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History and Characteristics of the Development of Educational Tourism in Russia

Abstract: In this day and age, competitiveness may manifest itself in young people through the pursuit of quality education, new knowledge, as well as continuous learning and self-improvement. Accordingly, modern academic environment retains and strengthens the importance of this very need to grow while also becoming increasingly vital as an economic branch in post-industrial societies. Universities attract the youth to their respective cities by offering them education of either short- or long-term nature. This article features the history and current status of educational tourism development in Russia. The authors put forward certain recommendations that may improve the situation.

Keywords: Russia, educational tourism, educational service, educational product, educational market

1. Introduction

It transpires that young people strive to acquire quality education. In order to achieve this goal, they are ready to move to another city or country prior to choosing their subsequent place of employment. What is more, the process in question contributes to the economic development of particular areas to which people come with the purpose of receiving basic or additional (non-formal) education (Khusnutdinova and Safonova, 2014). A multitude of academic institutions in the world – including Russia – establish and implement their marketing programs to promote their educational services, and rely on attracting students from diverse cities and countries. For this matter, as far as various university rankings are concerned, the presence of a large number of foreign students may serve as an indicator of an institution's success and its high competitiveness.

Literature on the subject addresses numerous aspects of educational tourism pertaining to both its development potential and problems arising in this field. Above all, it is emphasized that studying abroad may be highly beneficial for the ones involved in this process. That being

said, there is no certainty as to how and to what extent the students in question benefit from such circumstances (Stone et al., 2017). What is more, despite the fact that numerous universities offer educational services for foreigners, determining their expertise or predispositions before their arrival and after their graduation poses a great challenge with the current state of research. Bearing that in mind, it is recommended for academic institutions to also take the main challenges and aspects outside the field of educational tourism into consideration should they intend to expose subsequent teachers to international student teaching abroad (Quezada, 2004).

It is often stressed that Europe plays a leading role in terms of higher education financing. However, it should be mentioned that due to insufficient information on the region presence in the higher tourism education financing sector, this and other regions require further research (Mahachi-Chatibura and Nare, 2017).

Moreover, the article offers analysis of policy documents and stakeholders' thoughts, which are instrumental in improving undergraduate

academic tourism as a whole. Apart from the government itself, the institutions involved include non-governmental tourism associations along with tourism academics and tourism trade associations (Yusuf et al., 2018).

As is stated in, *inter alia*, Smith and Jenner's (1997) research, language learning is likely to play a major role in educational tourism. Aside from the fact that Spanish and Chinese are becoming more prevalent in today's world, English is still of great prominence. Thus, in spite of the growing competition, the UK exerts a profound influence in the field of educational tourism.

Other than that, there is a number of qualitative studies, the purpose of which is to survey the youth and their standpoint on studying overseas in order to gain a deeper insight into said issue (Duerden et al., 2018).

It is argued that international educational tourism has the potential to foster global learning. Nevertheless, there is a need to perform more empirical research to confirm this statement (McGladdery and Lubbe, 2017). The same holds true for Russia, since no research on a general scale has been conducted so far. Accordingly, this article features a preliminary summary of changes with reference to educational tourism in the country in question, which may give rise to further targeted studies and provide the opportunity to set up the route towards development of this very field.

2. Methods of research

This paper is mostly based on a general review of theoretical aspects of the study on educational tourism, and Russian experience related to the organization of educational tourism. It also looks into foreign practices in terms of the development of said tourism form. Among essential aspects of this study one can find the analysis of the Russian state policy in the field of education, a number of legal documents of either local or foreign nature, and the procedures aimed at bringing young people and specialists from abroad to Russian universities. The analysis involved strategies employed by universities in the USA, Germany, and Finland. Many of them hold leading positions in the ranking of the best universities in the world

Contrary to popular belief, the education system of the USSR was among the finest in the world, and the quality of education was particularly high (Rodionova et al., 2018). However, when Russia transitioned from a planned economy to a market economy at the beginning of the 1990s, this system required a number of alterations. In order to adapt to a changing situation not only with regard to economy, but also demography and society itself, Russia undertook efforts to seek new mechanisms that would improve the functioning of its universities. Considerable diversity of both academic institutions and educational programs in modern Russia, especially in rapidly changing circumstances, has led to increased competition between facilities in various spheres (e.g. including student recruitment). Thus, universities had to implement efficient marketing policies so as to promote their educational services.

In a broad sense, educational tourism constitutes any cognitive activity performed whilst travelling. Educational institutions, official tourism organizations, government bodies, and employers worldwide recognize its social, cultural, and economic value.

This article aims to identify the characteristics of the development of educational tourism in modern Russia, as well as to introduce the readers to its historical background. In addition, the authors provide certain proposals that may improve the situation.

(QS World University Rankings 2018), and the list includes 10 universities from Finland (University of Helsinki – ranked 102; Aalto University – 137; University of Turku – 276, etc.). To provide comparison, Moscow State University named after M.V. Lomonosov was ranked 95, St. Petersburg State University – 240, Novosibirsk State University – 250, etc.

The authors draw attention to the experience of Finland. Their Ministry of Education has established the Education Finland export program for education services provided in Finland. The website of the Ministry of Education provides the best practices concerning international cooperation. We analyzed the sites of Russian universities: Moscow State University named

after M.V. Losonosov, Higher School of Economics, Kazan Federal (Volga) University, Ural Federal University named after First President of Russia, B.N. Yeltsin (UrFU), Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University), etc.

The authors analyzed Project 5-100, the goal of which is to maximize the competitive position of a group of leading Russian universities on the global market of educational services and research programs (more on Project 5-100 website: <https://www.5top100.ru/>). This is a state program aimed at supporting the largest Russian universities. It is carried out with

the support of the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia in accordance with the decree of the President of Russia of May 7th, 2012 "On measures to implement state policy in the field of education and science". The main goal of Project 5-100 is to increase the prestige of Russian higher education.

The analysis of government programs in the field of export of education and the websites of foreign and Russian universities allowed the authors to formulate recommendations that will help attract a greater number of students from different countries to study in Russia.

3. Theoretical aspects of the study on educational tourism

The ability to accumulate, systematize, and use acquired knowledge correctly is an expression of the competitiveness that can be found both in individuals and the society as a whole. The pursuit of quality education and new knowledge, together with continuous learning and self-improvement are among the striking features of a post-industrial or knowledge economy. Being the main product of our times, knowledge is becoming ever more relevant. At the beginning of the 21st century, a new phenomenon associated with pursuing quality education abroad emerged in Russia and the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (or CIS). In certain instances, such desire becomes one of the key factors in the choice of prospective students whether to change their current place of residence or not.

According to the International Standard Classification of Education developed by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics in 2011, "Education is the process by which society purposefully transfers accumulated knowledge, understanding, attitudes, values, skills, competencies and behavior patterns from generation to generation. They include communication for learning" (International Standard Classification..., 2011).

The authors discuss the matter of rapidly increasing mobility which stems from the fact that today's world is becoming more open and thus facilitates free movement across borders. As a result, people seeking a better life and high-quality education are ready to move their domicile to other cities and countries.

Mobility by itself comprises a term that is widely used nowadays and as such can take various forms. For instance, long-term mobility involves migration, but may refer to other types of geographic movement as well. Modern tourism, which is considered another type of mobility, corresponds closely to socio-economic development, and, in fact, its range of activities expands progressively. As an illustration it may be noted that the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2017 the International Year of Sustainable Tourism Development. Important to realize is the fact that tourism allows for greater insight into other nations, a much clearer picture of legacy belonging to diverse civilizations, and deeper understanding of a wide spectrum of cultural values. Consequently, such actions contribute to the strengthening of world peace (United Nations Declares, 2015).

Present-day youth perceive travel (tourism) as an integral part of their everyday life. By the same token, the trips made by young people – including talented individuals – who aspire to broaden their knowledge also have a great influence on cultural exchange and experience. Said tourism-oriented activities contribute to the socio-economic development of particular areas to which people come with the purpose of receiving basic or additional (non-formal) education. Obtaining high-quality education or employment, which may ensure well-being for the young people and their children, are among the prime motivations for migration. For this reason, it is appropriate to turn to

the concept of educational tourism. Its value in social, cultural, and economic spheres is recognized by numerous people and establishments, including educational institutions, official tourism organizations, government bodies, and employers worldwide (Top Five Most Popular Studies..., 2017; Understanding Tourism..., 2018).

According to Pogodina (2009), despite the fact that educational tourism has a rich history, its very concept has not yet been fully formed. Another statement made by this author is worded as follows: "Educational tourism is a phenomenon of integration of education and tourism through the organization of tourist and educational activities to achieve the goals and objectives defined by the curriculum and aimed at the formation and development of personal qualities that manifest themselves in the formation of universal, general professional and specialized competencies" (Pogodina, 2009). In a broader sense, educational tourism can be perceived as a cognitive activity, whereas in the strict sense of the term, it is "a special direction of tourism". It includes specially organized interactive forms and various combinations of recreation, learning, and education for people of all ages. Training carried out outside the place of residence usually takes the form of tourist trips, during which solving a specific pedagogical or developmental task requires from 24 hours to 6 months, depending on circumstances (Nikolaeva, 2013). The objective usually constitutes either acquiring education (be it general, special, or additional) or advanced training by means of a wide range of courses and internships without engaging in activities related to receiving income from sources in the country (place) of temporary residence. In addition, it becomes apparent that the most popular educational tours revolve around learning foreign languages. From the economic point of view, however, educational tourism is a system which provides for creation, distribution, sale, and consumption of educational services within the national and world economy. Moreover, this system requires that trainers involved in this process transfer from their place of permanent residence to the place of study so as to meet the needs for knowledge,

skills, and competences for a maximum period of one year (Babkin, 2008).

As for foreign literature, one can also find several interesting definitions. One of them is provided by Rodger (1998), who refers to educational tourism as any type of program, the participants of which travel either individually or in a group, and their primary goal is to engage in educational process or gain educational experience directly related to their chosen destination. On the other hand, Ritche (2003) defines it as activities performed by overnight visitors and tourists, for whom training and education are the main or secondary purpose of the trip. Because of this distinction in motivations, he divided travelers into two groups—"education first" and "tourism first"—depending on what is considered their primary objective. Other authors are of the opinion that educational tourism is nothing more than student exchanges between educational institutions, and consists of several subtypes, such as ecotourism, cultural tourism, as well as agro-ecotourism.

All the aforementioned definitions of educational tourism do not include tourism activities as such (Understanding Tourism..., 2018). Then again, educational tourism should be defined as a pedagogical technology, since it may be considered a highly efficient form of education which also includes organization of educational process.

According to the Federal Law of Russia "On the Basics of Tourism Activities in the Russian Federation," the field of educational tourism covers all types of education and training which are provided away from one's permanent residence (Order of the Government, 2012; The State program..., 2014). As is the case with tourism itself or any of its types, educational tourism can be broken down into the following branches: domestic, outbound, and inbound.

The goals of educational tourism include exchange of experiences and obtaining new information that may prove to be of use in professional life. In fact, the largest cities in the world constitute leaders in the knowledge economy, which, given the importance of expertise nowadays, prompts those who are willing to acquire proper education to leave their homes behind.

4. The history of educational tourism development in Russia

The authors of this article assume that the development of educational tourism dates back to antiquity, when poets of that time, who later became philosophers, traveled to numerous countries with the aim of exploring and learning about the world surrounding them – for instance, Greek philosopher Plato founded a philosophical school upon returning home from a long journey. The fact is, however, that educational tourism began to take shape in the late Middle Ages, when the first universities emerged (Pogodina, 2009).

It is thus apparent that educational tourism has a rich history worldwide – including Russia. The tradition of this country regarding travels with the purpose of acquiring profession and expertise overall is said to have emerged during the reign of Peter I, and continues to this day (Ulyaninskiy, 1914, 1915). Additionally, during the 18th and 19th century, education in Russia underwent several changes due to newly introduced reforms. Novikov, Yankovich, and Radishchev also contributed to the work on this matter – the so-called excursion method of research activities (Lindeman, 1914). By the early 20th century, educational trips became widespread and Russia established its own thematic routes. For this reason, tourists could take pleasure in observing the scenery, learning about interesting historical places, and admiring natural objects scattered across the country (Zorin and Kvartalnov, 2003). The basis of educational tourism comprised travels primarily carried out by geographers, historians, researchers, merchants, and representatives of the business world. They were the ones who made scientific discoveries, observations, and descriptions related to the property of other people. These days one can find a wide variety of literary, geographical and historical materials based on reports and diaries written during said expeditions.

Back in the 19th century in Western Europe and the Russian Empire, the concept of “visibility” in school education gained popularity (Lindeman, 1914). Educational tourism in Russia in the 19th and early 20th centuries was aimed at students and teachers, and so they were given the opportunity to participate in various

excursion programs (Pyatkova, 2008). As it was observed by numerous researchers, the tourists predominantly comprised scientists of all specialties, teachers of educational institutions, as well as regular students (Dolzhenko, 1988). In 1876, Golovkinsky was the first person to organize a tourist trip for students, the destination being Crimea. As it was noted in *Excursion Bulletin* for the year 1914, this very event facilitated obtaining knowledge which could not be found in books or picked up during classes, not to mention that it also stimulated scientific interests and indicated possible ways of further improvement (Gintovta and Borozdina, 1914).

Considering educational tourism as a form of economic activity, certain organizational forms could be identified as early as in the 19th century. The first tourist organizations, namely the societies and associations of travel enthusiasts, played a major role in this process. Their area of interest was not directed solely at the exploration of regions, and although they organized educational trips and excursions, these activities were not public nor funded by the state (Pyatkova, 2008). Then again, they did not strive to become a nationwide tourism organizations – their travels were meant only for the members of the societies in question. Such endeavors greatly contributed to the creation and publication of the first historical essays as well as guides to the cities and regions of the country featuring personal impressions of tourists (Tkeshelashvili, 1899; Lindeman, 1914; Savelov, 1915).

Teachers of Russian educational institutions in the late 19th and early 20th century highlighted the need to develop educational tourism, especially in terms of guided tours around the country, region or particular city. Accordingly, they published their works concerning this issue in the “Excursion Bulletin (Rus: Ekskursionnyy vestnik)” (Ulyaninskiy, 1914, 1915; Tarasov, 1914; Gartving, 1914).

With a view to pedagogy at the beginning of the 20th century, an even greater emphasis was put on traveling as a means to obtain scientific and practical knowledge (among the ones approving of this method were K.D. Ushinsky, A.Ya. Gerd, P.F. Kapterev) (Lappo, 1997).

At that time, specialized magazines for tourists included *Russian tourist* in St. Petersburg, "Excursion Bulletin" in Moscow, and "Notes of the Crimean-Caucasian Mountain Club" in Odessa.

Within the same time frame, teachers would integrate tourism into their teachings so as to educate and train their students more effectively. This was, in fact, evidenced by the Law on Strengthening the School's Communication with Life (1958), which led to the approval of new educational programs and curricula. Particular accent was put on the special role of local history in the teaching of school subjects, which needed to be taken into account while organizing excursions. During the 1960s and 1970s, the purpose of expeditions undertaken by teachers and their students was to study the history of their homeland.

An important step in the development of international educational tourism was taken by European countries as they signed the Bologna Declaration on April 17th, 2001. Owing to that decision, there has been a dramatical increase in mobility of international students over recent years. In 2014, as far as the countries of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) are concerned, foreign students amounted to 6% of all students enrolled in higher education programs. Students from Asia make up more than half (53%) of international students studying in OECD countries for graduate and doctoral programs or their equivalent (Education at a Glance, 2016). As a matter of fact, China is the country with the largest number of citizens studying abroad, followed by India and Germany. As for OECD countries, however, the USA ranked first with regard to the number of foreign students accepted for graduate and doctoral programs or equivalent

(26% of the total), followed by the United Kingdom (15%), France (10%), Germany (10%), and Australia (8%) (Education, 2016, 2017).

At present, e-education, which is developing more actively within the framework of non-formal education, poses a competitive constraint on educational tourism. In 2016 the non-formal e-learning market worldwide was estimated at \$47 billion. The proliferation of open educational resources is a medium-term trend promoting introduction of new educational technologies in higher education (The NMC Horizon Report, 2015; Education at a Glance, 2017).

In most of the leading countries in the export of education the policy of attracting foreigners to study is supported by a national strategy further complemented by several university strategies. Bearing that in mind, universities are key players in attracting the attention of students from abroad.

Currently, educational tourism in Russia not only remains relevant, but it has also acquired new characteristics, which relate to both tourism and educational activities. What is more, a new State Program of the Russian Federation on Development of Culture and Tourism covering the period of 2013–2020 (as amended in September 2017) has been adopted. It envisages "development and promotion of cultural and educational tourism as the basis for the growth of enlightenment, raising the cultural and educational level of the Russian population (primarily of young people)" (The state program..., 2014; Order of the Government, 2012). Although the legislation of the Russian Federation did not include any separate directives for regulating educational tourism, this very field reflects the need of people to develop their intellectual side and search for new knowledge in general.

5. Discussion

The authors of this article put forward the following proposals that may foster the development of educational tourism in Russia in current conditions.

First of all, it is important to pursue the research on foreign experience in this field, and put particular focus on the leading countries in the export of educational services,

the reason being the fact that an increasing number of young people from the CIS countries are seeking to obtain education in other (especially English-speaking) countries. In addition, to provide a sound basis for the study, one may need to determine the target group, i.e. gather data on people who want to broaden their knowledge abroad in terms of

their age, home countries, regions, as well as the most commonly selected destinations of their travels.

Another proposal that may facilitate this process involves convincing Russian students themselves to study at universities in their own country and conducting analysis pertaining to the specialization and activities of already existing Russian education clusters. There is also a need to evaluate whether the regions of the Russian Federation are willing to implement educational tourism programs. The methods of their online recruitment should be analyzed as well (Krasnova and Krasnova, 2015; Krasnova et al., 2017). That being said, such steps have already been taken by foreign universities. Consulting Russian travel agencies on the matter of forming educational tourist routes may be of help as well, considering that they might devise means to attract foreigners to Russian universities.

Furthermore, universities should establish online portals intended for students from abroad – not only in Russian, but also in English, Chinese, French, and Spanish; particular attention should be paid to the structure of the universities and the ease of navigating through them. In addition, they should be provided with a possibility to post reviews related to studying at a particular Russian university. Having seen positive feedback on an institution of interest, prospective students from abroad may eventually consider applying for them (Rodionova et al., 2018).

There are also other measures that can be taken so as to accomplish this goal. For this matter, it is advisable to develop national and regional programs for the export of educational services, as well as render data on international student mobility more accessible. One should also put reliable and interesting information about Russia in the public eye, especially with reference to its regions, the rules of admission to its universities, the organization of the educational process along with students leisure time. Considering the fact that Russia has a very rich heritage in terms of history and culture, details regarding places in Russia and the CIS countries that are worth visiting should also be provided.

Combining the efforts of several universities would also be of great importance when it

comes to bringing foreign students to Russia. This would help create an appropriate structure of said institutions and facilitate the process of creating online portals for the students in question, which would feature all relevant information on possible manners of cooperation, student exchange programs, and benefits arising from studying at Russian universities (Khusnutdinova and Safonova, 2014; Rodionova et al., 2018).

On another note, universities should provide foreign students with possibilities to learn Russian. With this aim in mind, it is essential for them to carry out joint work with travel companies so as to expand programs in the field of educational tourism. Then again, these programs should not put focus on the sole purpose of learning the language through immersion in the environment—they would also need to include familiarization with the culture and history of Russia and its regions, sightseeing, and participation in various cultural events. Given the unique environment and history, it is necessary to develop educational tourist routes in this country.

Student and academic exchange programs should likewise be promoted in order to interest teachers from across the border in conducting lectures at Russian universities. Additionally, it would be advisable to implement programs of scientific cooperation between universities from different countries, also through participation in international summer schools.

Universities should expand their work on recruitment and selection of prospective students from abroad through social networks. It is also important to improve the joint work of press and international services provided by universities, as well as communication with foreign-born graduates.

Although the inflow of foreign students to Russia is growing, there are only a few Russian universities that appear in international ratings (QS World University, 2018). In fact, the vast majority of foreign applicants arrive from the former Soviet republics, such as Belarus, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Ukraine. In addition, young people from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East also aspire to study in Russia, which should be taken into consideration in further research.

6. Conclusions

Over the past few years, more and more countries – including developing ones – are taking interest in export of education. What is more, it is worth noting that relations between the countries sending and receiving students cease to be unidirectional and turn into a dynamic and reciprocal exchange instead.

This article highlighted the characteristics of educational tourism development in Russia. One can distinguish the following stages in this process: a) the period before the October Revolution in Russia in 1917, b) the Soviet period (in the USSR with a planned economy), c) the modern period (from the 1990s in the context of the development of a single European educational space). In this day and age, the conditions for the advance in educational tourism in Russia have changed to a certain extent.

On the view that the transition of Russian economy calls for a new organization of higher education institutions, the search for adequate arrangements is currently in progress. It also emerges that Russia has a particular interest in developing various forms of educational tourism, and, for that matter, it is necessary to rely on foreign experience of this process.

Russian universities can certainly compete with facilities in other countries despite rapidly changing conditions both on the labor market and the market of educational services. They have the potential and means necessary to increase the competitiveness of the domestic system of higher education and educational tourism in general.

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