

Museum Education as a Pedagogy for Sustainable Tourism: Programs and Practices

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Abstract:

The UN member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, which aims to achieve a balance among social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Within the shift towards sustainable tourism, there has been increasing interest in protecting and utilizing museums and incorporating them into sustainable tourism plans. The concept of museum education has emerged as a pedagogy for Sustainable Tourism. Accordingly, this research article demonstrates that museum education serves as a pedagogical tool for achieving sustainable tourism goals. We will clarify the concept of museum education and its role in enhancing museums' missions, analyze studies on museum education, demonstrate how museum education can contribute to sustainable tourism, and highlight several museum education programs and activities, as well as their implementation approaches.

Keywords: Development, sustainability, tourism, museum, education

1. Introduction

As all nations that belong to the United Nations accepted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have led efforts to eliminate poverty, safeguard the environment, and promote prosperity for everyone (Hansson & Öhman, 2022). The UN member states designated 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, establishing the perfect stage for the field to embark on a shared journey towards 2030, a journey to 2030, seeks to generate knowledge, empower, and motivate those involved with tourism to

take necessary action to accelerate the trend towards a more sustainable tourism sector (UNWTO - UNDP, 2017). Sustainable tourism is defined as managing tourism activities in a way that considers all present and future economic, social, and environmental implications while serving the requirements of tourists, industry, the environment, and the local community.

Furthermore, in a statement on World Tourism Day 2014, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted that "leveraging the enormous benefits of tourism will play a critical role in achieving the SDGs and implementing the post-2015 development agenda." As a result, there has been a growing interest in protecting and utilizing museums in order to achieve sustainable tourism goals. Since the 2015 proposal for the protection and enhancement of museums and collections, their variety, and their role in society (UNWTO - UNDP, 2017) .

Tourism culture plays a crucial role in education and museums As part of the process of constituting a key attraction for international and local tourists (Skyrda et al., 2012). For example, the National Museum of the Mujahid and Maqam Echahid attracts both foreign and local tourists, as well as schoolchildren and adults from within Algeria and abroad. Museums are capable of employing the collaborative techniques necessary to connect with communities on multiple levels (Kristinsdóttir, 2017) In terms of non-formal education, which is an important component of the activity of all social organizations, including museums.

Today, students begin formal education with a fragmented body of knowledge obtained through informal and non-formal learning environments, which often include direct encounters with the world or symbolic and multimodal objects from an early age. (Todino & Campitiello, 2025). Museums encourage non-formal, informal, and continuous education. Museum learning is described as a transforming, emotive experience that encourages visitors to acquire new attitudes, interests, appreciation, beliefs, or values "in an informal and voluntary context." (Kristinsdóttir, 2017).

Non-formal education is analogous to a museum, which, unlike a school, often sees the learner-visitor only during their "walk" around the broad galleries. (Todino & Campitiello, 2025). Nowadays, the link among educational museums and formal schooling is a popular

subject in discourse concerning museums' role in the education sector. In this study, we concentrate special attention on museum education targeted to students and propose an operational pedagogy for sustainable museum education inspired by John Dewey's educational philosophy (Hansson & Öhman, 2022).

Accordingly, John Cotton Dana noted, "a good museum is a proper and helpful institution to any community which may establish and maintain the same," and every museum's mission and operations must express a dedication to education as vital to their public service. (Pennay, 2021). Dana emphasize the "ever-present and never-forgotten fact that the museum is the assistant to and the handmaiden of all the formal education activities of the whole city." It is an institute of visual instruction" (Jenifer Ishee Hoffman, 2020). Additionally, Dana's wish that museum is "Institutes of Visual Instruction." (Jenifer Ishee Hoffman, 2020), and believed that "museums should be accessible to everyone" (Dane, 1990, pp. 5-9).

Furthermore, John Cotton's work has influenced and challenged the perceptions of informal education in museums, as well as how we can effectively utilize it. Dana recognized the need to foster a closer relationship between the community and the library during the Progressive Era (1890s-1920s). He believed that the approaches he introduced in the library and museum would promote more learning from the public. Dana transforme the museum into a center for ordinary people rather than the elite and academics (Kristen, 2024, pp. 4 - 5). John Cotton Dana's idea was that if museums were to be more useful to the world, their collections, facilities, and personnel should all collaborate for the enjoyment, education, and benefit of their particular communities.

In addition to Dana's educational philosophy their was George E. Hein's contributions, founded in constructivist learning theory, have a significant impact on current museum education and its connection with museums' expanding role as educational institutions. Inspired by John Dewey, Hein emphasizes the need of connecting education and experience, arguing that successful learning happens via active engagement and interaction with knowledge. Hein's theoretical framework divides museums into four educative models: the constructivist museum, the discovery museum, the methodical

museum, and the orderly museum. The notion of constructivism is founded on the notion that knowledge is not simply transferred from the outside but rather built inside by individuals utilizing information from their surroundings (Todino & Campitiello, 2025).

Hein supports the constructivist museum, which adapts to visitors' varied educational needs rather than being limited by the fundamental features of the displayed artifacts. According to Hein, this technique transforms museums from static repositories to dynamic venues that reflect the many learning styles and life experiences of its visitors. (Todino & Campitiello, 2025)

Based on the preceding discussion and the descriptive methodology, we will define the issue of museum education as a strategy and pedagogical technique to accomplish the aims of sustainable tourism using the following axes:

- Defining the museum education concept, the role of museums, and Analyzing studies on museum education;
 - Show how museum education helps to achieve sustainable tourism;
- Demonstrate museum education strategies for children and adults, as well as approaches to their implementation.

2. Defining of the museum education

The term "museum" comes from the Greek word "mouseion" (μουσεῖον), which refers to a temple or temple devoted to the Muses, as well as a classroom or gymnasium for the arts. The term "museion" was then used in Latin as "museum". "The contemporary term museum is defined as a location where things of historical, artistic, scientific, or anthropological importance are gathered, organized, and preserved (Todino & Campitiello, 2025). Dana frequently stated in his writings that he did not want to use the term "museum" due to its aristocratic connotations. He favored "The Institute of Visual Instruction." (Jenifer Ishee Hoffman, 2020)

The notion of the museum as an institution committed to protecting and presenting art and textual materials for public access, cultural enrichment, and study goes back to antiquity, with significant examples in Egypt, Greece, and Asia Minor. (Todino & Campitiello, 2025) Many of the issues in early museums are similar to those in

present-day discussions in education departments. Moreover, many historians of museums describe the museum as a place for learning and education. (Protta, 2019, pp. 337-341). Furthermore, Museum education is the deliberate employ of museum resources, collections, and surroundings to promote learning and personal growth among varied audiences. It includes a variety of official and informal educational techniques that attempt to engage visitors in active, inquiry-based learning. (Todino & Campitiello, 2025)

The discourse about education museums has changed from using the word museum 'education' to 'learning,' emphasizing the learner over the teacher, 'experience' and the open-mindedness of an outcome, and learning as 'performance' or 'meaning-making.' Museum learning is defined as a transformative, affective experience' that helps visitors to develop interests, new attitudes, beliefs, appreciation, or values 'in an informal and voluntary context. (Kristinsdóttir, 2017)

The museum's role as a learning environment is generally recognized. In reality, at an Extraordinary General Assembly in Prague on August 24, 2022, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) approved a proposal for a revised definition of museums. Following this ruling, the new ICOM museum definition is as follows: "A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets, and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage." Museums that are open to the public, accessible, and inclusive promote diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally, and collaboratively with communities, providing diverse experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection, and knowledge exchange" (Todino & Campitiello, 2025)

3. The History of Museum Education

The history of museum education has two views. The first mention of museum education as a vocation date back more than 50 years, yet its methods are as old as museums themselves. The controversial educational aim of museums may be traced back to the establishment of one of the first public museums, the Louvre in Paris, in 1793, when the French Revolution transformed the museum from a private emblem of power to a public tool for civilizing the people. (Kristinsdóttir, 2017).

The second point of view among North American educators is that the roots of museum teaching are inextricably linked to John Cotton Dana, who worked at the Newark Museum in New Jersey. His creative approach to outreach and community work has made him a perfect starting point for many museum educators seeking the foundation of our profession. (Protta, 2019, pp. 337-341).

Beginning in the 1970s, the new museology movement had a profound impact on museum education, prioritizing the museum's social purpose over its collections. Its purpose was to improve museum accessibility by revising community partnerships. A 'bottom-up' approach and 'heritage as empowerment' are further elements of modern museology. The second wave of modern museology in the 2000s prioritizes representations and access while also allowing for the examination of the 'poetics' and 'politics of museums.' (Kristinsdóttir, 2017).

4. Analyzing studies on museum education

Many studies have examined the significance of museum education in establishing sustainability; here are two examples.:

The first one is Cerquetti, M., & Montella, M. M. (2015). This paper investigates the influence of sustainable cultural tourism problems on the preservation of overloaded major cultural cities, as well as the survival of local heritage assets. In terms of local cultural attractions, this essay contends that research has missed the possibility of sustaining local cultural heritage through upgrades. Instead, ties between local museums should be strengthened to produce economies of scale, scope, and learning, allowing for the supply of necessary cultural infrastructure and the enhancement of museum service quality for local tourism development. The results suggest that the expansion of cultural tourism through cultural heritage upgrading might be through the following notes:

- Promote new economic and environmental planning tools;
- Stimulating people's awareness and participation in the maintenance and management of cultural and historical sites;
- Developing a joint interest of tourism participants and local authorities in inter-sector policies and programming.

This study outlines prospective areas for intervention in cultural policies aimed at improving museum networks, as well as the influence on heritage tourism and local development. As a result, continued development should not prohibit comparisons with other regional museum systems. (Cerquetti & Montella, 2015)

The second study by Young, Eadie, Suda, and Church (2022), sought to investigate the features of museum programs that are critical in engaging young children in museum education programs. It is based on two early childhood education programs developed and implemented by an inner-city museum in Australia. Both activities in this study were conducted by museum presenters with preschool children (4- and 5-year-olds in their year before formal schooling) and their instructors. Program A was held at the museum, whilst Program B was carried out in preschool settings. Not all museums can provide this sort of outreach program; nonetheless, outreach programs enable access for individuals who are unable to visit the museum and promote future participation in museums. The study included 14 early childhood groups and five museum presenters (14 teachers and 296 children).

The main objective of the study was to show how communication and museum-based activities for young children increased concept, language, and literacy acquisition, as well as how this learning was integrated into the preschool curriculum. The goal of this study is to explain features of the curriculum that helped youngsters learn. The findings of this inquiry as Following:

- The relationships between children and adults within museum programs are vital for their learning. For example, museum presenters who ask questions enable youngsters to contribute their thoughts and build on the conceptual information covered in the museum program ;
- Repeating new concepts and enabling children to ask questions throughout visits promotes inquiry-based learning;
- Children's learning experiences at museums are influenced by both what they do and what they talk about. However, how they communicate about the exhibit is crucial for establishing meaningful learning opportunities;

- The research found that museum activities that empower children to explore and extend their own experiences lead to ongoing chances for engaged learning;
- Emphasizing the continuity of children's engagement with museum programs' content and themes;
- Given the wealth of novel resources that museums offer to children and their families, a focus on learning can support children's engagement and experience at the museum. (Young, Eadie, Suda, & Church, 2022)

5. Museum Education Helps to Achieve Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable development has been described as “a dynamic process that enables people to realize their potential and improve their quality of life in ways which simultaneously protect and enhance the Earth’s life-support systems.” (Logan & C. Sutter, pp. 11-26)

According to Jaimie Cloud of the Cloud Institute for Sustainability, sustainable education is a creative learning process that provides learners, educators, and school systems with the new information and methods of thinking required to accomplish economic growth and responsible citizenship while also restoring the health of the living systems on which our lives rely. Logan & C. Sutter. Based on this viewpoint, museum education can help to achieve sustainable tourism.

The General Conference of UNESCO endorsed the 2015 Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, their Diversity, and their Role in Society (hence referred to as "the recommendation") at its 38th session in 2015 (38 C/Resolution 49). This standard-setting instrument reflects Member States' commitment to assisting museums in fulfilling their role in modern society as sustainable development partners by safeguarding and protecting heritage, promoting cultural diversity, transmitting scientific knowledge, developing educational policies and lifelong learning, and fostering creative economies and sustainable tourism. (UNESCO, 2019)

The majority of Member States expressed interest in creating exhibitions and public programming to promote the 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development via museums, mainly scientific institutions. Member nations' efforts vary significantly. (UNESCO, 2019)

According to Hansson and Öhman (2022), Museums may help promote sustainable development via exhibitions and educational initiatives. This presents many pedagogical and theoretical questions regarding how to include sustainability into museums' educational programs and exhibits that emphasize sustainability issues.

The relationship between museums, sustainable development, and education for sustainable development has received increased attention in the museum policy discussion. As an example, in the year 2019 the International Commission of Museums (ICOM) approved the advice made by its working committee on sustainability. The first resolution recommends that ICOM acknowledge that all museums have an important part to play in developing a sustainable future and should assist in any way possible in achieving the UN SDGs' goals and targets, as well as using the 2030 "Transforming our World" Agenda as a guiding framework to integrate sustainability to our own both internal and external practices and programs for education. This paper, *Museums and Sustainable Development aims: A Reference Guide for Galleries, the Cultural Sector, Museums, and Their Partners*, is the first attempt to contextualize museum education within Agenda 2030. It is suggested that museums may play an important role in increasing public education and involvement in the SDGs. (Hansson & Öhman, 2022)

Hansson and Öhman (2022) identified four themes as relevant points of departure for thinking about a pedagogy for teaching and learning about sustainability in museums. The primary topic requires paying particular attention to complex sustainability issues such as migration, climate change, and racism, even if they are not always explicitly associated with sustainability. The second topic is that museums, with their collections of art, natural things, and historic items, have always been seen as teaching organizations that impart valuable information and experiences. Third, the 'transformative turn' of museums has added a new dimension to their instructional mission by portraying them as agents of social transformation. The fourth and last theme is that the link between formal schooling and museum education has transformed in recent years, which has been called 'the

pedagogical ambiguity' of museums refers to the increasing interaction between teachers and museums, and the various conceptions concerning the educational role museums serve. (Hansson & Öhman, 2022)

6. Museum Education Children and Adults' Programs and Activities

The idea of incorporating sustainability into all elements of society, as well as the transformative role of museums, prompts educators to reevaluate their ways. How to include education and sustainability into museums' educational programs (Hansson & Öhman, 2022)

Museum education is founded on accessibility, and learner-centered approaches, diversity, with an emphasis on making meaningful links between people and scientific, cultural, or historical information. The purpose is to boost the visitors' understanding, increase interest and enthusiasm for the museum's collections, artifacts, and stories.(Todino & Campitiello, 2025)

Museum education is leveraging a museum's resources and exhibits to support learning for a variety of audiences. (Kristinsdóttir, 2017). This includes hands-on activities, guided tours, workshops, and interactive exhibits that encourage critical thinking, collaborative knowledge generation and emotional involvement. These objectives can also be achieved through interactive exhibitions, didactic workshops, and the incorporation of multimedia technologies such as virtual reality, augmented reality, and artificial intelligence. (For example, digital tutors and avatars). Alternatively, digital twins of scanned artworks are converted into digital artifacts. (Todino & Campitiello, 2025)

As illustrated in the table, a creative program encompassing various activities is implemented across notable museums.

Table 1. Cases Of Creative Program and Activities in Leading Museums.

Museum names	Programs And Activities	Objectives
Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art	-The Educational Museum Field Trips; Interactive exhibitions ; digital media; games; storytelling.	The Activities had a profound impact on the students. Engaging young minds;
Louvre Museum	- Workshops centered around art; - certain works of art or time periods - drawing, painting or sculpture, Guided by skilled instructors. ; - suitable for families guided excursions; - Practical activities.	These activities are designed to pique children's interest in history and art in a fun and engaging way; they also allow them to understand art via creative expression. Engage young people in an active exploration of art and history, instilling a sense of discovery and adventure.
MoMA The Museum of Modern Art, New York City	-Workshops with artists and educators; - sculpture, drawings, or digital art influenced by museum exhibits; - Family-friendly shows may incorporate mobile applications, interactive digital kiosks or online resources.	- Make modern art accessible and engaging to the younger audience; - Interactive elements, child-friendly interpretive materials, and activities within the exhibition space make these visits both educational and enjoyable for families.
London's Victoria & Albert Museum	- They provide both physical and digital presentations at different pricing ranges to ensure accessibility. - They also have a lecture series called "Packed Lunch".	- These lectures are designed for curious minds that want to process museum themes and work through ideas post-visit or exhibition ; - This series offers adults the opportunity to spend their lunch hour listening to a conversation between a museum programmer and a scientist about their current research.
The Spy Museum in Washington, DC	- Hosting exclusive gatherings for young professionals and providing cocktails, snacks, and special gallery hours.	- SPY's first digital exhibition of Open Source intelligence collection, often known as Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT).
Museums After Dark	- Creating "Museum Late" evening social spaces with food, drinks, and themed quizzes for adults.	- Whether or not they are revenue-generating events, they provide an opportunity to draw people in who would not otherwise visit the museum during the day.
Missouri's Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art	The museum offers English Language Classes for Learners focusing on USCIS 100 questions,	- Citizenship Preparation - This program demonstrates how to meet the needs of a community while

Museum names	Programs And Activities	Objectives
	as well as teaching about Geography, American Indian Culture, War of Independence, Civil War, Voting Rights, and the Civil Rights Movement through its rich collection.	also utilizing the collection for educational purposes.
The Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Created a strong virtual product, a reflection and activity series for youngsters titled "Look, Think, Do" and "Look Imagine Move," which is an artwork in the focus film series. - Introduced the "MUSE" series, which focuses on watercolor and acrylic painting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - These programs encourage children's creativity and enthusiasm for modern art. - They provide opportunities for youngsters to participate in activities.
The Holburne Museum New New Yorke	A peer-organized museum group named "IMAGE" for those who have had mental health issues. Artistic integration.	Program for Mental Health and Community Involvement.
Queens Museum Of Art New York	- The Queens Museum and Queen's Library partner on the "New New Yorkers" multilingual learning project. Designed for Hindi, Croatian, Persian, Nepali, Arabic, Korean, Bengali, Portuguese, and Tibetan.	-Designed to fulfill the requirements of Queens' adult immigrant population, this program is built on art and creativity, with artists and their work serving as a catalyst for language acquisition.
The Dallas Museum of Art Dallas Museum of Art	There are presently nine virtual date themes to select from, including "Au Naturel," "Fright Night", and "Gettin' Jiggy Wit It."	-provides a fun, accessible, and affordable method to add a new twist to spending quality time with their creative virtual dating.

Source: (Design Dash, 2025 &Turner, 2024).

The table above shows museum activities and initiatives implemented by prominent museums across the world. Almost all museums currently offer innovative programs that reflect their objective and activities. In addition to all the details provided above, Algeria has a wide range of museums with creative programs and activities for example :

The Central Army Museum

The Central Army Museum's exhibits are organized chronologically, from ancient times to the present, and separated into historical periods: prehistory, antiquity, the Islamic era, the modern era, and the contemporary era. It has exhibits connected to historical eras of resistance and revolution: popular resistance, the national movement, the liberation revolution, and a particular wing dedicated to the People's National Army. (The Central Army Museum, 2025). Schools in various educational districts provide educational tours that teach pupils about Algerian history through pictures and displays.

The Public National Museum of Fine Arts

The Public National Museum of Fine Arts provides a variety of programs as part of its museum education program, including workshops. For example, on June 21, 2025, a free workshop was held in association with the National School of Fine Arts, comprising presentations for children and teens and organized by the Injaz Cultural Foundation. A sketching workshop for children with trisomy was also held, In collaboration with the TRIA organization in Algeria. (The Public National Museum of Fine Arts, 2025).

The National Museum of Fine Arts also hosts lectures. For example, on April 26, 2025, Professor Ammar Mokadem, Head of the Arabic Language and Literature Department at the University of Skikda, will conduct a lecture titled "The Contents and Prospects of the Algerian Novel." On January 24, 2024, the National Museum of Fine Arts hosted a Ministry of Culture-organized study day titled "Digitization of Museum Collections in Algeria". In addition to seminars and lectures, the museum hosts events including an exhibition of modern photography by Argentine artist Gabriela Messina. (The Public National Museum of Fine Arts, 2025)

Bardo National Museum

In general, a museum's mission consists not only of preserving heritage, but also of attempting to enhance and disseminate it within the context of a fair and adaptable cultural policy. Thus, the museum's primary objective has always been to maintain collections of public interest within the context of a public service, or at the very least a public utility mission. The primary goal is to guarantee that everyone has equal access to education and culture. (Bardo National Museum, 2025)

Thus, the Bardo Museum's rehabilitation project aims to transform it into an important destination for high-quality cultural growth. With the extension of its facilities, the reorganization of its collections, and their appropriate, fascinating, and didactic exhibition, the visitor will be able to enjoy better, comprehend, and eventually enjoy the revealed works of art for himself, regardless of his intellectual level or age.

The projected function of the educational programs and workshops within the overall mission of the Bardo Museum will result in:

- A direct rapport with works (shows, permanent and temporary exhibitions)
- An analytic approach to work (conferences, political debates, meetings with the scientific and technical staff)
- Effective training throughout workshops and conferences. (Bardo National Museum, 2025).

The National Museum of Antiquities and Islamic Arts

The National Museum of Antiquities and Islamic Arts is in the town of Algiers-Center. It is not just Algeria's oldest museum, but also one of the oldest in Africa. The museum is divided into two pavilions: the antiquities pavilion, which has important treasures such as legendary mosaics in remarkable condition, statues, ceramics, and many more historical objects to find. The second pavilion, that of Islamic arts, contains mostly pieces from the Islamic period, such as currency, swords, jewelry, and furniture, including the minbar of the Great Mosque of Algiers (The National Museum of Antiquities and Islamic Arts, 2025).

In addition to the Algerian museums mentioned above, we would like to mention: The National Museum of Popular Arts and Traditions in Medea, The National Museum of Tebessa, the National Museum of Popular Arts and Traditions, the National Museum of Bardo, the National Museum of Fine Arts, the National Museum of Sirt, the National Museum of Zabana, the Museum of Miniatures, the National Maritime Museum, the National Museum of Nasreddine Dene, Ornamentation and Arabic Calligraphy, the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, the Regional Museum of Chlef, and the Regional Museum of Khenchela, the National Museum of Antiquities and Islamic Arts, the National Museum of Setif, (Ministry of Culture and Arts, 2025).

7. Conclusion

The Finally, our findings demonstrate the enormous potential of museum education as a critical pedagogy for encouraging sustainable tourism. Museums may go beyond their conventional duties as artifact repositories to become proactive agents for promoting environmental awareness, respect for cultural heritage, and responsible tourist practices. The study of various programs and practices shows that using interactive exhibits, participatory workshops, and community-based initiatives can help diverse visitor demographics gain a better understanding of the complex links between .cultural preservation and environmental sustainability

The findings indicate that successfully integrating museum education into sustainable tourism initiatives demands a comprehensive strategy. This means not just creating targeted educational programs but also fundamentally aligning museum aims and operating procedures with sustainable principles. Furthermore, developing cooperation among museums, tourist stakeholders, and local communities is critical for .achieving meaningful and long-term transformation

Furthermore, by employing their educational potential, museums can provide individuals with the knowledge, abilities, and views required to become educated and responsible visitors. As a result, the tourist sector becomes more durable, democratic, and environmentally responsible, guaranteeing that cultural and natural heritage are preserved for future generations. Continuous innovation and intentional execution of museum education initiatives represent a potential avenue for realizing the high .global objectives of sustainable tourism

In general, for creating museum educational programs and improving museums' standing in the field of tourism, "museums need to cooperate closely with the government, large and medium companies, businesses in the region, museums and cultural institutions in other cities and countries for joint programs development, scientific and methodological, research institutions and authorities in the area of education and tourism, grantors financing cultural and educational projects, representatives of mass media." (Skyrda, et al., 2012).

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