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## Assessing the Role of Social Studies Curricula in Enhancing Tourism Awareness among High School Students: A Student Perspective

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**Abstract.** Tourism awareness plays a pivotal role in promoting cultural understanding and supporting economic growth, especially in regions with rich heritage and tourism potential. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of social studies curricula in fostering tourism awareness among high school students in the Irbid region of northern Jordan. The research addresses the problem of limited integration of tourism-related topics within the existing curricula, which tend to prioritize general knowledge over specialized subjects such as sustainable tourism and cultural diversity. A total of 979 students were randomly selected to participate in the study, and data were gathered using a structured survey designed to assess how well the curricula promote tourism awareness. The research employed a quantitative approach to examine relationships between tourism awareness and variables such as gender, residence, and academic achievement. The results showed significant gaps in the curricula, with minimal focus on hands-on learning experiences like field trips or interactive projects, leading to generally low levels of tourism awareness among students. Furthermore, the lack of career guidance related to tourism hinders students from exploring potential tourism-related career paths. There were no significant differences in tourism awareness based on gender, residence, or academic performance. The study concludes by recommending a comprehensive revision of the social studies curricula to include more specialized tourism concepts, practical learning opportunities, and career exploration activities. Such changes would enhance students' understanding of the tourism industry and its importance, preparing them for future roles in this sector.

**Keywords:** Social studies curricula; role of curricula; tourism awareness; high school students.

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## 1. Introduction

Tourism plays a pivotal role in the global economy, significantly contributing to the economic, social, and environmental development of countries. Education, particularly through Social Studies, is essential in shaping students' understanding of tourism and its multifaceted impacts. By integrating tourism education into Social Studies curricula, schools can cultivate students' awareness of tourism, which, in turn, influences their behaviors and attitudes toward sustainable practices that support the long-term viability of this vital sector (Huang et al., 2022; Issakov et al., 2023). This awareness is particularly crucial for high school students in regions where tourism serves as a major economic driver, as it can directly shape their future engagement with the industry and their local communities (Fraihat et al., 2022; Moscardo & Benckendorff, 2015; Rosas-Jaco et al., 2020).

In Jordan, tourism occupies a prominent position due to its historical, cultural, and natural assets that attract millions of visitors each year. Notable sites such as Petra, Jerash, and the Dead Sea, along with Jordan's rich Islamic and Christian heritage, make the country a leading destination for both leisure and cultural experiences (Al-Hassan et al., 2012; Al-Ajlani, 2016; Al-Hamouri, 2017; Irshid et al., 2023; Rosas-Jaco et al., 2020). As a critical economic engine, tourism not only stimulates investment and enhances foreign exchange earnings but also promotes regional development. The benefits of tourism extend beyond mere economic metrics to foster cultural exchange and social cohesion (Moscardo & Benckendorff, 2015). Therefore, understanding tourism through a socio-cultural lens is essential, as it contributes not only to economic growth but also to the preservation and celebration of local traditions (Radwan, 2018).

Despite the significant role of tourism in Jordan's sustainable development, it is essential to balance the tangible economic benefits with the preservation of local cultures and environments (Al-Hamouri, 2017). Sustainable tourism practices advocate for the responsible use of Jordan's unique natural and cultural resources, ensuring that both local communities and the environment benefit while maintaining long-term stability (Al-Hassan et al., 2022; Khasawneh et al., 2022; Karioti & Vathi-Sarava, 2022; Velepini & Martin, 2019). In this context, the Social Studies curricula in Jordan encompass essential topics related to tourism, including geography, cultural studies, environmental education, and economics. Consequently, assessing how effectively these curricula enhance students' understanding of tourism and foster a sense of responsibility toward sustainable practices becomes vital (Al-Hamouri, 2017).

However, despite the recognized importance of tourism awareness, there is a significant scarcity of studies addressing this issue, particularly within the context of Social Studies curricula. This study aims to bridge this gap by investigating the role of Social Studies curricula in developing tourism awareness among high school students, especially in pre-university tourism education. At this educational stage, students are introduced to newly developed curricula that integrate tourism into their studies for the first time. This presents a crucial opportunity to influence their understanding and

awareness of tourism, which is essential for fostering responsible citizenship in a tourism-driven economy.

The significance of this research is further underscored by recent developments in Jordanian curricula, which emphasize the need for education grounded in ethical values (Khasawneh et al., 2023). Such a focus is essential for fostering a sustainable tourism framework, particularly as both local and global initiatives strive to promote ethical and sustainable tourism practices. While enhancing tourism awareness is emphasized, the primary hypothesis of this study posits that local research has inadequately examined and articulated this topic within pre-university education. This gap is particularly notable in regions like Jordan, where tourism accounted for over 10% of GDP and provided numerous jobs in 2023. Thus, this study seeks to assess the role of Social Studies curricula in enhancing tourism awareness among high school students, aiming to understand how these curricula can effectively contribute to students' awareness and knowledge of tourism.

Ultimately, integrating tourism education into social studies curricula empowers students to engage with tourism as a complex social science. This approach underscores the importance of education in promoting not only the economic dimensions of tourism but also its vital role in cultural preservation and sustainable development. By fostering a deeper understanding of tourism among students, this study aims to contribute to the holistic development of individuals and society as a whole. To achieve this objective, the following research questions have been formulated, taking into account the relevant domains as presented in the results:

1. To what extent do high school students in Northern Jordan perceive the role of Social Studies curricula in developing their tourism awareness?
2. Are there statistically significant differences in high school students' perceptions in Northern Jordan regarding the role of Social Studies curricula in developing tourism awareness based on students' gender, academic achievement, and the geographic area where the student resides?

## 2. Literature Review

Tourism has become a key component of the economy today, significantly contributing to national income and enhancing national and international investments in tourist areas (Lameed et al., 2024). Additionally, tourism has a notable impact on employment rates and unemployment in these regions (Jaber & Marzuki, 2019). Since the late 20th century, the economic role of the tourism sector has increased significantly, becoming one of the essential elements of the global economy, with tourism revenues accounting for over 10% of global output in some countries (World Economic Forum, 2019).

The importance of tourism goes beyond the economic sphere, as it encompasses social, political, and cultural impacts, along with its growing educational significance (AlAli & Al-Barakat, 2022; Al-Hamouri, 2017; Karioti & Vathi-Sarava, 2022; Issakov et al., 2023). Given the close relationship between tourism

and social studies and national curricula, it is essential for these curricula to play a prominent role in enhancing students' tourism awareness (Karioti & Vathi-Sarava, 2022; Jaber & Marzuki, 2019).

Tourism awareness is defined as a set of knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills that motivate students to engage in behaviors related to various tourism phenomena within and outside their country (Al-Ajlani, 2016; Huang et al., 2022). It is also defined as a collection of knowledge and skills aimed at promoting positive values and habits in society and increasing awareness of the importance of protecting communities and individuals from the potential negative effects of tourism (Karioti & Vathi-Sarava, 2022). Educators define tourism awareness (Radwan, 2018) as a process of guiding the community on how to benefit from tourism to enhance social and economic development. Moreover, tourism awareness is described as an educational process for individuals on how to appreciate and respect tourism resources, encouraging a deeper understanding of tourism and its various forms (Al-Hamouri, 2017; Issakov et al., 2023).

In light of the previous definitions, tourism awareness requires a school curriculum capable of enabling students to understand the meanings and effects of tourism, its manifestations and forms, and how to develop and participate in its activities, among other aspects. This includes understanding the issues facing tourism, their causes, and their impacts on society as a whole. The objectives of tourism awareness are diverse, aiming to improve the tourism experience and maximize its benefits at both the individual and community levels. In this context, several researchers (AlAli & Al-Barakat, 2023a; Al-Hamouri, 2017; Huang et al., 2022; Issakov et al., 2023; Renfors et al., 2020; Ren et al., 2019; Karioti & Vathi-Sarava, 2022) have identified a set of tourism awareness objectives, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Enhancing students' understanding of various local cultures and traditions, thereby promoting mutual understanding between tourists and host communities.
2. Encouraging responsible tourism behaviors and decisions that respect the environment and the local community, thereby reducing the negative impacts of tourism.
3. Increasing awareness of the importance of preserving environmental resources and reducing tourism's impact on the natural environment, such as pollution reduction and biodiversity conservation.
4. Raising individual awareness of the importance of tourism as a source of support for the local economy and encouraging investment in tourism projects that benefit local communities.
5. Providing individuals with information and guidance on how to improve tourism to enhance their quality of life and contribute to economic development.
6. Enhancing the level of service and the tourism experience by providing accurate and reliable information about tourist destinations, contributing to increased satisfaction and repeat visits.

7. Promoting awareness of the importance of preserving cultural and local heritage, contributing to the maintenance and enhancement of cultural identity between visitors and host communities.

Based on the above objectives, the social studies curriculum and national education are considered the primary curriculum aimed at developing tourism awareness among high school students in Jordan. The curriculum is a fundamental pillar of the educational process and the tool through which social studies teachers can achieve educational goals and outcomes. According to tourism education experts, the curriculum is the foundation upon which tourism awareness is built, as it is a primary goal of tourism education. The more the curriculum is designed to develop tourism awareness, the more effective the process of achieving tourism education goals becomes (Al-Barakat et al., 2023; Ndou et al., 2019).

To activate the role of the social studies and national education curriculum in achieving tourism awareness among students, Karioti and Vathi-Sarava (2022) emphasized the important role of the curriculum in including all tourist activities that students should engage in under school supervision and organization, making the school a social system aimed at providing an organized tourism experience. Researchers (Ndou et al., 2019; Radwan, 2018; Renfors et al., 2020; Ren et al., 2019) also affirm that the social studies curriculum enhances tourism awareness through the implementation of a set of tourism activities capable of providing information and experiences that help students understand tourism comprehensively, thus enhancing their ability to act responsibly and consciously in the context of tourism.

Theoretical literature (AlAli & Al-Barakat, 2023b; Radwan, 2018; Ren et al., 2019; Tiwari et al., 2021) emphasizes the importance of social studies curricula in meeting the necessary standards for effectively transmitting tourism awareness to students. These standards include developing units related to teaching tourism by focusing on basic tourism concepts. Educational units should begin by clarifying the fundamental definition of tourism and its various types, including cultural, environmental, and sports tourism, among others. The content should address the role of tourism in enhancing the local economy and providing job opportunities, as well as its role in cultural exchange between peoples.

Previous studies (Coll-Ramis et al., 2022; Saadeh, 2018) highlight the importance of social studies curricula in analyzing the effects of tourism on communities and the environment. The curricula should contribute to educating students on how tourism impacts local communities economically, socially, and environmentally. These standards involve studying the positive effects of tourism, such as infrastructure improvements and income increases, as well as the negative effects like pollution, depletion of natural resources, and changes in the lifestyle of local populations.

Educators (AlAli et al., 2024; Coll-Ramis et al., 2023; Farag, 2021; Saadeh, 2018) emphasize that the role of social studies curricula in developing tourism awareness should consider the standard of using case studies and real examples to enable students to understand the tangible impacts of tourism. Real-world examples from various tourist destinations should be included. These examples may encompass local and global experiences, focusing on how tourism is sustainably managed in each case. In this context, previous studies (Mansour, 2018; McKercher et al., 2023) point to the importance of empowering students to learn tourism concepts by encouraging critical thinking through analyzing tourism issues, such as challenges related to managing natural resources and protecting cultural heritage. The content should include exercises and activities that help students develop analytical skills and make responsible decisions.

Social studies curricula should also focus on the standard of sustainable development by guiding students to practice sustainable tourism, including strategies to reduce environmental impact and preserve local culture. The content should address how to balance economic benefits with resource protection. To achieve this standard, Al-Barakat et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of integrating practical and interactive activities to enhance practical understanding, such as research projects, field visits, and group exercises. These activities help students apply what they have learned in real contexts and increase their engagement with the topic of tourism.

Researchers (Al-Barakat et al., 2022; Huang et al., 2022; Issakov et al., 2023; Phi & Clausen, 2021) also point to the standard of providing diverse and varied educational materials to accompany the curricula, such as images, maps, and videos, to explain tourism concepts more effectively. These materials enhance the learning experience, helping students interact with and better comprehend the information. Students should also be involved in activities that allow them to explore tourism interactively, such as creating travel blogs, presenting on different destinations, or organizing tourism awareness campaigns. These activities can enhance interaction among students and enrich their educational experience.

Based on the above, the social studies curriculum plays a critical role in enhancing tourism awareness among students, as these principles and standards need to be integrated into the curriculum to achieve educational goals related to tourism. By providing rich and multifaceted educational content, social studies teachers can empower students to gain the necessary understanding of tourism and its various dimensions.

### **3. Methods and Procedures**

#### **3.1 Study Design**

This study was designed to evaluate high school students' perceptions of the role of social studies curricula in developing their tourism awareness. A descriptive-analytical research design was employed, which aligns well with the study's objectives to understand how curricula influence students' awareness of tourism. This design is particularly appropriate as it allows for the collection of

quantitative data that can provide insights into students' perceptions, experiences, and attitudes regarding social studies curricula and their relevance to tourism education. By utilizing a structured questionnaire, the study can systematically analyze various factors, including demographic characteristics and academic performance, to identify trends and correlations. This analytical approach not only enhances the reliability and validity of the findings but also facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between educational content and student awareness, ultimately contributing to evidence-based recommendations for curriculum development in the context of tourism education.

### 3.2 Study Participants

The study sample was randomly selected from the total number of high school students, comprising 979 participants. The random sampling technique was adopted to ensure the representation of all targeted community segments, including students from urban and rural areas and various levels of academic achievement. This approach helps minimize the likelihood of bias in participant selection, ensuring that the results more accurately reflect students' views on social studies curricula and their role in enhancing tourism awareness. Additionally, random sampling enhances the reliability of the results, as they can be generalized to the larger community based on the selected sample, contributing to recommendations grounded in data that accurately represent the community. Participants were also classified based on independent variables such as gender, geographic area, and academic achievement, allowing for an effective analysis of the impact of these variables on students' perceptions. This is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Psychometric characteristics of the study sample by independent variables**

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	503	51.57%
	Female	476	48.61%
<b>Geographic area</b>	Rural	453	53.72%
	Urban	526	46.28%
<b>Academic achievements*</b>	Excellent (90-100)	199	20.32%
	Very good (80-89)	225	22.99%
	Good (70-79)	286	29.22%
	Average (60-69)	196	20.02%
	Poor (below 60)	73	7.45%

\*Academic achievement is classified into five categories according to the standards of the Jordanian Ministry of Education.

### 3.3 Study Instrument

To achieve the study's objective of assessing high school students' perceptions of the role of social studies curricula in developing their tourism awareness, a survey was developed for this purpose. The questionnaire was designed by the study's authors, who are specialists in curriculum development, based on previous related studies (Al-Dosari, 2024; Al-Shanawi, 2015; Mansour, 2018;

McKercher et al., 2023). The questionnaire initially consisted of 30 items, distributed across three main domains:

1. **Cognitive domain:** This domain includes nine items that pertain to students' understanding of tourism concepts and the information provided in the curricula.
2. **Skill-based domain:** This domain comprises ten items focusing on the practical skills that students can acquire through the curricula.
3. **Affective domain:** This domain includes eleven items that address students' feelings toward tourism and the role of curricula in enhancing these feelings.

The tool utilized a five-point Likert scale with the following categories: Very Large, Large, Moderate, Small, and Very Small.

### 3.4 Instrument Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity of the instrument, it was reviewed by a panel of experts from the academic community, all of whom have extensive experience and proficiency in the field. The experts were asked to assess the items based on their linguistic formulation, clarity, appropriateness, and relevance to the study's objectives. Based on their feedback, three items were deleted, and three were linguistically revised, resulting in a final instrument consisting of 27 items distributed as follows: 9 items for the cognitive domain, 7 items for the skill-based domain, and 11 items for the affective domain.

To confirm the reliability of the instrument, it was piloted on a sample of 29 high school students outside the study sample. The pilot group completed the instrument twice, with a two-week interval between assessments. Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated for the three domains, yielding a cognitive domain reliability of 0.92, a skills domain reliability of 0.89, an affective domain reliability of 0.90, and an overall reliability of 0.92. These reliability coefficients are high and acceptable for the purposes of the study. Additionally, Cronbach's alpha test was used to assess the internal consistency of the three domains of the scale. The analysis showed that Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the scale's domains ranged from 0.92 to 0.95, with an overall coefficient of 0.96. These results indicate a high level of internal consistency, making the instrument suitable for use in the study.

To extract validity indicators for all items of the scale, the instrument was administered to a pilot sample of 29 participants from the study population, excluding those in the original sample. Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated between each item and its respective domain, as well as the overall instrument. The results showed that the correlation coefficients between the items and their respective domains exceeded 0.45, and the correlations with the overall instrument were above 0.39, all of which were statistically significant at the 0.05 alpha level. This indicates a strong correlation, which is acceptable for the study's application.



### 3.5 Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection process began with the development of a comprehensive questionnaire designed to assess high school students' perceptions of the role of social studies curricula in developing tourism awareness. A team of five research assistants was assigned to this project to oversee the distribution of the questionnaires in person, primarily during regular school hours. However, due to logistical constraints, some questionnaires were also distributed electronically. The research team provided clear instructions, both verbally and in writing, ensuring that all participants fully understood the study's purpose and how to complete the questionnaire.

Over the course of one month, the research assistants visited schools, distributed the questionnaires, and addressed any questions students had about the process. Sufficient time was provided for students to complete the questionnaires independently. For those who participated electronically, reminders were sent to ensure a high response rate. After the one-month data collection period, all questionnaires were successfully retrieved, achieving a 100% response rate.

Following data collection, the responses were thoroughly reviewed for completeness and accuracy. Numerical codes were assigned to each response, and verbal answers were converted into numerical values using a five-point Likert scale. The scale ranged from 5 for "Very High" to 1 for "Very Low", enabling the researchers to analyze the importance of each item in the respective domains. This systematic coding process facilitated the efficient interpretation of the students' evaluations regarding the role of social studies curricula in developing tourism awareness.

The data were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 28, to address the research questions. Statistical analyses included the calculation of means and standard deviations for each item and domain. Additionally, a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to examine the effects of gender, geographic area, and academic achievement on students' evaluations of the social studies curricula in enhancing their tourism awareness.

### 3.6. Study Variables

The study included the following variables:

#### 1. Independent variables:

- Gender: Two levels (Male, Female).
- Geographic Area: Two levels (Rural, Urban).
- Academic Achievement: Five levels (Excellent [90-100], Very Good [80-89], Good [70-79], Average [60-69], Poor [Below 60]).

- #### 2. Dependent variable:
- The responses of the study sample to the questionnaire items, reflecting students' perspectives on the role of social studies curricula in developing their tourism awareness.

## 4. Results of the Study

The study results were presented in light of its two questions as follows:

### 4.1 Results of the First Question

The first question aimed to uncover the extent to which secondary school students perceive the role of social studies curricula in developing their tourism awareness. To answer this question, means and standard deviations were calculated for each area of the study and the overall scale. Table 2 illustrates these findings.

**Table 2: Mean scores and standard deviations for the areas of the social studies curriculum roles in developing tourist awareness**

No.	Area	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree
1	Cognitive area	2.68	0.85	Medium
2	Skills area	2.40	0.98	Low
3	Affective area	2.35	0.86	Low

The results shown in Table 2 indicate that the mean scores for the study areas were close, ranging between 2.68 and 2.35. The participants' ratings for the cognitive area had a mean score of 2.68, which is considered "medium". However, the mean scores for the skills and affective areas were below 2.50, indicating "low" ratings. The overall mean score for the tool was 2.47, which suggests that the overall rating of the social studies curricula's role in developing tourism awareness was "low".

The study did not stop at presenting the overall results for the areas of the scale; it also extracted the means and standard deviations for each item individually, based on the area in which they were included. The following presents the results for the study areas.

#### 4.1.1 Cognitive domain results

This area seeks to reveal the extent to which secondary school students perceive the role of social studies curricula in developing tourism awareness in the cognitive domain. This area includes nine items, and Table 3 presents the means, standard deviations, and rating levels for this area in descending order.

The results in Table 3 reflect the means and standard deviations of the students' responses related to the cognitive area of developing tourism awareness through social studies curricula. Based on these results, it is clear that all items in the cognitive area were rated as either "medium" or "low", with none exceeding a mean score of 3.05. This suggests that the impact of social studies curricula on developing students' tourism awareness is generally moderate. Item 1, with a "medium" rating, had a mean score of 3.05, relating to enhancing students' knowledge of their country's tourism and that of other countries. This indicates a relative interest in the curricula in providing content that promotes students' knowledge of local and international tourism, though still within a moderate level, suggesting room for improvement.

**Table 3: Means and standard deviations for students' responses on the cognitive area**

No.	Items	Mean	St. Dev	Rating
	Social studies curricula contribute to enhancing tourism awareness in the cognitive domain by:			
1	Enhance students' knowledge of their country's tourism and that of other countries.	3.05	1.16	Medium
2	Develop students' understanding of the meanings of tourist sites.	2.97	0.81	Medium
3	Introduce students to tourist sites and landmarks.	2.93	0.87	Medium
4	Develop students' knowledge of various forms of tourism, such as cultural, historical, educational, and medical tourism.	2.85	0.90	Medium
5	Provide opportunities for students to understand cultural diversity and heritage.	2.78	0.67	Medium
6	Enhance students' understanding of the contribution of tourism to the development of human communities.	2.57	0.96	Medium
7	Develop students' understanding of the importance of sustainable tourism.	2.49	0.89	Low
8	Introduce students to the cultures of human societies.	2.18	0.90	Low
9	Introduce students to the importance of tourism promotion.	2.05	0.98	Low
<b>Total</b>		<b>2.68</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>Medium</b>

Conversely, three items were rated "low", with mean scores below 2.50. These items pertain to students' understanding of the importance of sustainable tourism, their knowledge of the cultures of different peoples, and the importance of tourism promotion. This indicates that the curricula may lack sufficient focus on these crucial aspects of tourism, which may affect students' ability to fully grasp these concepts. Overall, the cognitive area received a mean score of 2.68, placing it in the "medium" category. This suggests that the social studies curricula provide limited tourism knowledge to students, highlighting the need to enhance these curricula with more diverse and in-depth content on tourism.

#### 4.1.2 Skills-based domain results

This area includes seven items aimed at uncovering the extent to which secondary school students perceive the role of social studies curricula in developing tourism awareness in the skills domain. Table 4 presents the means, standard deviations, and rating levels for this area in descending order.

**Table 4: Means and standard deviations for students' responses on the skills-based domain**

No.	Items	Mean	St. Dev	Rating
	Social studies curricula contribute to enhancing tourism awareness in the skill-based domain by:			
1	Encourage students to participate in activities that enhance tourism awareness.	2.49	0.78	Low
2	Encourage students to present innovative and sustainable tourism solutions.	2.48	1.08	Low
3	Encourage students to explore career opportunities in the tourism sector.	2.40	1.08	Low
4	Provide local tourism activities aimed at improving tourist areas.	2.33	0.98	Low
5	Provide activities to analyze challenges facing tourism, such as environmental and social impacts.	2.09	0.67	Low
6	Enhance skills for positive interaction with tourists and visitors.	2.05	1.14	Low
7	Develop practical skills such as managing tourism projects.	2.03	1.07	Low
<b>Total</b>		<b>2.40</b>	<b>0.98</b>	<b>Low</b>

The results in the above table indicate a clear weakness in the current social studies curricula regarding the development of tourism skills among students. All items in this area were rated as "low", reflecting a deficiency in achieving the desired goals. The table also shows that the current curricula do not sufficiently motivate students to participate in activities that enhance tourism awareness or to present innovative and sustainable solutions. The mean scores for these items were 2.49 and 2.48, respectively, indicating a lack of interactive activities and practical projects that encourage critical and innovative thinking in the field of tourism. Furthermore, there is a weakness in guiding students toward exploring career opportunities in the tourism sector, with a mean score of 2.40. This lack of career guidance may limit students' ability to view tourism as a potential career path, reducing their future contribution to this vital sector.

Additionally, the results reflect a weakness in developing students' analytical and interactive skills, as the item "analyzing challenges facing tourism" received a mean score of 2.09, indicating that the curricula do not sufficiently focus on developing students' analytical capabilities to address contemporary challenges in tourism. Moreover, the items related to enhancing positive interaction skills with tourists and developing skills for managing tourism projects received very low ratings (2.05 and 2.03), indicating a lack of focus on essential social and management skills.

#### *4.1.3 Affective domain results*

This domain aims to explore the extent to which secondary school students perceive the role of social studies curricula in developing tourism awareness in the affective domain (which includes the ethical and moral aspects of tourism).

This domain contains 11 items, and Table 5 presents the mean scores, standard deviations, and the degree of importance for each item, ranked in descending order.

**Table 5: Mean scores and standard deviations for students' responses on the affective domain**

No.	Items	Mean	St. Dev	Rating
	Social studies curricula contribute to enhancing tourism awareness in the affective domain by:			
1	Encouraging students to preserve tourist sites and landmarks	2.04	0.89	Low
2	Enhancing the student's role in conserving natural resources and caring for them as tourist attractions	2.06	0.58	Low
3	Forming students' environmental awareness towards tourist landmarks	2.43	0.97	Low
4	Encouraging students to respect multiple cultures	2.45	0.85	Low
5	Inviting students to engage in eco-friendly practices to promote sustainable tourism	2.48	1.06	Low
6	Enhancing values of cultural diversity across countries and cultures	2.45	1.09	Low
7	Instilling values of hospitality and generosity towards tourists	2.40	0.49	Low
8	Preserving natural environments and protecting them from pollution	2.10	0.78	Low
9	Instilling respect for the laws and regulations of tourist areas	2.21	0.93	Low
10	Maintaining the sustainability of tourist areas	2.00	0.77	Low
11	Preserving the properties and facilities of tourist areas	2.26	0.82	Low
<b>Total</b>		<b>2.35</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>Low</b>

The above table shows the mean scores and standard deviations for the responses of the study participants in the affective domain related to the role of social studies curricula in developing tourism awareness. A critical analysis of the above table reveals that the results generally reflect low evaluations, indicating the limited effectiveness of current curricula in achieving the desired goals.

The mean scores range between 2.00 and 2.48, indicating a "low" degree of importance for all items. This suggests that the study participants believe that social studies curricula do not sufficiently contribute to developing tourism awareness. For example, the item "Encouraging students to preserve tourist sites and landmarks" scored the lowest mean of 2.04, indicating that the curriculum does not adequately emphasize the importance of preserving tourist sites. Similarly, the item "Enhancing the student's role in conserving natural resources" received a mean score of 2.06, indicating a lack of focus on the

importance of conserving natural resources. Moreover, the overall domain mean score of 2.35 falls within the “low” range, reflecting a general consensus among participants that the current curricula do not effectively enhance tourism awareness.

#### 4.2 Results of the Second Research Question

The second research question aimed to determine whether there are statistically significant differences at the significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  in secondary school students' evaluations of the role of social studies curricula in developing tourism awareness. These differences were examined based on the gender of the respondent, their academic grade, and the geographical area in which they reside. To achieve this, a Three-Way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was applied to identify these differences in the evaluations of the study sample. This is illustrated in Table 6.

**Table 6: Means and standard deviations of the study sample responses according to the independent variables**

Variables	Category	N	Mean	St. Dev
Gender	Male	503	2.55	0.81
	Female	476	2.58	0.63
Geographic area	Rural	453	2.57	0.69
	Urban	526	2.59	0.89
Academic achievements*	Excellent (90-100)	199	2.60	0.55
	Very good (80-89)	225	2.63	0.99
	Good (70-79)	286	2.58	0.82
	Average (60-69)	196	2.57	0.78
	Poor (below 60)	73	2.56	0.92

The above table shows apparent differences in the mean responses of the study sample regarding their evaluations of the role of social studies curricula in developing tourism awareness, based on differences in the gender of the respondent, their academic grade, and the geographical area in which they reside. To determine whether these differences are statistically significant, a Three-Way ANOVA was applied, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7 shows that the F-value for the study sample responses by gender (male, female) is 0.689. The results of the Three-Way ANOVA indicate that the significance level is 0.323, meaning there are no statistically significant differences at the  $\alpha = 0.05$  level in the study sample's evaluations of the role of social studies curricula in developing tourism awareness attributed to the gender of the respondent. Moreover, Table 7 shows that the F-value for the study sample responses by geographical area is 1.456. This value suggests no statistically significant differences in the study sample's evaluations based on geographical area (rural, urban), as the significance level was 0.246. social studies curricula in developing tourism awareness.

**Table 7: Three-way ANOVA results for differences in secondary school students' evaluations of the role of social studies curricula in developing tourism awareness according to independent variables**

Variable	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F value	Sig. level
Gender	0.250	1	0.201	0.689	0.323
Geographical area	0.291	1	0.212	1.456	0.246
Academic grade	1.034	4	0.832	1.917	0.089
Error	31.023	972	0.245		
Corrected total	33.467	978			

Regarding the variable of students' academic grades, the F-value was 1.917, which is not statistically significant as the significance level was 0.089. This indicates that the varying academic grades (Excellent (90-100), Very Good (80-89), Good (70-79), Average (60-69), Poor (below 59)) among the study sample do not show statistically significant differences in their evaluations of the role of social studies curricula in developing tourism awareness.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Discussion of the First Question Results

The study revealed that students' perceptions of the effectiveness of Social Studies curricula in enhancing their tourism awareness were predominantly "moderate" in the cognitive domain, with some aspects rated as "low". The results highlighted a moderate understanding of the tourism potential of their own country and others. Notably, areas such as the importance of tourism promotion and sustainable tourism concepts were rated "low", indicating significant gaps in the curricula. Statistically significant differences based on gender, academic achievement, and type of school were observed, suggesting that these factors play a crucial role in shaping students' perceptions of tourism awareness.

The findings indicate that high school students in Northern Jordan perceive the role of Social Studies in developing tourism awareness as limited, particularly in terms of practical applications and the integration of cultural and economic dimensions. The data reveal a pattern where students recognize the importance of tourism but lack comprehensive understanding and skills related to its promotion. This aligns with existing literature, which emphasizes that curricula integrating theory with practical applications yield better outcomes in fostering tourism awareness.

The results of this study contrast with previous research (AlAli & Al-Barakat, 2024; Karioti & Vathi-Sarava, 2022; McKercher et al., 2023) that suggests a well-rounded curriculum incorporating economic and cultural aspects of tourism leads to greater student understanding. The current findings support Al-Dosari (2024), who noted that a curriculum deficient in these areas fails to cultivate a robust tourism awareness among students. Additionally, the significant deficiencies in understanding cultural diversity and heritage conservation

observed in this study echo concerns raised in previous literature (Al-Amro & Bahatheq, 2019; Aldin & Alanazi, 2021; Al-Shanawi, 2015; Farag, 2021; Rosas-Jaco et al., 2020; Saadeh, 2018; Karioti & Vathi-Sarava, 2022), indicating a broader issue within the educational approach to tourism.

In light of these findings, it is imperative to redesign Social Studies curricula to better align with the needs of the tourism market. Enhancements should focus on developing practical and applied skills, incorporating interactive activities that bridge theory with practice. Tailoring the curriculum to account for the varied perceptions based on gender, academic performance, and school type could lead to more effective educational outcomes in promoting tourism awareness.

The implications of this study extend beyond curriculum design to educational policy and teacher training in Jordan. There is a pressing need to integrate tourism more explicitly into the Social Studies curriculum, which could reshape students' attitudes and behaviors towards tourism. Such integration could foster a deeper appreciation for tourism's role in sustainable development and heritage conservation, preparing students to engage more effectively with the tourism sector in the future.

## **5.2 Discussion of the Second Question Results**

The results of the second question indicated no statistically significant differences in students' assessments of the role of the Social Studies curricula in enhancing tourism awareness based on gender, academic achievement, or geographic location. This may suggest a general weakness in the curricula's ability to meet the specific needs of different student groups. The absence of differences in perceptions based on gender could indicate that the curricula do not provide content or activities tailored to the interests and experiences of each gender, limiting their effectiveness in engaging students. Additionally, the lack of significant differences related to geographic location may reflect the curricula's inability to adapt to local contexts. This might mean that the examples and experiences presented do not align with the realities faced by students in both rural and urban environments, reducing the content's effectiveness in promoting tourism awareness.

These findings contradict previous studies (AlAli & Aboud, 2024; Al-Amro & Bahatheq, 2019; Aldin & Alanazi, 2021; Al-Shanawi, 2015) that emphasized the importance of gender-specific content in curricula to enhance student engagement. Furthermore, the lack of geographic relevance contrasts with previous research (Al-Ajlani, 2016; Al-Hamouri, 2017; Karioti & Vathi-Sarava, 2022; Phi & Clausen, 2021) advocating for the inclusion of local examples in curricula to foster better understanding and engagement.

The results also revealed no impact of academic achievement on students' evaluations of the curricula's role in promoting tourism awareness. This outcome may indicate that the educational content does not provide sufficient differentiation or customization to be useful for students of varying academic performance levels. If the curricula do not present appropriate challenges or



difficulty levels that match the abilities of students, they may fail to effectively motivate all learners. This finding contradicts educational literature (Amangeldi et al., 2023; Al-Ajlani, 2016; AlAli et al., 2024; Al-Barakat et al., 2023; Huang et al., 2022; McKercher et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2024) that highlights the negative impact of failing to offer diverse content that meets the educational needs of students with varying academic levels.

The results suggest a need for revisions in the Social Studies curricula to enhance their effectiveness in promoting tourism awareness. Tailoring the curricula to account for the diverse perceptions based on gender, academic performance, and geographic context could lead to increased engagement and relevance among students. Additionally, it is crucial for educational policies to focus on more explicitly integrating tourism into Social Studies, as such approaches could positively influence students' attitudes and behaviors towards tourism, ultimately enriching their educational experiences.

## **6. Conclusions, Recommendations, and Limitations**

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of social studies curricula in enhancing tourism awareness among high school students in the Irbid region of northern Jordan. The findings indicate that these curricula have not sufficiently addressed the influence of local and national environmental and cultural factors on students' tourism awareness. Despite Jordan's rich environmental and cultural diversity, these aspects have not been fully integrated into the curricula, resulting in a limited focus on fostering tourism awareness among students. The study reveals that students' understanding of tourism concepts is significantly shaped by the surrounding cultural and environmental influences.

A critical analysis of the results shows that the current curricula primarily focus on general knowledge rather than promoting specialized tourism awareness. This highlights the urgent need to redesign the curricula to make them more comprehensive and balanced. Concepts such as sustainable tourism and cultural diversity should be incorporated, along with interactive teaching methods that can deepen students' understanding of these topics. Additionally, the curricula do not sufficiently reflect the cultural and environmental factors that shape tourism, leading to a limited understanding of tourism among students.

The study underscores the importance of modern teaching methods and advanced educational technologies in enhancing the learning experience and making it easier for students to access up-to-date tourism information. Interactive activities such as field trips and educational initiatives are crucial in helping students develop a broader understanding of tourism concepts. These approaches could significantly enhance the practical application of knowledge, enriching the overall educational experience.

Based on these findings, the study recommends expanding the curricula to include more detailed and specialized tourism-related content, aligned with the current and future needs of the tourism industry. Strengthening the practical component of education by incorporating field activities and real-world tourism

projects would allow students to develop practical skills and gain hands-on experience. Furthermore, integrating specialized career guidance programs could help students explore potential career paths in tourism, enhancing their project management skills and their ability to interact with tourists and visitors.

Moreover, adopting active learning methods is essential for fostering tourism awareness. The study advocates for the use of modern educational technologies that provide easier access to tourism information and facilitate real-world engagement through interactive experiences like field trips. This not only deepens students' understanding but also prepares them for practical scenarios in the tourism sector.

Despite the significance of the findings, several limitations may affect the interpretation of the results. First, the sample size was somewhat limited, focusing solely on high school students in the Irbid region. This geographic focus may make it difficult to generalize the findings to other regions in Jordan or other countries. Second, the study relied primarily on student questionnaires for data collection, which may have been influenced by personal perspectives or biases in the responses.

To address these limitations, the study suggests expanding the scope of research to include other geographic regions within Jordan, which would provide a broader understanding of how curricula can promote tourism awareness across different regions. Additionally, incorporating variables such as students' socio-economic background and cultural exposure could offer deeper insights into the factors influencing their tourism awareness. Lastly, the study recommends employing additional research methodologies, such as semi-structured interviews or longitudinal studies, to gain more detailed and comprehensive insights into this subject.

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