evaluation has been done on the basis of school-type, that is the high school students experienced it the best, and the students from vocational schools the least, which is also related to the values of the family, the family capital.

5) The preparation of a journey postulates knowledge and expertise, that is finding the necessary information from among all the available. We can say that the majority of the youth has done some investigation to organize his own journey, and updated his already existing knowledge. They used the internet as a source of information primarily. However, the '*quantity and quality*' of preparation determined how and with what the youth spent their vacation, it determined whether they spent their freetime in an active or passive way, and how much information they needed to carry it out. We can say that those who spent their vacation abroad, or took part in a cultural program, that is the high school students primarily, had most probably done more investigation, and used the internet, that is in accordance with our assumptions, it can be related to their parents' qualification.

6) The youth's interest in tourism is not the same, as it could also be seen in their opinion regarding vacation. During our survey, we managed to set up various tourist-types that shows their differences even better. The youth who took part in the survey can be divided into two major groups on the basis of gender, program type, their parents' qualification etc. It means that there is a sharp dividing line between those secondary school students who long for entertainment and those who are interested in culture when examining their preparations before journey, and their actions and the way they gain experience during the vacation. Among others, these were the factors that we used for examining their learning.

7) When examining the factors one by one, we can see that the **dwelling place** is the least determining of all. The reason why it is so is that all the students taking part in the research are students from Eger, therefore the **school** as a scene for socialization is very significant. We cannot forget about the parents' qualification and cultural capital which determines the choice of school in their children's case, and we cannot neglect the type of program the students attend and its determining role either.

8) We have also examined the socializing effect of schools deriving from the **school's profile**. However, we had to discard our assumption that those students who get acquainted with the system of tourism in the frames of education also, find it less dangerous, less problematic than those who do not have a more thorough knowledge of it, because our results did not confirm it. On the other hand, we have also made a survey of the school's effect on environmental attitudes, where we found that those who attend high school, find it more important to get to know nature than those in other types of programs.

#### **Revised publications by the author regarding the topic:**

- 2009 A turista élmény és tanulás. (The tourist-experience and learning.) In Bajusz Bernadett (et al.) (2009): *Professori Salutem. Tanulmányok a 70 éves Kozma Tamás tiszteletére*. Debrecen, Doktoranduszok Kiss Árpád Közhasznú Egyesülete. 63-70. p. (ISBN 978 963 473 273 0)
- 2008 Autonóm tanulás és turizmus összefüggései egy kutatás tükrében. (The coherence between self-directed learning and tourism in respect of a research.) (Társ szerző: Juhász Erika)  
*Educatio*, 17. évf. 2. sz. 301-307. p. (ISSN 1216-3384)
- 2007 Rousseau vagy az utazásról és a turizmus. (Rousseau or about the travelling and the tourism.)  
*Iskolakultúra*, 17. évf. 8-10. sz. 23-31. p. (ISSN 1586-202X)
- 2007 Az ifjúsági turizmus. (Youth tourism.)  
*Képzés és Gyakorlat*, 5. évf. 2. sz. 99-107. p. (ISSN 1589-519X)
- 2007 Középiskolások a turizmusban. (Secondary school students in the tourism.) In Mankovits Tamás – Molnár Sándor Károly – Németh Sarolta (szerk.) (2007): *Tavaszi Szél*. Budapest, Doktoranduszok Országos Szövetsége. 135-140. p. (ISBN 978-963-87569-0-9)
- 2007 A tanulmányi kirándulások és a turizmus kapcsolata. (The connection between Field Trips and Tourism.)  
*Mester és Tanítvány*, 4. évf. 13. sz. 53-59. p. (ISSN 1785-4342)

### **Further writings by the author:**

- 2008 Die Kirchen und der Tourismus – Die Möglichkeit der Zusammenarbeit anhand deutscher Beispiele. (Egyházak és a turizmus – Az együttműködés lehetőségei német példa nyomán.) In Pusztai Gabriella (szerk.) (2008): *Religion and Values in Education in Central and Eastern Europe*. Debrecen, CHERD. 445-451. p. (ISBN 978 963 473 103 0; ISSN 2060-2596)
- 2008 Aus der Geschichte der ungarischen Erwachsenenbildung. (Szemelvények a magyar felnőttképzés történetéből.) (Társszerző: Juhász Erika) In Sári Mihály (főszerk.) (2008): *A felnőttképzés története Közép-Európában. Regionalisierung-Internationalisierung. Geschichte der Erwachsenenbildung in Zentraleuropa*. Pécs, Pécsi Tudományegyetem. 227-237. p. (ISBN 978 963 642 265 3)