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# Tourism in geography textbooks in secondary education and high school. The case of the Balearic Islands.

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**Abstract:** Since the mid-20th century, tourism has become a strategic activity for the economy of the Balearic Islands, causing profound social, territorial, and environmental transformations. This fact challenges local society, which must be aware of its environment to better face the future challenges posed by this economic activity. With this goal, the official curriculum has been analyzed, making it possible to ascertain the approach with which this subject is taught by the administration and what objectives are set. Furthermore, a review was carried out of the contents of geography textbooks in the third year of ESO and the second year of Baccalaureate, which correspond to the educational stages in which tourism aspects appear. The results obtained represent a fundamental strategic diagnosis to improve the teaching and learning of this key activity for the Balearic Islands, giving it more importance and adapting its approach to the current times.

**Keywords:** geography education; tourism education; curriculum; textbook; secondary education

## 1. Introduction

The tourism industry is one of the economic activities that has grown the most in recent decades, representing 10.3% of world GDP [1] and with the Mediterranean as one of the most important tourist areas on the planet. Since the second half of the 20th century, this region of the world has seen uninterrupted tourism growth [2, 3, 4], causing deep economic transformations in it [5, 6, 7, 8], social [9, 10, 11] and environmental [12, 13, 14]. Within this geographical context, this research analyses the case of the Balearic Islands (Spain), which with 16.2 million tourists [15] is one of the main tourist destinations in the Mediterranean.

Just as Marins et al. [16] points, tourism can be characterized as a beneficial phenomenon for the agents that constitute it and for the towns and cities that participate in it, it can also contribute to intensify sociocultural tensions, economic dependence and environmental degradation [17, 18], just like it has been studied in the case of the Balearic Islands [19, 20, 21]. On this issue, it should be noted that the discontent of local residents towards tourism and the disputes between residents and tourists are becoming more frequent throughout the world [22], including the Balearic Islands [23, 24]. Some works such as that of Martins [25] have associated these coexistence conflicts with low levels of education. Other authors such as Andereck et al. [26], point out that education can contribute to a better understanding of the tourism industry.

Therefore, there is no doubt that there are points of contact between education and tourism [27], which go beyond professional formation [28, 29, 30, 31, 32]. The dynamism of the socioeconomic, technological, environmental and political environment is causing

the research paradigm to change in recent years to respond to the needs of all interested parties [33, 34]. Consequently, the focus of analysis of the relationship between education and tourism has broadened, showing that education has an impact on many aspects of tourism, beyond the formation of human capital [35].

On the other hand, there are several works that have made didactic proposals to incorporate tourism aspects into secondary education and achieve significant learning [36, 37]. However, more than the form or specific proposals, this paper aims to review the content of the textbooks with the largest circulation in the archipelago as well as the focus of the official curriculum.

Although tourism education has taken root in colleges and universities [38], its presence has been very limited in secondary education institutes [39]. The present investigation is framed at this point, entering a little-explored study niche such as pre-university tourism education [40] despite, just as some authors point, such as Goeldner et al. [41] has great potential, since it is at this stage of education when students are first introduced to the study of tourism [42, 43].

Starting off based on this premise, this work aims to analyse the contents on tourism proposed by the manuals of the different courses of the Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) and Baccalaureate (High School) stages of the Balearic Islands. The starting hypothesis is that few resources are devoted to explaining and analysing this phenomenon despite the fact that, according to data from 2019, this activity represented 41.3% of GDP and employed 41.6% of the active population of the Balearic Islands [44]. In this way, it is intended to promote debate in the scientific field about the contents of didactic materials and the way in which tourism is taught, given its growing relevance within today's society [45, 46, 47].

## **2. The role of geography in the Spanish secondary school**

In Spain's compulsory secondary education (ESO), there is no specific subject for tourism and it is taught on geography [48], as it happens in other countries of the world [49, 50]. As Moreno [51] points out, this is due to the fact that, unlike other disciplines, the geography curriculum facilitates the approach of transversal themes. In the case of tourism, geography makes it possible to obtain holistic knowledge, since socioeconomic and natural aspects of other aspects converge in this economic activity, facilitating the understanding of the tourist phenomenon [52]. In Spain, the teaching of tourism in pre-university studies has focused mainly on the analysis of the social, economic and environmental components of tourism, having been able to identify three large blocks of content: the tourist space, the tourist system and the impacts of tourism.

However, geography shares a subject with history during the first two years of ESO, remaining independent in third and not studied in fourth. In this way, in the first year, the contents of physical geography are taught and in the second year's contents of human geography. The contents of the third year of ESO are completely geographical, and although it is usual to review what has been worked on in previous courses, they focus above all on economic aspects, being in this course when the issue of tourism is addressed. Therefore, this course is key to teaching tourism, since it is the last one in which a large part of the students' study geography. Only those students who continue their training through the Baccalaureate of Social Sciences and Humanities modality, have the option in the second year of rediscovering Geography [53].

## **3. Materials and Methods**

It should be noted that this article does not incorporate in its study the content of the new educational law, the LOMLOE; since this is beginning to be fully applied (in all secondary school courses) after the investigation, the 2023-2024 academic year. Therefore, the analysis presented is based on what is established by the LOMCE (Organic Law 8/2013, of December 9, for the improvement of educational quality).

Thus, in order to find out what is taught about tourism in pre-university education in the Balearic Islands, Decrees 34/2015 and 35/2015 have been consulted, through which

the ESO and Baccalaureate curriculum is established in the Balearic Islands. Balearic Islands (table 1).

**Table 1.** Contents related to tourism in the curricula of the Balearic Islands.

Education level	Topic	Contents
First cycle of ESO (3 <sup>rd</sup> Course)	Human geography	Systems and economic sectors. Geographical spaces according to economic activity. the three sectors.
Baccalaureate 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Third Sector	The outsourcing of the Balearic economy. Tourism: factors and evolution. Tourism and the environment.

Despite the fact that many educational centers are incorporating digital learning materials [54], it has been decided to inquire about printed textbooks, since they continue to be the preferred teaching materials in the field of formal education [55, 56]. Specifically, the textbooks for the 2021-2022 academic year have been consulted, therefore, they are teaching materials that were published in accordance with the curricular criteria of the LOMCE and Decrees 34/2015 and 35/2015. The textbooks chosen correspond to those of the three publishers with the largest circulation, which are available in most schools in the Balearic Islands (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Geography school books that have been analysed.

Education level	Book
ESO 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Burgos, M. & Muñoz-Delgado, MC (2015). Geography and History 3. Learn to believe in connection. Anaya Group.
	Albert, A.; Bosch, D.; Garcia, C. & González-Monfort, N. (2016). GiH 3. Geography. Ed. Vicens Vives.
	VVAA (2015). Geography and History. Know How. Ed. Santillana.
Baccalaureate 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Muñoz-Delgado & Mérida, M <sup>a</sup> C. (2016) Geography. Anaya Group.
	Albert, A.; Bosch, D.; Garcia, C.; González-Monfort, N. (2016). Geography. Balearic Islands (3D Classroom). Ed. Vicens Vives.
	VVAA (2016). Geography. Know fer. Ed. Santillana. voramar.

The analysis of these textbooks has been carried out systematically, delving into their contents [57], with the purpose of understanding the characteristics under which tourism is institutionally conceived, and which are the guidelines that are prescribed for teachers. of secondary education in the Balearic Islands. To achieve the proposed objectives, a transversal and structured methodology has been used that develops a descriptive-interpretative analysis within the qualitative paradigm [58]. Aspects have been identified such as the unit in which tourism is framed, the topics covered, the theoretical

approach, the proposed activities and materials provided, and the geographical context on which the work is done. Finally, based on the results obtained, a SWOT analysis has been carried out.

#### 4. Results

##### 4.1. *Tourism in the geography curriculum of secondary and high school.*

The treatment of tourism within the geography curriculum in the Balearic Islands is done tangentially in secondary school and more specifically in high school. The contents linked to tourism are usually integrated within the economic branch of geography, and are usually included in the topic of economic sectors and tertiary activities.

Despite the socioeconomic and environmental importance of tourism in the Balearic Islands, tourism does not appear explicitly in the secondary school curriculum. It only implicitly refers to tourism in the competency aspect and the objectives, since the contents, evaluable learning standards and evaluation criteria are not made this reference explicitly.

Unlike the high school curriculum, in the Baccalaureate there is explicit reference to tourism, both in the contents and in the evaluation criteria and in the evaluable learning standards (Table 3). Regarding tourism, special emphasis is placed on the study of this sector in the Balearic Islands and the relationship it maintains with the environment.

**Table 3.** References to tourism in the high school geography curriculum.

Contents	Evaluation criteria	Learning standards
Touristic spaces. Characteristics and evolution.	Locate touristic spaces on a map and list its regional characteristics.	Analyse and explain the inequalities of the tourist space.
The outsourcing of the Balearic economy. The tourism. Factors and evolution. Tourism and environment.	The outsourcing of the Balearic economy. The tourism. Factors and evolution. Tourism and environment.	Prepare schemes to analyse the influence of the service sector on the economy and employment in Spain from images that reflect the impact of the tourism sector on a landscape.

In the part of the didactic objectives, the curriculum also develops a good number of these issues, focusing on the understanding and knowledge of the territory, valuing environmental impacts and interest in environmental heritage, as well as how the territory is interacting with the expansion of tourism. Sustainability and the effects of tourism are a reason that is constantly present in the curricular formulation, which suggests a proactive position on the part of the administration and an awareness of the situation in relation to tourism in its territory.

As regards the learning standards, different tourism-related competencies are also required, all of them related to spatial skills and the ability to identify, analyse and express geographic content. In this sense, it can be noted that the curriculum has a predominance of didactic strategies that encourage students to inquire, reflect and have critical thinking regarding problems and processes that occur in their environment [59]. Thus, students must know the situation of the geography of tourism in Spain and the Balearic Islands, considered from the curriculum a "part of the whole"; contextualized in the local reality, but always in a global framework. Consequently, the student can acquire a more analytical vision and with a broader scope of the geographical processes associated with the tourist activity in their territory.

#### 4.2. *Tourism in secondary school geography textbooks.*

In secondary geography textbooks, the contents associated with tourism are normally included in the blocks of economic geography, specifically, within the topic of the tertiary sector. They suppose, from the current curricular approach, the first contact with tourism of secondary school students [42], the approximation that is made being essential to determine what first vision the students will have on this topic.

**Table 4.** Title of the units where content and activities on tourism are collected in the different ESO textbooks.

Units	Contents	Activities
	Transportation and tourism	
	The tourist modalities	Questions about the contents
		Scheme making
The third sector. Spaces and activities	International tourist flows: origin and destination areas	Search for press news
Transport and tourism	Economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism	Commentary on maps, graphs and statistical tables
Service activities	Development of sustainable tourism	Argumentation of texts
	Spain, a tourist power	Search for information and
	Tourism in the Balearic Islands	writing reports

The content orientation of textbooks is predominantly descriptive. Regarding the type of content, a unanimous presence of the types of tourism, the location of tourist areas and the socioeconomic and environmental impacts derived from tourism have been observed. Usually, it starts from a global vision of the tourism phenomenon that is completed with a final annex dedicated specifically to Spain and the Balearic Islands. These issues are usually addressed through graphic materials and close case studies given their ability to make visible the relationship between theory and daily practice.

In the Balearic Islands, the predominance of an economic vision of tourism has been observed, highlighting the presence of graphs and statistics to explain the importance of this sector for the economy and the labor market. On the other hand, sun and beach tourism is highlighted as the dominant modality, and the effects that this model has at a spatial and temporal level are explained. On the one hand, the concentration of the tourist offers in the coast and, on the other hand, the concentration of demand during the summer months is addressed.

Finally, it should be said that as it is an intermediate course in ESO, teachers are not subject to a stage evaluation, which allows teachers to have a greater margin of action with respect to the curricular lines, being able to complement the contents of the book with other types of activities.

#### 4.3. *Tourism in Baccalaureate geography books.*

In high school geography textbooks, tourism is covered in more deeply than in the secondary school stage. However, as in secondary school, there isn't a specific theme dedicated to tourism, and it is incorporated as a part of the theme of services. On the other hand, it should be noted that the content and development of the subject is highly

marked by the Exam for University Access (EvAU), which is a major curricular conditioner when planning and didactically designing the teaching and learning of geography [60].

In the case of the Balearic Islands, the geography test at the EvAU is divided into four parts: a mapping section, a brief definition section, and two comments sections (graphs, statistics, maps, or texts). Tourism in these sections is evaluated by commenting on graphics, statistics, texts or thematic maps on tourism development and inequalities in the tourism space in Spain and/or the Balearic Islands. In addition, there are definitions of concepts related to tourism such as: agrotourism, tourist rental, tourist seasonality, tourist monoculture, discretionary transport, alternative tourism, mass tourism, non-hotel occupancy, tour operator and overbooking.

**Table 5.** Title of the units where content and activities on tourism are collected in the different textbooks of the second year of high school.

Units	Contents	Activities
Service spaces	Tourism and tourist services	Comments of maps and images
	The development of tourism in Spain	
The activities of the third sector	Spain, a touristic power	Data search and reporting
	Location and characterization of tourist areas	Arguments of texts
The third sector	The social, economic and environmental impact of tourism	Questions about the information in the book
		Interpretation of graphs and statistical tables

The textbooks analysed deal with tourism from a descriptive perspective and following a very similar content structure (Table 5); characterizing the sector itself in the first place to enter later on the location of the tourist areas, the different problems and processes related to this economic activity and its territorial interactions. The theoretical contents are accompanied by abundant graphs, tables, maps and specific texts. In a complementary way, case studies or topics are presented that are in line with the current and future challenges of Spanish tourism, such as the National Comprehensive Tourism Plan (PNIT), the 2030 Agenda or the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Regarding the sections that refer to the Balearic Islands, a brief review is made of the particularities of tourism in the Balearic Islands and its history, describing the distribution of its offer and mentioning the main tourist flows, in addition to analysing the impacts of tourism, among which the term "Balearization" stands out above all, which was used to describe the transformation that the coast as a consequence of the terrible urban planning caused by the tourist boom. Finally, it should be noted that in the books analysed it has been observed that not all the definitions of the key concepts of the EvAU test, which obligates teachers to provide those to students.

## 5. Discussion

The results obtained are shown in the same line as other works such as those of Eade [61], who showed that the presence of tourism is more significant within secondary education than at other educational levels, as in this case. It would be high school. However, the curriculum in ESO is more flexible than in high school, which is highly conditioned by the rigidity of the EvAU. However, the possibility of taking advantage of this greater flexibility to deepen the teaching of tourism in secondary will depend on the

perception that teachers have about tourism [40] and the teaching they may have on the subject [48]. Thus, the learning of tourism by secondary school students is subject to the personal characteristics of the teacher [43].

On the other hand, it is important to note that students tend to read textbooks as neutral descriptions and not as the "masterfully crafted social instrument to achieve a social purpose" [62] (p.502) that they ultimately are. This makes it all the more important that textbooks offer insight into the complexities related to socially controversial domains [63]. In this sense, this research has analysed the contents of geography textbooks to identify the way in which tourism is treated as a transcendental subject for the Balearic Islands (Table 6).

**Table 6.** SWOT matrix based on the treatment of tourism in geography textbooks in secondary and high school.

<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Lack of a specific topic	Growth of new digital materials and techniques that replace the textbook
Little connection with academic sources	Changing context and constant updating of tourist data
Repetition of content between secondary and high school	Transformation of the sector once the Covid-19 crisis has been overcome
Omission of key issues related to tourism, both locally and globally	
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
Approach to the regional reality of the Balearic Islands	Large number of audiences that can be reached
Quality of the graphic information displayed	Possibility of adaptation to the new themes of study of tourism
Adequacy of the language used and the format of the text	Didactic potential of textbook materials, their digital versions and associated resources
Adaptation to the curriculum, analysis of holistic tourism	

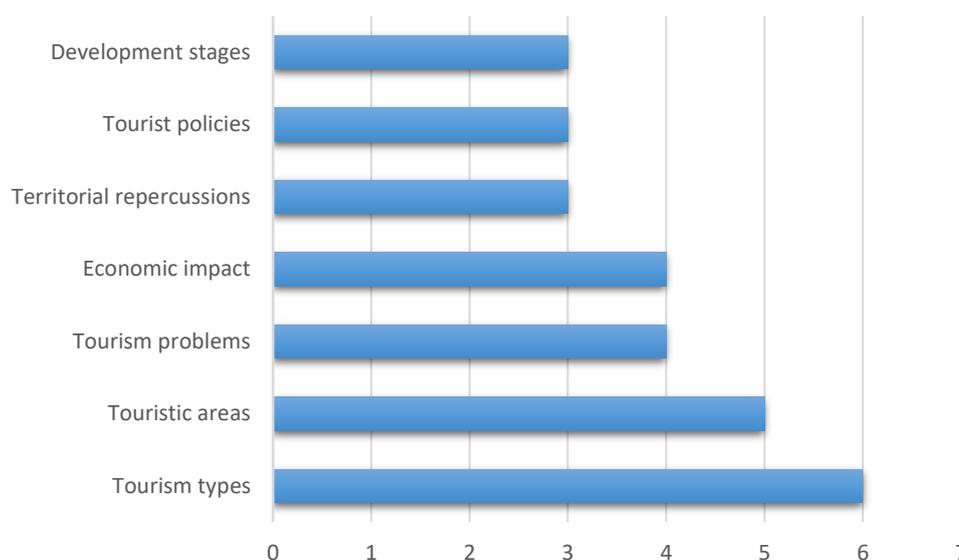
Textbooks can be considered indicators of the current social and political climate, and markers of how groups and/or ideas have weight in official knowledge [64]. In this sense, it has been observed that despite the importance of tourism for the socioeconomic and environmental metabolism of the Balearic Islands, no specific chapter or didactic unit is dedicated to it. This fact is noteworthy, since in all the books the tourist question is always included in relation to other activities of the tertiary sector, such as transport or commerce. In addition, the predominance of an approach based on the positive transformations of tourism is observed, on the other hand, inequalities and the negative effects it generates appear to a lesser extent.

Another aspect to highlight is that the information sources that feed the different maps, diagrams and graphs that complement the text contents are almost always official sources, from public organizations and governmental or supranational associations. The lack of citations in scientific articles is notorious, removing from the student's perspective the possibility that the contribution of science may be useful for their learning process about tourism.

Furthermore, an issue that should be reconsidered from the analysis of the textbooks is the need to incorporate technology in the teaching-learning processes of tourism in secondary education and high school. Despite the fact that there are numerous experiences on the educational potential of the use of GIT in the field of geography [65,

66], its use for teaching tourism has barely been explored so far in textbooks. However, its application can contribute to the acquisition of spatial skills for citizens [67] that can contribute to a better understanding of the tourism phenomenon.

A recurring characteristic between the different topics is the repetition of contents that are shown between the two courses that tourism is taught (Figure 1). Although data is shown at different scales, generic aspects such as tourist typologies or the territorial repercussions that can occur due to the sightseeing, duplicates are seen; sometimes making specific reference to each geographical context. This repetition of content and the rote nature of the subject has made it sometimes be considered tedious and of little depth for the general public [68], an aspect that goes against its prestige and significance in learning.



**Figure 1.** Most repeated epigraphs in the analysed textbooks.

Many textbooks, even having gone through many editions, they continue with the classic structure of contents marked by the educational law, with little room for innovation or a differentiated presentation of the contents, either by the grouping of sectors or by the topics that are shown. This scheme omits aspects that in recent years have become relevant and that today are basic when it comes to talking about tourism; thus, uncovering some of the shortcomings of both the curricular proposal and the work embodied in the books. Some of the most important topics specific to the geography of tourism, both globally and nationally, which are omitted in the thematic blocks of the books analysed:

- Tourism and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The expansion of Tourist Use Housing (VUT) as an alternative to traditional accommodation.
- The effects of tourist seasonality.
- The tourist saturation (overtourism) and the debates on the tourist decrease.
- The new forms of intelligent tourism management of destinations (Smart Destinations).
- Types of accommodation on the rise: boutique hotels and inland hotels.
- Climate change and tourism.
- The energy crisis and tourism.

The incorporation of current issues within the teaching of tourism can play a transcendental role when it comes to addressing the social and environmental challenges of the 21st century [69], since it can stimulate future generations to adopt new ways of thinking, behaving and acting, that are more in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the 2030 Agenda [70]. In fact, SDG 4 points to quality education as an essential pillar that should help achieve these challenges. The new educational law known as LOMLOE (Organic Law 2/2020 that Modifies the Organic Law of Education) is focused in this line, which will be fully applied in Spain from the 2023-2024 academic year, replacing the current one (analysed in this article) the contents and evaluation criteria to direct education towards these objectives more clearly [71, 72].

## 6. Conclusions

Textbooks have a legitimizing role in teaching, as teachers tend to believe that curriculum requirements are met by following the textbooks [73], and consequently, learning outcomes are often assessed in relation to their content. On the other hand, the content that these books offer about tourism significantly influences the construction of the social representations of the students, given that they are perceived as objective and rigorous materials with scientific evidence [74, 58]. So, taking into account the above points, this investigation has allowed to address how knowledge is built about tourism in the geography books of secondary education and high school, and, with this, detect the weaknesses, threats, strengths and opportunities that can affect its teaching-learning process.

In this way, it has been observed that despite the importance that tourism has acquired in the world economy and its environmental effects, its presence within the secondary school curriculum is very scarce [75], and this is reflected in the textbooks. In the case of the Balearic Islands, despite having a great dependence on tourism, it is seen how tourism has a secondary role within the contents of geography textbooks. On the other hand, the predominance of a markedly economic approach to the contents of tourism has been observed, and on the contrary, the most critical contributions on the effects generated by tourism on the socioeconomic and environmental functioning of the territories in which it develops intensely, as would be the case of the Balearic Islands, are scarce. To fill these deficiencies, it is recommended that teachers use complementary materials, such as news, documentaries or scientific articles, which contribute to a more comprehensive teaching-learning process of tourism.

In addition, the contents of textbooks frequently do not match the reality of tourism, due to the fact that it is an economic sector that changes rapidly and makes it difficult to adapt the materials to the current situation [76]. Therefore, it would be recommendable for teachers to use other types of teaching resources that can adapt more quickly to changes in the tourism industry, such as digital books, project-based learning or field trips [77]. This last learning methodology can be especially beneficial for students [78], given that in the Balearic Islands there are many tourist spaces in which to work on aspects of said activity and generate more significant learning. On the other hand, this fact can help to establish roots in the students, which encourages them to be more in contact with the territorial reality and helps them to be aware of the changes produced by tourism in the geography of the archipelago and its environment in general.

Another issue observed in textbooks is that little use is made of Geographic Information Technologies (TIG), despite being fundamental tools for active methodologies such as project-based learning, student-based learning [79, 80]. These tools foster the acquisition of spatial knowledge and location-based skills [81], which are essential to be able to carry out spatial reasoning about tourism.

Finally, it should be noted that education, as a social phenomenon, must respond in its contents and approaches to what occurs in the environment of the students [82]. In this way, given the importance of tourism in the Balearic Islands, a tourism education that contributes to the training of future generations in the face of the challenges that

tourism entails for society is essential. For this, it is proposed to link the contents of tourism to the objectives of the 2030 Agenda, given that these objectives can contribute, directly or indirectly, to responding to these challenges of tourism.

#### Author Contributions

Conceptualization, M.C-R. and V.P.; methodology, V.P. and M.C-R.; validation, A.O., V.P. and M.C-R.; formal analysis, V.P. and M.C-R.; investigation, V.P.; resources, V.P. and M.C-R.; data curation, A.O.; writing—original draft preparation, V.P.; writing—review and editing, V.P., M.C-R. and A.O.; supervision, A.O., V.P. and M.C-R.; project administration, M.C-R. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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The authors declare no conflict of interest

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