

Academic Tourism: A Great Opportunity

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Charles Chaplin said that he did not consider himself a citizen of a particular country but a citizen of the world. In that time, few people probably thought like that or could feel that way. From that time until today, a lot has changed. The intensification of globalization from the end of the last century changed the geography and the world economy. The creation of many economic blocks, such as the example of the European Union, facilitated international business, not only among the participating countries of these blocks, but also among non-participating countries with those inserted in such blocks.

Nowadays it makes no difference to a small Brazilian trader whether to import a good from Portugal, France or Germany; because she or he does not need to worry about in which currency the transaction will be performed. The Euro will be used anyway. In case of doing business with any other country, the American dollar can be used as a reference with its intrinsic characteristics of international currency.

All this economic Exchange facility can also be seen in academic activities. Exchanges of students and professors among universities around the world have grown rapidly [1,2]. As the effect of globalization, the opportunities for studying in other countries have become increasingly evident. We are in the Knowledge Era. Students of several knowledge areas who look for a differential in their area do not limit themselves in their universities, their countries or their mother tongue.

Similarly, professors and especially researchers seek knowledge beyond their former geographical boundaries. It is not enough to know well their mother tongue, as well as it is not enough to know a second language; the major differential today is to be multilingual. The major difference today is to exchange experiences and knowledge between their reality and that experienced by professionals and researchers from different countries around the world.

Due to the great demand of students, professors and researchers exchange, universities had to create their institutes of international relations and had to develop their international Exchange programs.

Furthermore, it has become increasingly important to conduct international academic conferences and a search for partnerships among universities to promote multicultural and multinational events.

These events are now excellent opportunities to exchange knowledge among researchers and to find new partnerships of

research around the world. However, events with greater participation of multinational researchers are on the one hand a great opportunity; on the other hand, it had to be adapted to this new reality of mass participation. As a result, the exchange of experience during the events, through oral presentation have limited time and often reduced debating time.

The opportunity of knowledge exchange among researchers in an international conference, due to the limited time in formal sessions, is increased through social activities promoted by the organizers of the event or by tourism around the event site.

I have participated in international conferences, mainly in Europe and the United States, and I have noticed that a large proportion of participants opt for attending some sessions, but almost all of them take part in social activities, where they can exchange knowledge and important information. I attended a congress in Portugal, where the participants were taken to visit some local sites and between a church and a castle, a lot of information was exchanged and many opportunities for further researches were established.

Another important factor that academic event organizers have to take into account is that nowadays there is a large quantity of conferences, workshops, and seminars, then, to promote a successful event, it needs to be attractive to participants. The attractiveness of the event encompasses not only the quality of the sessions, but also the facilities of participation and social and tourist attractions that are available to participants.

Thereby a great opportunity for the tourism industry arises, which is the academic tourism. Agreements between the promoters of international conferences and the tourism industry can be an important facilitator of the knowledge exchange of researchers. Academic tourism is a great opportunity for the tourism industry as well as for the growth of academic knowledge. Nowadays we are researchers of the world.

References

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