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Long-term benefits of field trip participation: Young tourism management professionals share their stories

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ABSTRACT

Research on field trips within hospitality and tourism programs have started to draw academic attention in recent years. However, there is still room for a deeper reflexive analysis on the long-term benefits that field trip participation may bring to students - even after they graduate - by approaching field trips as a broader component of the learning experience, which take place continuously throughout the program. This article tells the stories of seven young Peruvian tourism management professionals, from the moment they decided to enroll in a tourism-related program until their current involvement in the tourism sector. Special attention is given to exploring their perception of how field trip participation has impacted them so far as well as their career projections. The stories suggest that despite differences among participants' socio-demographic backgrounds, personalities, student performance, current employment status, and professional goals, they all agree that field trips provided them with numerous benefits at academic, professional, and personal levels. While in the short-term participating in field trips helped them succeeding in their courses, in the long-term the knowledge gained during these trips allowed them to feel more empowered and self-confident at the current stage they are in as young professionals who keep acquiring experience in the field. Findings suggest that field trip participants may develop a certain level of place attachment that may lead to implement tourism development actions later when they become professionals. Valuable insights are provided for educators as well as tourism management program directors.

1. Introduction

The future of the tourism sector lies in the hands of its young professionals. In many destinations tourism started evolving thanks to local entrepreneurs who identified it as an economic opportunity. However, many of them – unlike most young tourism professionals – never had the opportunity or interest in gaining tourism management training at a higher education level. Considering the recent extraordinary growth of tourism management higher education programs (Lee, Olds, & Lee, 2010; Vodenska & Mileva-Bozhanova, 2017), the many challenges these programs face (Sigala & Baum, 2003), and the fact that there is a better understanding regarding the skills and competences employers desire to find in newly recruited tourism professionals (Fominiene, Mejeryte-Narkeviciene, & Wozniewicz-Dobrzynska, 2015), many universities and other training institutions have changed their curriculums numerous times to meet those needs (Cho & Kang, 2006). The approach is shifting from a tourism services-only focus to one which considers studying tourism from different analytical perspectives (Barboza-Núñez, 2018). Nowadays, future professionals acquire knowledge about the complexities of the sector and the challenges that tourism destinations must overcome to remain attractive for visitors while adopting

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good social and environmental practices to ensure long-term benefits for all involved parties (Milinchuk, 2017). As a result, graduates are becoming philosophic practitioners who are capable of satisfying the demands of business, and at the same time are reflective and aware of the wider aims of the tourism world (Dogramadjieva, Vodenska, & Marinov, 2016; Tribe, 2002). For this, the curriculum needs to be socially constructed, dynamic and flexible, composed of vocational, professional, social science and humanities knowledge and skills (Dredge et al., 2015).

Field trips are one component of tourism management programs that has been recognized as a highly effective teaching tool (Dembovska, Silicka, & Lubkina, 2016). Research on field trips within hospitality and tourism programs have started to get academic attention in recent years. Most studies have discussed the role of field trips in achieving positive learning and other outcomes among students (Goh, 2011; Gretzel, Jamal, Stronza, & Nepal, 2008; Kelner & Sanders, 2009; Sanders & Armstrong, 2008; Sotomayor & Gil Arroyo, 2015; Wong & Wong, 2008; Xie, 2004). However, based on the literature review, there is still room for a deeper reflexive analysis on the long-term effects that field trip participation may have in students - even after they graduate - by approaching field trips as a broader component of the learning experience, which takes place continuously throughout the program.

This paper tells the stories of seven young Peruvian tourism management professionals. Participants walk us through their journeys from the moment they decided to enroll in a tourism-related program until their current involvement in the tourism sector. Special attention is given to their perception of the short-term and long-term benefits that field trips - as a broad component of the tourism education experience - have had in their personal and professional development and projections.

2. Literature review

2.1. Field trips within tourism education

Field trips - also referred as educational tourism - take place when a class visits an out-of-school setting (DeWitt & Storksdieck, 2008). Dembovska et al. (2016) described this as "a phenomenon of education and tourism integration by organizing tourism as an educational activity". Fieldtrips can involve visits to domestic and/or international destinations (Ritchie & Coughlan, 2004). Further, depending on the training institution, field trips can be either planned, organized and conducted by the teacher of the relevant subject or included as mandatory components of the curriculum (Khuong, 2015). In either case, the active role of the teacher has been recognized as key to the success of any field trip (Anderson & Zhang, 2003; Wong & Wong, 2008). Therefore, authors like Anderson, Kiesel, and Storksdieck (2006) focused their attention on teachers' perspectives on field trips. However, many other aspects have been said to influence in the learning potential of the entire field trip experience. As mentioned by DeWitt and Storksdieck (2008), these include the structure of the field trip (i.e., organizational degree of the itinerary), setting novelty and prior knowledge (i.e., level of interest of the students), the presence or absence and quality of related actions (i.e., preparation and follow-up), the social context of the visit and the student experiences during the field trip.

Even though the importance of field trips in tourism courses and/or programs has been recognized as they allow students to go through authentic learning experiences in different tourism destinations (Rogers, 2011), studies in this matter are still scarce. The existent research presents insights gathered through a variety of approaches. In the United States for example, Xie (2004) conducted a study among 15 tourism major students who participated on a 4-day field trip to the Niagara Falls as part of a practicum class taught by the author. He identified personal development as the main benefit of the field trip. Later, Gretzel et al. (2008) identified the following as the main outcomes of an eight-day field trip to an international tourism destination: greater awareness of issues related to cultural heritage, cross-border immigration, as well as of the influence of mass tourism on local residents. In 2009, Kelner and Sanders designed a field trip-based course in the sociology of tourism which included visits to different sites around Nashville. They explored the positive and negative aspects from merging content and form by using tourism as a pedagogical resource.

Meanwhile in Australia, Sanders and Armstrong (2008) addressed third year undergraduate students' expectations and experience of a one-day field trip to Braidwood, a historic town in rural New South Wales. They suggested for students to be introduced to field work early in their tourism degrees, systematically extending their confidence with this type of experiences so eventually they become capable of designing and conducting their own field-based research. Later, Goh (2011) compared student attitudes toward field trips across different stages of their university undergraduate program, finding that first year students perceived field trips as an education tool whereas second year students acknowledged the experience as an enhancement for their future career pathway. Goh and Ritchie (2011) reported on the interviews conducted with 31 students (from first and second year) who participated in a half-day field trip to a hotel in Sydney, as part of their hospitality and tourism degree program. The focus of their research were the attitudes of students toward attending field trips and their perceived constraints in doing so. They found that the key motivator was enhancing understanding of course materials and that the most mentioned perceived difficulty faced was long travelling time.

Learning outcomes from field trips are commonly categorized as cognitive or affective, which at the same time can have either a short-term or long-term impact. The later have not received as much academic attention as the first (DeWitt & Storksdieck, 2008). However, Anderson et al. (2006) suggested that school students who participate in field trips that are perceived as educational and pleasurable may visit again the field trip setting either with their parents while they are still young or even many years later with their own young children. Further, in recent years, it has been suggested that long-term impacts within field trips at a higher education level may lead to behavioral changes (Sotomayor & Gil Arroyo, 2015; Ting & Cheng, 2017).

3. Methods

This paper tells the stories of seven young tourism management professionals. It was written based on a series of in-depth semi-

structured interviews (Knox & Burkard, 2009) conducted between January and April 2018.

3.1. Participants

A total of nine young professionals were invited to participate in this research through email or private messages on social media platforms like Facebook or LinkedIn. Two of them declined due to technical difficulties to conduct the interviews and work schedule conflicts, respectively.

At the time of the interviews, all seven participants had finished their undergraduate studies within the last three years from the Tourism Management Program (TMP) of Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola (USIL), a private university in Lima - Peru. One thing that characterizes these participants is that during their student years, they had taken at least three field trips organized by the university as a mandatory component of various academic courses from the program. The length of the field trips varied from full days to 4 days/3 nights. The destinations included different regions of the coast, the highlands and the Amazon jungle of Peru. During these field trips, participants visited a variety of sites with tourism potential, which in most cases were just starting to promote domestic and/or incoming tourism. In addition, participants interacted with local professionals and community members who provided them with insights about the tourism sector in their areas.

The seven stories included in this article were selected due to the differences among participants regarding their socio-demographic backgrounds, personalities, student performance, current employment status, professional goals, among others. Four women and three men participated in the study. Aliases were used in all cases to protect participants' identities (see Table 1).

3.2. Instrument and data analysis

The two-page questionnaire used was divided in four sections. First, participants were asked personal information to define their profile (e.g. his/her place of birth, his/her parent's place of birth, age, years in which they begun and finished studying in the TMP). The second section focused on the process participants went through from the moment they decided to enroll in the TMP, the potential struggles or doubts they overcame while studying and the factors that helped them to reaffirm their conviction of becoming tourism managers. The third section of the instrument gathered information about their domestic and international travel experience before and during the years they studied at the TMP and their perceptions on the advantages or disadvantages of field trips as compared with other types of trips. The last section explored their current professional situation as well as their work and academic projections, and the relation (if any) that they perceived between these projections and the field trips they participated in.

All interviews were conducted via Skype in Spanish. They were voice-recorded by using the program iFree Skype Recorder. Interviews lasted between 30 and 51 min (41 min on average). Stories were used for gathering and analyzing data. According to Moezzi, Janda, and Rotmann (2017), narrative analysis allows to crystallize arguments. Therefore, each case is presented following a narrative or storytelling format. Personal stories are perceived as authentic, engaging, concrete and democratic (Polletta, Chen, Gardner, & Motes, 2011). Dahlstrom (2014) suggested that its use offers intrinsic benefits in all steps of processing information. Further, their emotional, psychological, symbolic, and cultural content invites a different intellectual framework (Moezzi et al., 2017).

4. Findings

4.1. The story of Rita

She was born in Ayacucho - an Andean region that was strongly hit by terrorist groups in the 1980s and early 1990s - and moved to Lima with her mom at the age of 11. When finishing high school, she received a scholarship from the Regional Government of El Callao that was awarded to one outstanding student per each school in this Constitutional Province to support their study expenses in the field and university of their choice.

"When I was informed that I got a scholarship, the enrollment period had already begun. It was a fast process, I really didn't know what to study but to take advantage of the scholarship I had to decide right then"

She now feels she made the right decision by choosing the Tourism Management Program. This feeling grew over time, especially when she started interacting with tourists during the 11 field trips in which she participated (four full days and seven 4 days/3 nights).

Table 1
Participants per each interview.

N°	Pseudonym	Age	Place of Birth	Years at the TMP (°)	Duration of the interview
1	Rita	22	Ayacucho	2013–2017	30 min
2	Lucas	30	Lima	2012–2016	52 min
3	Jenny	24	Lima	2011–2017	33 min
4	Alfredo	32	Cusco	2011–2015	35 min
5	Denisse	22	Lima	2013–2017	34 min
6	Federico	32	Lima	2013–2017	44 min
7	Vania	23	Tarapoto	2012–2016	30 min

^a The Tourism Management Program at USIL comprises ten semesters.

She had never had the opportunity to travel around Peru – or abroad – before, but her scholarship covered all field trip related expenses, so she was able to take full advantage of them.

“In the short-term, field trips helped me to learn about what each destination has to offer and the challenges they need to overcome. And in the future, when I get to work maybe in some travel agency, that knowledge would allow me to create new tourism products, since we have traveled to many non-traditional places”

She has recently finished an internship period at the Tourism Office of a District Municipality in Lima. She is now eager to start working for a private company to gain some experience and eventually work for the public sector towards the development of Peruvian tourism, working for the underdeveloped areas she once visited with the field trips as well as for her hometown, Ayacucho.

“I want to contribute with tourism development. I feel a great commitment to do so. Traveling has helped a lot with this. Otherwise, by living only in my little bubble I could have known that there are many other places, but I would not have greater awareness about them. While traveling one gets to see the reality of how our country is doing”

Over time, she feels that her academic and professional goals have been consolidating. At first, she was not sure about what to do next, but she always liked the nature tourism field. Now, after taking the courses to obtain a minor in nature tourism she knows that if someday she gets to obtain a master’s degree it would be related to that.

4.2. The story of Lucas

He decided he wanted to study Tourism Management while travelling. He had previously studied a few semesters of Communications at another university in Lima and a couple semesters of Zoology at a university in Buenos Aires (Argentina). After deciding none of those were a perfect fit, he spent over a year taking seasonal jobs and travelling as much as he could. He went backpacking for three months around Australia, went to Brazil to visit a friend, went to Cuba on a family trip and traveled around Peru.

“I wanted to study something that allowed me to travel while learning, and I saw many opportunities in Peru. I was tired of people assuming Peru was only Machu Picchu. What about the rest? I had friends who had come and were impressed with other attractions. So, I started liking the idea of studying tourism. Also, my mom had had a successful career in the field”.

During the years he studied tourism management, he participated in six field trips (two full days and four 4 days/3 nights). These experiences reassured his desire to work on the tourism field and helped him choosing the types of tourism he wants to focus on (nature and adventure tourism).

“Learning during those trips made it much easier to absorb information as compared to (learning) in a classroom, which can sometimes be tedious and boring”

However, given that he had the opportunity to travel extensively around Peru and abroad with family, friends and by himself prior and during the years studying tourism, he felt that participating in field trips had some downsides as well.

“When traveling on your own you choose the itinerary considering what you find interesting. That freedom is important. Whereas field trips have a predetermined itinerary that doesn’t change unless there is an emergency. Also, you must move at the speed of the group which can be problematic. Some people are slower or are not prepared for the place they are visiting”

He is currently the Guest Experience Manager at a company that manages apartment rentals for short stays in Lima. He will soon travel to Spain to pursue a Tourism Master’s degree. After that, he would like to either remain in Europe or move to Australia, a country he admires as he considers it possess several well-managed tourism destinations. He does not rule out the possibility of going back to Peru to work outside of Lima as long as social and economic decentralized development takes place in the country in the next 10–20 years.

“I see myself returning to Peru in a long time. Especially if I have a promising idea of something that has not been done or that is not being done correctly. I, as a good millennial, don’t want to work long for someone else, I’ve always wanted to have something of my own, but I still don’t know what!”

4.3. The story of Jenny

After finishing high school, she already knew she wanted a major related with travelling. She studied hotel management for one year but did not like it, so she transferred from another university to study tourism management.

“The first two years I wondered if tourism management was my ideal major. I liked it, but some said it was just for lazy people. Also, many of my peers seek an administrative approach or something like cultural tourism and that was not my thing. So, I had doubts until I took courses like natural heritage, sustainable tourism and environmental impact assessment”

Since childhood she had traveled with her parents around Peru. During her university years, besides the eight field trips (one full day and seven 4 days/3 nights) she participated in, she traveled abroad and within the country with friends.

“For me, the main difference is that when I travel with friends we treat locals properly. Some peers from the university didn’t know how to treat them and wouldn’t care either. Same with local tour operators. Some students would always ask for more and got very demanding”

One benefit of field trips she pointed out is that the tour guides assigned strived and tried to provide a more specialized explanation given that the group was from a university. Regarding the effects field trips had on her, in the short term they helped her figuring out

what she liked the most from the tourism field and motivated her to study more. In the long term, they provided her with more cultural awareness.

“When I go to a new place I no longer feel lost. When I am at the jungle for example I know where some communities are, and I have a topic of conversation with them”

She had recently been working for a socially oriented company that promotes ecotourism and sustainable agriculture in several jungle communities from the San Martin Region. She is currently looking for a company with a similar focus in Lima to work for them until she can return to San Martin.

“I feel committed and would like to do more but maybe having more trainings would make me feel more qualified “

For now, she would like to focus on learning more about experiential tourism and gaining knowledge in photography or agronomy that may complement her background.

“I’ve broadened my horizons. Before, I wanted to organize events. Now, it’d be more like a social enterprise that involves art, culture, handicrafts”

4.4. The story of Alfredo

Born and raised in the city of Cusco - a well-known destination surrounded by Inca monuments located among the Sacred Valley, Machu Picchu, among others - he moved to Lima after finishing school to study at the university. He studied Industrial Engineering for a few semesters but always felt like it was not a good fit for him.

“Each summer I would come back to Cusco to spend time with my family and to practice mountain biking in the surrounding areas”

His desire for studying tourism management grew each time that his friends from Lima and other countries would ask him for advice on what to visit while in Cusco.

“In order to help them organizing their tours, I kept learning more and more and I started to like it a lot so that’s why I decided to switch to the Tourism Management Program”

Besides Cusco and its surroundings, he had had the opportunity to visit a couple other destinations in Peru before studying tourism. He had also traveled to the US for extended periods twice. During his four years studying tourism management he participated in four field trips (two full days and two 4 days/3 nights). Coincidentally, one of the long field trips was to Cusco and included hiking in areas he had never visited before.

“With each tourism course I took and each field trip I participated in, I felt stronger about the decision I had made”

He feels he benefited from travelling in general - before and throughout his studies – but acknowledges that his participation on field trips in particular helped him to succeed in more advanced courses and still help now that he works as a HR manager and Quality Supervisor at a hotel located in Ollantaytambo (Sacred Valley).

“After working for a couple years in the city of Cusco, six months ago I started looking for jobs in the valley. When I saw the job post I knew this was my chance!”

Since he started at this position, he has been part of the team in charge of meeting the criteria of an international certification, which they just obtained. Therefore, he feels excited about the professional challenges of his position and plans on working for the company for at least two more years. This way he feels he is also better preparing himself for launching a personal lodging project he wants to implement with a friend in the future, still in the Cusco area.

“Lima was ok for a while but as I’ve always said, ‘I’m serrano’, I’m from the countryside and I love it here. On my way to work I have to walk through farms, by an Inca wall, corn fields, strawberry crops. It’s another world where I am!”

He is proud to call Cusco his home. He feels committed to keep working to ensure new tourism products are being developed in a responsible way.

4.5. The story of Denisse

Since she was a little girl she traveled around Peru with her parents. The influence of her adventurous father got her interested in the tourism field.

“When I was finishing school, I talked to my parents about what I could study. We made a list of what I liked, my strengths, and we decided as a family that tourism management was a good option. I also considered hospitality, but I picked tourism and I do not regret my decision at all! From the beginning I said, ‘this is my thing!’ and I did great in all courses”

For her, participating in field trips (three full days and nine 4 days/3 nights) was a motivation to keep her good grades. The main differences she found between travelling with her family or friends and going on field trips was that in the last case she had to focus on gathering and analyzing the specific information she needed to successfully develop course projects.

“I didn’t like it when people said that as we traveled so much then it was an easy major. I would tell them that when studying tourism management there is a vast amount of research you have to do from various sources and it’s a lot of work”

The knowledge she gained from field trips allows her to recommend destinations, services and attractions to her Peruvian and

foreign friends. It is also useful now that she is working for PromPerú – the Peruvian DMO – as an intern for the Latin-American Market.

“Sometimes at work I can say ‘Yes, I’ve been to that place’ and I’m able to answer questions from coworkers about my perceptions, which is a wonderful way to interact with people who are well-experienced in the field”

Before her current job, she had the opportunity to work abroad (in Disneyworld) and for a big tour operator in Cusco. She now wants to keep acquiring work experience in Lima.

“I feel that in tourism I have to keep experiencing jobs to determine what I like the most. At first, I did not project myself much. I thought only about travel agencies but gradually I became interested in the public sector. Now I know that tourism is an activity that impacts a lot on the development of Peru”

In a few years, she would like to study a Master’s degree and become an expert on developing destination promotional plans. She feels very committed to work for her country’s development.

“I feel very Peruvian. Now I want to show the country brand everywhere. It’s nice to hear that there are so many people who think Peru is a wonderful destination”

4.6. *The story of Federico*

While in high school he belonged to a hiking club (with other students, teachers and some parents) with which he would travel around Peru.

“We would go trekking or biking and that’s how my interest in the tourism field was born. But, when I finished high school I didn’t know much about where to study it at a university level”

At that point he chose studying Economics and he did so up to the ninth semester (out of ten). He then had to interrupt his studies due to health issues for about three years. After recovering, he learned he had missed an administrative procedure to complete his Economics studies. It was then when he decided to enroll for the tourism management program instead.

“Since the first class I noticed the teacher had an extensive knowledge of the subject and remained satisfied with the classes and everything since. While studying Economics, I had doubts but in Tourism I had no doubts at all!”

He focused on finishing his studies as fast as he could, so during those years he did not travel much on his own, but he participated in six field trips (two full days and four 4 days/3 nights). They all reaffirmed his passion for tourism, but one was specially revealing for him.

“During a field trip to Cajamarca, we visited a rural community that offered tourism and I realized that was a way to reduce the rates of extreme poverty in Peru, which had been my teenager dream. From then, I had remained interested in community-based rural tourism”

What he liked the most about field trips is that they gave him the opportunity to visit places that he would not have visited otherwise, which allowed him to see the reality of the sector.

“We may know that there is poverty or deficiencies in the services in some places but when you visit them you learn which specific aspects need to be improved to provide a quality experience that is what the tourist seeks”

In addition, he got to integrate field trips with the subjects he was learning about in the courses and he was able to have a critical view of the destinations.

“For example, the dream of every Peruvian is to visit Machu Picchu. I went for the first time with a field trip and started analyzing issues such as carrying capacity, how beneficial it is for the place to receive too many tourists...I had another perspective”

In the future, he would like to travel abroad and pursue a Master’s degree that relates Tourism with Economics. For now, he is looking for job opportunities to contribute to sustainable tourism development in Peru.

4.7. *The story of Vania*

She was born in Tarapoto, a city in the high jungle plateau (San Martín Region). At age six, she moved to Lima with her family. During her last year at school, she had to develop a short-term life plan for a class which included the major she wanted to study, the university she wanted to enroll in and the kind of job she projected herself into. Given that she loved learning different languages and getting to know unfamiliar cultures, she realized studying tourism management would be a good idea.

“From the beginning, I never had doubts that this was for me, the more I learned the more I liked it. In addition, during the career fairs I got to be in contact with potential employers such as travel agencies, hotels, cruises and I loved their presentations. Imagining myself working for one of them got me very excited”

Her travelling experience was limited before starting at the university; whenever she traveled with her parents it was to visit her maternal and paternal grandparents. During her years at the university, she got to travel to Argentina for an academic mission and to Disneyworld to work for a few months. She also participated in 11 field trips (two full days and nine 4 days/3 nights). In addition, she would also go on weekend trips to nearby locations with a group of classmates.

“The main advantage of the field trips was having a teacher at our disposal in case we had doubts that the tour guide couldn’t answer. When traveling with friends we almost never took a tour, we would mainly focus on just having a good time”

She recognizes many positive outcomes from her participation in field trips. In a short term, she acknowledges that she would start working on a class project without really knowing how to address some specifics but after coming back from the field trip everything felt way clearer. Now that she works as a specialist for the Sales Department of one of the biggest Peruvian tour operators, she feels more confident talking to her clients about the destinations she had the opportunity to visit with the field trips.

“If I haven’t visit a place I try to have a predetermined speech based on what I have been told about the destination, but I lack a personal point of view so it’s not the same explaining it to someone else. Also, what happens if they ask you a question you had not anticipated?”

In the near future she sees herself running her own business either in Lima or other areas in Peru. Meanwhile she wants to keep learning about tourism marketing and the socially-responsible projects her company offers.

“When I make a quotation for a customer I love telling them about the projects the company has to support the local communities and I encourage them to contribute to these projects so that their trip leaves a footprint in our country”

5. Discussion of findings

Despite the differences between interviewees, they all agreed that field trips played an essential role in providing them with knowledge that they would not be able to attain through any other learning tool. While enhancing understanding of the concepts and theories learned in class had already been identified as the main motivation for attending field trips (Goh & Ritchie, 2011), participants of this study identified some elements that made this possible for them. For example, some mentioned that interacting with local communities and entrepreneurs as well as tourists, allowed them to see the reality of the tourism situation in various destinations across the country. Other participants highlighted that having the teacher’s guidance during the field trips helped them seeing the destination through a critical perspective. These findings reinforce the importance of the active role of the teacher in charge (Anderson & Zhang, 2003; Wong & Wong, 2008).

Interviews also revealed that participating in field trips helped each of them in a distinct level to achieve academic and professional goals. In most cases, these experiences helped them to reaffirm their decision to study tourism management and motivated them to attain good academic results. Similarly to what Fominiene and Svagzdiene (2017) found, all participants acknowledged that at the beginning of their studies, their perception of the tourism sector was vague, which made it difficult for them to set specific career goals. They considered that attending field trips was crucial to shape their professional projections by defining what type of tourism they wanted to specialize in and what kind of position they would like to occupy once they graduated (e.g., public sector at a local or national level, private companies, non-profit organizations, personal projects). Further, they all indicated they have ambitious goals for the future, in most cases involving academic advances (e.g., getting a master’s degree) and entrepreneurial projects.

In addition to the academic and professional outcomes, as suggested by Xie (2004), field trip participation seems to provide benefits at a personal level. It was noted that during each interview, participants brought up concerns regarding the way they perceived destinations are being managed in Peru. Further, most participants not only showed greater awareness of problematic tourism-related issues (Gretzel et al., 2008) but also recognized behavioral changes (Sotomayor & Gil Arroyo, 2015; Ting & Cheng, 2017) that lead them to become more involved at a destination management level. They expressed willingness to work towards a more responsible approach in the field considering aspects such as “decentralized development”, “sustainability” and “corporate social responsibility”. This reinforces what Tribe (2002) and Dogramadjieva et al. (2016) suggested regarding the arise of a more reflective and conscious generation of tourism leaders.

Interestingly, findings suggest that field trip participants may develop a level of place attachment which, according to Warzecha

Table 2

Cognitive and affective benefits from field trips suggested by tourism management program participants.

Type of outcome	Duration	Main benefits
Cognitive	Short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gaining firsthand experience on travelling planning which may lead to reinforce their decision to study tourism as a major increasing interest towards a better comprehension of facts and concepts from course materials by relating theory to actual practice
	Long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing a critical view about issues related to destination resources management strengthening overall knowledge and skills for deciding which type of tourism to specialize in and gaining self-confidence for a promising professional development
Affective	Short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> socializing with teachers and peers as a way of informal learning appreciating the point of view of local residents regarding the effects that tourism has on their community at a social and environmental level
	Long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> embracing more conscious behaviors related with the social and environmental impacts of tourism developing a degree of place attachment with the visited places and the whole country due to long-term memories that may lead to more active destination management involvement

and Lime (2001), occurs if there is a close emotional or functional relationship between humans and places that for some reason hold a noteworthy value or meaning. Participants acknowledged the development of symbolic ties for the places they visited, which are linked with special memories of the field trip, and in most cases, are places that have great significance, such as being a symbol of Peruvian natural or cultural heritage. As suggested by Manzo and Perkins (2006), people's thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about certain places can influence whether and how they participate in local planning efforts. In this study, almost all interviewees mentioned at some point in their future they would be willing to work towards the tourism development of some of the places they visited with field trips. In a few cases, they even prioritized their commitment to these destinations over the places where they or their parents were born. However, for most participants, field trips reinforced their sense of pride and overall relation with their country (Peru) and enhanced the commitment for working towards its tourism development (e.g., creation of new tourism products, promotion of new destinations). Activism and involvement are expected only if place attachment is strong (Inglis, Deery, & Whitelaw, 2008; Payton, Fulton, & Anderson, 2005) which is common when, like in this case, individuals perceive governance processes as inadequate (Clarke, Murphy, & Lorenzoni, 2017).

A summary of cognitive and affective benefits from field trips suggested by tourism management program participants can be found in Table 2.

5.1. Practical implications

By sharing these stories, valuable insights are provided for educators and tourism management program directors from universities and colleges around the world, who are already incorporating field trips as a recurrent learning tool throughout their programs as well as for those who are considering to do so. This is especially important considering that because of the COVID-19 pandemic, most universities around the world had to cancel the field trips they had planned for the year 2020, and it is unclear when these will resume. Even though the introduction of current trends, such as VR-based virtual field trips, have also been proven to provide several benefits (Schott, 2017), this study concludes that impacts of field trip participation cannot be easily replaced. In sum, similar to what Goh (2011) found, individuals suggested that participating in field trips during their first years in the program helped them succeeding in their courses while over time, the knowledge gained during these trips, allowed them to feel more empowered and self-confident at the current stage they are in as young professionals who are acquiring experience in the field. Thus, the present study supports what Rogers (2011) suggested regarding the incorporation of fieldwork as a mandatory element in the curriculums due to its key role in supporting students to go from learning about being a professional to becoming a professional. Further, it can be concluded that future tourism professionals would benefit from the incorporation of field work early in their education (Sanders & Armstrong, 2008).

5.2. Limitations and recommendations for future research

Study findings are not intended to be representative given that the study was conducted within a few participants. However, findings call for broadening the spectrum to study the potential benefits of field trips in tourism management programs. For example, future research could focus on the possible development of place attachment as a result of field trip participation. While these bonds are considered as essential in planning for tourism development (Strzelecka, Boley, & Woosnam, 2017), they have only been largely documented within the tourism literature in relation to residents' attitudes toward tourism development (Styliadis, 2018). However, further understanding of the effects of place attachment among tourism professionals is just starting to arise (Olsen, Vogt, & Andereck, 2018). To the extent of the authors' knowledge, no studies have focused on the relation between field trips, place attachment and tourism development awareness and/or implementation among tourism professionals. Such study should consider that place attachment varies greatly in type and depth depending on the unique interactions of an individual's experiences, culture, and socialization (Payton et al., 2005). For example, among professionals who participated in the present study, some differences were noted. While all recognized short-term and long-term benefits of participating in field trips, perceptions varied depending on the domestic and international travel experience that each of them had on their own, before or during the time they were studying the major, whether travelling with family, friends or alone. Whenever travel experience level outside of the field trips was low or nonexistent, perceived benefits of field trips were greater, and no downsides were mentioned.

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