Chapter 7
Evaluation and Identification of Professional Tourism Educational and Training Competences

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ABSTRACT
This chapter deals with the evaluation and identification of professional tourism educational and training competences with the purpose of recognizing the main characteristics of labour capacity in the tourism industry. Tourism is promoted through education, as well as through the development of skills and tools that result in an optimal labour performance during the stages of school training. Moreover, it describes the relationship of knowledge management in the tourism sector that leads to quality in human capital, in addition to professional alignment, in an educational context. As this section focuses on the overview of professional tourism, the following components are considered; the preamble and classification of the tourism industry, the conceptualization of educational evaluation and competence, and concludes with the description and analysis of the works targeted at the evaluation and identification of professional competences in tourism.

INTRODUCTION
First of all, it is vital to determine the main basis of this chapter, tourism. In virtue of being the object of this section, tourism can be studied from several approaches and disciplines in regard to the complexity of relationships among the elements of this area of study.

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Tourism as a subject of university research becomes a matter of interest during the period between the two world wars of this century (1919-1938). Authors and organizations, like Hunziker and Krapf (1942), and Medlik Burkart (1981), Mathieson and Wall (1982) UNWTO (1994-2014) have studied and described the term tourism, which has observed changes, modifications, adaptations over time, by virtue of their social characteristics.

According to the UNWTO (2014), tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon related to the movement of people to the places that are outside their usual location of residence for personal or business / professional reasons. While these people are called visitors (which may be tourists or excursionists; residents or non-residents), tourism is associated with the people’s activities and, therefore, implies tourism expenditure.

Also, another element that needs to be explained is Knowledge Management, which is treated in two parameters, first as knowledge and then as management.

Knowledge can be defined in different ways. Firstly, for philosophers, it means intelligence, understanding, and reason; and secondly, it is studied from diverse disciplines, such as psychology, philosophy, and informatics. According to Muñante (2004), knowledge means to embrace the properties and relationships of objects, and understand what they represent or not. The Philosophical Dictionary of Rosental and ludin (1973), based on dialectical materialism, defines knowledge as a process by which the reality is reflected and reproduced in human thinking. This process is subjected to the laws of social development and is closely linked with practical activity.

On the other hand, knowledge management, according to Cortes and Pineda (2006), is intimately related to the subject’s education, obliged to live in a changing and accelerated environment, in a globalized society that requires a high degree of competitiveness. Hence, the person must and will be willing to learn and re-learn throughout his life.

Instead of remaining only in the mind or in the subject’s thinking, knowledge must transcend, transform, share and renew. Therefore, we refer to incorporate and combine it with the individual and collective experience, with the different everyday applications people have had with knowledge.

Knowledge management must be understood as the intended development of one of the people’s and organization’s competences, as an innovation supported by an interactive learning process, where the members involved rise their competence and take care of innovation (Minakata, 2009).

Prior to what has been mentioned above, it is convenient to analyze the evaluation and identification of the professional tourism competences in order to strengthen the human capital capacities in the tourism industry. This will be the beginning of educational management in the educational context. Nowadays worldwide societies tend to face frequent changes, mainly in the economic structure and, therefore, in the labour markets, which have an impact on tourism education and training. When knowledge is performed, it is not perceived as static because it responds to the needs of immediate application. As a result, the professional competences that meet the industries’ demands must be valued, exprofeso in tourism activities.

**PREAMBLE TO THE TOURISM INDUSTRY**

In recent decades, activity in the tourism industry has witnessed a rapid development; the panorama of international tourism of UNWTO (2013) states a growing number of destinations have opened up to tourism and have invested in this sector, making it a key factor of socio-economic progress by obtaining