

Promoting the Path of Holy Family as an Educational Tour to the Students of Technical Schools for Tourism and Hotels

Shahenda Mostafa M. El Shamy

Shereen Mohamed Ahmed

Lecturers –Tourism Studied department, Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management, Helwan University

Abstract

The educational fieldtrips are conducted for tourism students to provide them self- experiences and to apply their knowledge learned at schools in the real-world. The study determined the level of tourism students' awareness on the educational tour in the holy family path after restoration by The Supreme Council of Antiques. The study uses Quantitative research design with students at the Technical Schools for Tourism and Hotels (TSTH) (3-5 years system) in Cairo as respondents. In terms of Questionnaire, only fully completed forms were accepted and used in the field study of the research; (268 forms were submitted from 1st March 2023 to 30 May 2023). The vast majority of students have not visited the Holy Family Route despite studying it theoretically. The tourism students found it difficult in the conduct of the holy route as an educational tour because of lack of money, lack of safety and security particularly in some places towards Upper Egypt.

The study recommends raising awareness of both students and their parents about the importance of field trips. In addition, involving Supreme Council for Tourism, Egyptian Tourism Authority and Ministry of Education and Technical Education to raising up the awareness of the tourism students about the importance of these field trips via different marketing campaign.

Keywords: *The holy family route, Students of Technical Schools for Tourism and Hotels, Educational Tour, students' awareness.*

Introduction

The report of the World Youth Student and Educational Travel Confederation states that the youth travelers represent 20% of international tourism, thereby making the group an important economic force. In 2021, the youth travelers spent \$217 billion of the \$1.088 trillion in international tourism (Tashlai and Ivanov, 2022).

The educational tours are considered one of tourism types that youth travelers can move on, so it can be a vital source of national income in Egypt which has the abundance of attractions of all types in addition to strong infrastructure that can support the tourism sector . It can play a dynamic role in educational learning of Tourism students at the Technical Schools as they will be the future workforce of the tourism sector (Kelly,2019, Pawgi, 2017).

Educational tours provide the students with direct experience that have relation to the syllabus and theories being discussed in their fields of study. It also answers to the principle of learning by doing where students could able to experience and perform some tasks as part of the Outcomes-based education (Encio et al., 2016; Anuran et al., 2016; An, 2014 Laguador, 2014).

Recently, studies into field trips within hospitality and tourism programs have begun to attract academic interest for providing students direct experience which have relation to theory that they had learned at school so, students participating in these trips have long-term benefits even after their graduation (Sotomayor, 2020, Li & Liang, 2020).

In the educational trip, students enjoy the tour while they are also learning something different and new (Kennedy, 2014, as cited in Suarez et al., 2017). Allowing students to take responsibility for their learning is a great motivator to keep them involved and interested in educational tours (Suarez et al., 2017). Students engaging in field trips helps them to excel in their classes, the information acquired during these trips in the long run and allows them to feel more motivated and self-confident as young professionals who continue to gain experience in the field (Sotomayor, 2020).

Field trips or educational tours are students' activities that make them excited and motivated to learn more. Another terminology of the educational tour is which means a trip to learn by a group of people away from their home or to a place that is unusual from their home environment which can be day trips or overnight trips for educational purpose (Stephen, 2019, Hall and Lew, 2009). There are various teaching techniques given by schools and institutions around the world to students whereas educational tours are one of the important and known techniques in educating students practically and interestingly. Learning by seeing, observing, and experiencing is more effective than just learning from the four walls of the classroom. Acquiring knowledge through physical involvement lasts longer in a student's mind. Educational tours benefit students with new opportunities and new experiences to learning (De Castro et al., 2014; Ylagan & Laguardo, 2014; Buted, Ylagan & Mendoza, 2014; Tamayo & Celis, 2014).

Educational tourism is defined as a new tourism pattern, and is considered as an approach to continuing education, carrying out research activities, and acquiring knowledge. It's also called in other names, job development, career improvement, or experience of self-esteem and realization, and all persons at any age can gain knowledge through educational tourism (Becken,2009).

According to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities ; the list of 25 sites that the Holy Family passed through is as follows: *Rafah, El-Arish, Al-Farma, Tal Basta, Mostorod, Belbeis, Samanoud, Sakha in the lake district of Burullus,, Wadi el - Natroun, Matariyah, Ain Shams, Old Cairo, Maady, Deir Al-Garnous (Al Badrasheen), Al-Bahnassa, Beni Mazar, Samalout, Gabal ElTair ('Bird Mountain'), Al-Ashmounein, Dairout, Qost- Qoussia, Meir, Qusqam mountain (The Monastery of Al-Muharraq), Mount Dronka* (Ibrahim,2002).

The journey of the Holy Family in Egypt passed through many sites and left many monuments, the journey of the Holy Family began in the Egyptian lands of Rafah, which is a frontier city since ancient times (El-Beltagui,2011).

Many sources mention that the Holy Family took the same paths of returning, when they landed on the western side of the Nile. They first go to Maadi, passing through Old Cairo, then follow the road to Heliopolis, back to the city of Mostorod, and finally El-Arish, and from there to Gaza (El zek and Alfy, 2017).

The whole journey through Egypt, from Bethlehem to the return to Nazareth lasted over three years. They had covered approximately 1,240 miles (Ali,2013).

The Supreme Council of Antiques started the renovation of different religious archeological sites along the Holy Trail. The MoTA¹ has allocated EGP 60 million through the Tourism and

¹ MoTA : Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities

Antiques fund for a project to revive this trail contained 3 main categories: planning, renovation and development, promotion, and marketing (Egyptian Tourism Authority, 2020).

The project of the Holy Family Path restoration included eight governorates which are Christ – Cairo, Beheira, Sharqiya, Gharbiya, Kafr El-Sheikh, Minya, Assiut, and North Sinai.

The project relied on cooperation between the ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, ministry of Local Development, the eight governorates and representatives of the Coptic Church (Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2020)

The project's work includes paving roads and developing the areas along the path, additionally, raising the efficiency of the infrastructure by building public toilets and rest houses, planting trees, adding road signs, interactive maps inside a painting that is carefully embellished with materials commensurate with the historical value of the track, tourist bus waiting area and painting the facades of surrounding buildings.

The project is divided into several phases, and started with trial operation of five archaeological sites in Cairo and Beheira.

The first phase includes the restoration of the monasteries of Jabal Tair, Muharraq and Darnaka in Minya and Assiut, the second point in project of developing the Holy Family path is Kafr El-Sheikh governorate.

In March 2020, 41 million EGP were redirected to the MoLD² to complete the development of the different sites of the Holy Family Trail (Abu El Nile, 2021).

The project faced many challenges such as inability to raise road efficiency leading to archaeological sites, Lack of health units and hospitals on the route for emergency and treatment of the elderly if necessary which the ministers of tourism, antiquities and local development tried to overcome these obstacles in order to complete the project (Abdelfattah, 2017).

The Egyptian Government is making a push to promote the Pathway of Holy family to domestic travelers specially tourism students after the several restoration and conservation works at some of the most significant historical landmarks related to the route of the Holy Family in Egypt, which was conducted by the Ministries of Tourism and Antiquities as well as Environmental Affair (Abdelfattah, 2017).

Research Question

1. What is the importance of including the holy family route as one of educational tours for technical tourism and hotels school students?
2. How can technical tourism and hotels school raise their students' awareness towards the importance of the holy family route?
3. What are the obstacles facing marketing the holy family route to youth segment?
4. Which is the best tourism-marketing tool for affecting the targeted segment?

Research Objectives

The main objectives of the current study are as follows:

1. Investigating the reasons of the Students of TSTH as young domestic travelers to join educational tours with their school.
2. Examining the obstacles may meet them to join the tour.
3. To know the tourism students' awareness about the holy family route before and after restoration.
4. Exploiting the obstacles that may face them while visiting the holy sites along the route.
5. Identifying the most important marketing tools that can be used to affect young domestic travelers' preferences and expectations.

² MoLD : Ministry of Local Development

Field Study

Research Design

The study was based on online survey to collect data from the study's target segment. The online survey was developed using Google Form on the objectives of the study. The form was designed to only allow the fully completed forms to be submitted (268 forms were submitted from 1st March 2023 to 30 May 2023).

The online survey was designed to include 14 statements, distributed on 5 sections to cover the following aspects: demographic information, the reasons of the school student as young domestic travelers to join educational tours with their school, problems may meet them to join the tour, the tourism students' awareness about the holy family route before and after restoration, the obstacles that may face them while visiting the holy sites and finally the most important marketing tools that can be used to affect young domestic travelers' preferences and expectations.

The Study Population

The study was utilized a total 268 of tourism students at the technical schools (3- 5 years system) in Cairo where there are about 11 Tourism Secondary Schools.

Results and discussion

Analysis of participations' demographic data

From table 1 the percentage distribution of students' gender, female topped with 67.1% followed by male student with 32.9% which mean that female are more likely to choose these technical schools that male somehow has a positive outlook to these schools.

Table 1 Respondents profile

		N.	%
Gender	Male	88	32.9
	Female	180	67.1
Age	from 16- 18	69	25.8
	From 19 to 21	199	74.2
School system	3 years	100	37.4
	5 years	168	62.6

When it comes to school system, 3 years students dominated having 37.4% while 5 years students have 62.6%. 5 years students dominated because majority of the participants in the educational tours are from 19 to 21 year.

Reasons to join educational tours

Educational tours or study tour for tourism students are incredibly enriching and educational for them. These tours are organized to spot on specific subjects, for allowing students to experience a wide range learning activity.

Table 2 Reasons to join educational tours for tourism student

Reason	Mean	VI	Rank
Putting theory into practice	3.22	Effective	9
Building self confidence	3.41	Effective	5.5
Enhance creative learning	3.3	Effective	8.5
Development of social skills	3.53	Effective	3.5
Development of observational skills	3.55	Effective	2
Encourage independent learning	3.64	Highly Effective	1

Hand- on learning experience	3.41	Effective	5.5
Building of lifelong memories	3.42	Effective	4
Increased leadership skills	3.45	Effective	3.5
Promote team work	3.1	Effective	10
Composite mean	3.3	Effective	

The students who are participating will gain first-hand exposure to different cultures, historical sites, and natural landscapes also, encourage them to think more critically about the world around them. Educational tours can also provide students with the opportunity to improve major skills like independence, problem-solving, etc...(Shakil, Faizi and Hafeez, 2011).

Among the items that were verbally interpreted effective are, "Development of observational skills"(3.55), "building of lifelong memories" (3.42), lastly "promote team work" (3.1) that got the lowest mean score.

It also stated that developing team work skill has the least reason to join tours because team work skill is already done in school by making research papers together and using role playing learning tool.

Problems faced tourism students when they visited the holy family route

Considering number of their visits to the route results revealed that the huge percentage (79.1%) never visited the route before (Table 3). Meanwhile 11.6% of respondents had a chance to visit it for only one time, which mean that this route has not been marketed in comparable with its importance.

Table 3 the number of times of visiting the route by tourism students

N. of times	N.	%
Never	212	79.1
One time	31	11.6
More than 1 time	25	9.3
Total	268	100

Table 4 problems of educational tours

Problem	Mean	VI	Rank
Finances	4.9	Strongly agree	1
Time management during the route	2.88	Agree	5
Transportation all over the 25 points of the route	3.1	Agree	4.5
Safety and security	4.1	Strongly agree	2
Accommodation	3.9	Agree	3.5
Food and beverage	3.4	Agree	4
Composite mean	3	Agree	

Table 4 presents the problems faced tourism student when they visited the holy family route. It was found that the finances got the highest weighted mean score of 4.9 and rated strongly

agree, then safety and security (4.1), followed by the accommodation means on the route was very expensive and uncomfortable. The over-all composite mean of 3 indicates that the students agreed on problems mentioned above.

The tourism students' awareness about the holy family route before and after restoration

The table below shows that the students' awareness of the route vary according to school year and study. The student of the last year have more awareness about the holy family route , simply because the last year students always wanted to explore more about the future work fields.

Table 5 differences of responses of the tourism students' route awareness when grouped according to school year, study and sex

Profile Variables	F – value	p – value	Interpretation
School year	2.113	0.032	Significant
Study	1.998	0.899	Significant
Sex	0.009	0.122	Not Significant

The last year students have more awareness because they already have studied and know about the route and they always need to gain exceptional learnings outside their usual classroom to observe many things that are not available at their schools.

The barriers that faced the tourism student while visiting the holy family sites

From table 6, concerning tourism students' point of view about obstacles that may face them during visiting the holy route points mean analyses revealed that absence of entertainments requirements came in the first with (4.9) score.

Table 6 Tourism students' point of view regarding barriers and the needed facilities

Obstacle	Mean	Rank
Lack of hospitality service offered	3.1	4
Lack of restoration	2.92	5
Absence of entertainments requirements	4.94	1
Absence of bazaars and souvenir shops	3.9	2
Unfinished infrastructure	2.88	6
Failure of marketing and advertising activities	3.3	3

Then absence of bazaars and souvenir shops that achieved an average of (3.9). in the third position came weak of marketing and advertising tools with mean score (3.3). while, in the fourth position lack of hospitality service offered with mean score (3.1).

Meanwhile, lack of restoration came in the fifth position, and finally, the least obstacle was unaccomplished infrastructure with average mean (2.88)

The Most Important Marketing Tools that can be Used to Affect Young Domestic Travelers' Preferences and Expectations.

While traditional marketing still has a place, let’s be clear, digital marketing and social marketing are the future. Younger traveler have not known a time without smartphones, and they are starting to enter the workforce—backed another generation that will be even more digital. The fact is that every company and brand needs social and digital marketing strategies to survive in today’s world,

Table 7 the effective marketing tool for youth travelers

Tools	Mean	VI	Rank
Traditional marketing tool (Billboards, Print ads, Events, Merchandise, Surveys..)	1.2	Effective	3
• Digital marketing tool (Search Engine Optimization, Email lists, Digital analytics, Surveys...)	3.9	Effective	2.5
Social media marketing tool (Posts, Hashtags, Influencer marketing..)	4.6	Highly effective	1
Composite mean	3.1		Effective

As shown in table 7 the social media marketing tool is the highest effective tool for promoting the educational tour for tourism student so, tourism marketers can use this tool to increase student engagement. It is also stated that the traditional marketing tool has the least effect to student.

Conclusion

The majority of respondents are aged 19 to 21 years old, female and 5 years school learning system. The main reason of why students join the educational tours with their schools is to encourage independent learning outside their school. The vast majority of students have not visited the route despite studying it theoretically. Despite the difficulties facing the students in terms of field studies, arranging and encouraging field tours enrich the knowledge and experience of them.

Based on the results shown above there is a strong correlation between students awareness of the holy routs and the academic year and their study. The participants confirm that the absence of entertainment places such as parks, motels, economic restaurants with counter services...etc. are the core barriers on the route because they choose to join these trips to have some fun and create good memories with their classmates.

The most effective marketing tool that can be used to affect this segment is social media marketing tool which includes posts, hashtags , Influencer marketing...etc. Involving the public and the private sectors in marketing field tours can strongly participate in encouraging and promoting many tourist destinations in Egypt, and it is promoting domestic tourism by the youth segment. Youth segment is a vital tourist segment that can be exploited successfully by field tours to the holy family route which is a promising route.

Recommendations

First of all, it is essential to conduct awareness sessions for parents of tourism students about the importance of the educational trips and illustrate how this type of trips will provide new and more learning for their children. By trying to make these trips affordable, this will expand the opportunity towards more tourism students who can participate. It is recommended to issue a cooperation protocol between tourism schools' administration, Egyptian Tourism Authority and Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities to facilitate the procedures for carrying out educational trips in a way that can achieve higher benefits for students. For example, an open invitation from Supreme Council of Antiquities, Egyptian Tourism Authority and Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities can play a major role in attracting the owners and managers of tourism schools to organize this type of trips. In addition to marketing campaign addressed by Supreme Council for Tourism, Egyptian Tourism Authority and Ministry of Education and Technical Education for raising up the awareness of the tourism students about the importance of these field trips.

Promoting field trips must depend on institutions and agencies specialized in social marketing methods without ignoring to encourage international investors by Egyptian Ministry of Investment and Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities to establish motels and economic hotels nearby the holy path to satisfy the students' requirements. As well as encouraging local investors by Egyptian Ministry of Investment and Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities to share for covering the shortage in the entertainment requirements like souvenirs and handicraft shops, economic restaurants, parks..etc to be available surround sites of the holy path.

References

- Abdelfattah, Sh. (2017). The Holy Family Journey to Egypt, State Information System. [In Arabic]
- Abu El Nile, M. (2021). The Impact of Activating the Holy Family Path on Promoting of Religious Tourism Movement Coming to Egypt, Journal of Association of Arab Universities for Tourism and Hotel, 20 (1), 265-286. [In Arabic]
- Ali, M., (2013). Religious Tourism in Egypt: A Case Study Analysis, The American University in Cairo, School of Global Affairs and Public Policy. 14-20.
- An, I. L. (2014). Impact of outcome-based education instruction to accountancy students in an Asian University, Asia Pacific Journal of Education, Arts and Sciences, 1(5), 48-52.
- Anuran, A., Buenviaje, M. G., Encio, H. A., & Refozar, R. F. G. (2016). Academic Performance and Application Level of Acquired Learning and Student Outcomes from MBA Courses towards the Attainment of Personal Growth, Asia Pacific Journal of Academic Research in Social Sciences, 1.
- Becken, S. (2009). The carbon footprint of domestic tourism, Lincoln University. Environment, Society and Design Division.
- Buted, D. R., Ylagan, A. P., & Mendoza, E. (2014). Promoting the Tourism Industry of Calatagan Batangas, Philippines, Journal of Research in Business and Management, 2(5), 1-4.
- De Castro, J. A. T., Bueno, K. J. M., Laroza, J. A. R., Limbo, K. G., Petrasanta, J. S. D., Felicen, S. S., & Ylagan, A. P. (2014). Church Tourism in Batangas Province, Philippines. Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, 2(4).
- Egyptian Tourism Authority, (2020). The Journey of the Holy Family to Egypt, (Accessed 9/1/2023), retrieved from <http://www.egypt.travel/en/stories/the-journey-of-the-holy-family-to-egypt>.
- El-Beltagui, M. (2011). The holy family in Egypt.(Accessed 27/3/2021), retrieved from <http://www.touregypt.net/holyfamily.htm>.
- Elzek, Y., Alfay, N., (2017). The Role of Holy Family Path and Egyptian Pilgrimage Route Restoration in Promoting Religious Tourism to Egypt. Journal of the Faculty of Tourism and Hotels- Elsadat University. 2 (2). 1-26, retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328248699>.
- Encio, H. A., Buenviaje, M. G., Refozar, R. F. G., & Laguador, J. M. (2016). Employers' Feedback on the Competencies of MBA Graduates based on Curriculum and Student Outcomes. IOSR Journal of Business and Management, 18(8), 101-105.
- Hall, C. M. & Lew, A. A. (2009). Understanding and managing tourism impacts: An integrated approach, Routledge.
- Ibrahim, M. (2002). The history of the Coptic Church: The holy family in Egypt.
- Kelly, M. (2019). Field Trips: Pros and Cons, retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/field-trips-pros-and-cons-8401>.

Laguador, J. M., De Castro, E. A., & Portugal, L. M. (2014). Employees' Organizational Satisfaction and Its Relationship with Customer Satisfaction Measurement of an Asian Academic Institution. Quarterly Journal of Business Studies, 1(3), 83-93.

Li, P., & Liang, H. (2020). Factors Influencing Learning Effectiveness of Educational Travel: A Case Study in China. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, (42). 141-152. retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2019.10.001>

Sotomayor, S. (2020). Long-term Benefits of Field Trip Participation: Young Tourism Management Professionals. Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education, retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2020.100285>

Stephen. (2019). What is Field Trip | Definition of Field Trip in Education. retrieved from <https://www.educationalschooltrip.com/what-is-field-trip-definition-of-field-trip-in-education/>

Suarez, J. S., Anuran, J. D., Liabres, T. A., Mendoza, I. N., Verzo, E. V., & Felicen, S. S. (2017). Effectiveness of Educational Tours to the Tourism and Hospitality Management Students. Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research, 14(1), 16-28. retrieved from <https://research.lpubatangas.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/JTHR-2017.1.02.pdf>

Supreme Council of Antiquities. (2020). Reviving the Holy Family Path: Archeological sites, Cairo. [In Arabic]

Tamayo, M.R.B. & Celis, M. I. (2014). Tourism Development in Region IV: Employment Prospects and Opportunities of Tourism Graduates of Lyceum of the Philippines University.

Tashlai, Iana and Ivanov, Stanislav. (2022). Educational tourism - the case of Eastern European students: driving forces, consequences, and effects on the tourism industry, International University College, Bulgaria.

Ylagan, A. P., & Laguador, J. M. (2014). Tourism Studies in the Province of Batangas, Philippines: A Literature Review. International Journal of Management Sciences 4 (10), 421-428.

الترويج لطريق العائلة المقدسة كرحلة تعليمية لطلاب المدارس الفنية للسياحة والفنادق

المستخلص

يفضل طلاب المدارس الفنية للسياحة والفنادق الالتحاق بالرحلات التعليمية لتزويدهم بالتجارب الذاتية وتطبيق معارفهم النظرية في الواقع العملي. اعتمدت الدراسة على المنهج الكمي وذلك من خلال استخدام استمارات استقصاء للاجابة على تساؤلات الدراسة وتحقيق أهدافها والتي من اهمها الاستفادة من تطوير مسار العائلة المقدسة وتنشيط الرحلات التعليمية اليه والتي تم توجيهها لطلاب المدارس الفنية للسياحة والفنادق في محافظة القاهرة والتي تضمنت احد عشر مدرسة, وقد أسفرت نتائج الدراسة إلى اهمية رفع وعي طلاب المدارس الفنية للسياحة والفنادق بالرحلات التعليمية بالإضافة الى ضرورة استخدام الوسائل التسويقية الحديثة والتي تساعد على تنشيط هذا النوع من الرحلات بما يتناسب مع تفضيلات هذه الشريحة المستهدفة.

الكلمات الدالة: طريق العائلة المقدسة، طلاب المدارس الفنية للسياحة والفنادق، جولة تعليمية، توعية الطلاب