

The Principles of Responsible Management Education and Responsible Tourism Strategies: Success, Failure or Trauma for Generation Z?

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Abstract – The purpose of this chapter is to present secondary data around how the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) are adopted in a global context whilst making comparisons with the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index from the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2019. The discussion is centred around young adults (Generation Z) and their potential role and importance. In essence, we are trying to examine if tourism sustainability educational practice adopted within countries appears to transition into industry practice. For this, we consider success both from the perspective of tourism sustainability and general economic competitiveness. The findings suggest significant gaps (or current failure) between PRME delivery and achieving tourism sustainability globally, but generally highlights economic success where PRME uptake is strong. Thus, it would appear that PRME is not yet transitioning into industry practice; therefore, more needs to be done or adapted to achieve greater tourism sustainability, and we emphasise the role of Generation Z within this.

Keywords – The Principles for Responsible Management Education; Tourism Sustainability; Generation Z; Young Adults; Higher Education

1. Introduction

It is arguably a truism to state that education is an important tool that can help destinations in their endeavour to achieve greater sustainability levels, and, as such, it is naturally a part of the strategic plan of many destinations (Shaw & Allison, 1999; Wright, 2002; Sibbel, 2009; Åberg & Müller, 2018). For instance, education has been identified as one of the potential solutions to tackle overtourism due to its transformative potential (Stoyanova-Bozhkova, 2020). ‘Quality education’ is even one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), developed by UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and these SDGs act as a guideline to help toward the achievement of sustainability (Bradley, 2019). As for the Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME), another UN initiative, these have been put in place at a global level to promote the inclusion of sustainability in programmes in higher education institutions with the long-term objectives to have leaders who are literate in the area of sustainability (Bradley, 2019) and therefore become sustainability thinkers, actioners and transformers (Séraphin, Yallop, Seyfi & Hall, 2020).

The role of PRME in tourism higher education has so far been relatively overlooked by the literature. Séraphin, Smith and Yahiaoui (2021) have highlighted the potential ineffectiveness of PRME in terms of turning higher education students into sustainability actioners. However, when used as a framework for the development of activities for resort mini-clubs, Séraphin and Vo-Thanh (2020) argued that the PRME framework *could* educate young children and convert children into sustainability thinkers. The contrasting results highlight that the transformative potential of PRME is perhaps contextual; its application might be dependent on the target/expected outcomes. Thus, it could be argued that there is not yet a clear understanding of how to apply the PRME framework to a tourism context, e.g. how to generate impacts from PRME delivery within higher education institutions (HEIs) directly into the tourism industry, or how to maximise its transformative potential. As a result, the purpose of this study is to explore if PRME is part of the many optimistic tools available, i.e. not anchored in reality and not robust enough to achieve sustainability (Burrai, Buda & Stanford, 2019). The tourism industry as a service industry has been selected to investigate this matter. We want to address the following research questions (RQs):

1. How well spread is PRME in tourism courses around the world?
2. What evidence can be gleaned from the impact of PRME (directly or indirectly) on the sustainability and competitiveness of destinations?

2. Positioning of the Study

2.1. Adults

A top-down approach could be assimilated to an approach establishing a hierarchy amongst segments of a community. For instance, it could be government on top, with businesses just below, and at the bottom, the civil society (Kubickova & Campbell, 2020). This hierarchy could be compared with the framework developed by Mech (1999), and Mirjalili, Mirjalili and Lewis (2014), with the Alpha as the leader of the group; the Beta is the next one in line. He is seconding the Alpha; just below him are the Omega and Delta. This hierarchy has also been found in event management, with the identification of primary and secondary stakeholders (Todd, Leask & Ensor, 2017). When it comes to responsible tourism, strategies have so far mainly involved and taken into consideration, only Alphas and Delta, namely media; businesses; tourist organisations; emergency services; government and civic bodies; members of the local communities not designated as passive and/or powerless; suppliers; organisers; etc. (Hutton, 2016; Todd et al, 2017). Despite many stakeholders are involved in the tourism industry and related sectors (Burrai et al, 2019), this study is adopting a different segmentation, as a result, all those stakeholders are put under the common umbrella of 'Adults' (Figure 1).

2.2. Young Adults and children

The young adult category includes individuals 18-25, i.e. Generation Z (Gen Z) (Claude, 2014). This group is very important for the industry (Claude, 2014; Crapez, Delhaye & Drouet, 2014). In fact, the industry (led by adults) is gradually involving young adults (Gen Z) in the tourism industry via some initiatives such as volunteer tourism, the protection of natural, built, and immaterial heritage (Lenoir, 2014; Van Den Plas, 2014). To get young adults more involved as tourism sustainability thinkers – i.e. to get them involved as future leaders, what Visser (2015) calls transformation leadership – education strategies either theoretical or practical are put in place. This can include embedding sustainability (PRME) into management programmes

(Parkes, Buono & Howaidy, 2017), including tourism and related topics, or can include field trips (Hehir, Stewart, Maher & Ribeiro, 2020). Having said that, strategies such as the inclusion of PRME into management programmes of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can have its limitations, e.g. it is argued this strategy is not aligning students with actual real-life sustainability issues such as overtourism, and not getting them involved as activists (S raphin et al, 2021). That study focuses on young adults and the effectiveness of PRME on the sustainability of the tourism industry. In contrast to S raphin et al (2021), the study here is considering a worldwide position, rather than a single case study, with a hope to building a more rounded and reliable set of data. This study is going to indicate if stage 2 of the top-down strategy currently being used is effective or not (Figure 1). At the bottom of the hierarchy of stakeholders engaged in responsible tourism are children (Figure 1). Their view is largely neglected (Koscak, Knezevic, Binder, Pelaez-Verdet, Isik, Micic, Borisavljevic & Segota, 2021) by adults, as they are considered as passive and powerlessness members of the community (Hutton, 2016). Yet, children could be assimilated to Delta and they are the future of the tourism industry (Cullingford, 1995).

[INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE]

3. Literature Review

3.1. Tourism education: Meeting the demands of sustainability

With tourism having the potential for harm on the environment and local communities, the need for sustainability leaders to save and protect the planet has become more important over time (Gretzel et al., 2014; Sroufe et al., 2015; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2020). The call to arms for action concerning sustainable tourism is emphasized by SDG 11, target 11.4: to “Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage” (UNSDGs, n.d.). This education can serve to empower individuals with the values and confidence to put their sustainability-related knowledge into action (Zanotti & Chernela, 2008; Bowser et al., 2014; Camargo & Gretzel, 2017). Indeed, empowerment is considered central to achieving effective sustainable tourism development (Scheyvens, 1999; Cole, 2006; Joo et al., 2020). Of course, that sustainability mindset needs to come first through the educators and curriculum to then be fostered into the minds of future leaders (Kassel et al., 2016). There is a strong argument that tourism education should focus on sustainability to develop such future leaders within HEIs

(Camargo & Gretzel, 2017; Raagmaa & Keerberg, 2017). Thus, this now brings us to a point where we need to assess how this dynamic educational shift is impacting on change post the educational experience and training.

Since Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism industry, there has been a significant rise in sustainable tourism curriculum developments. Yet, the track record for fostering sustainability leaders and educating reflective sustainability practitioners is weak on evidence. Indeed, there is paucity of evidence demonstrating that tourism education contributes to sustainability or sustainable tourism (Gretzel et al., 2014; Raagmaa & Keerberg, 2017). This includes a lack of understanding regarding what students know and feel about sustainability (Camargo & Gretzel, 2017). Kemper et al. (2019) argue that current approaches to sustainability in tourism are generating sustainability thinkers where our ultimate goal for true sustainability empowerment should be to generate sustainability actioners (those instilling change in others and the community) and transformers (those wanting to initiate change in the surrounding environment). As a result, it is not surprising to see how there is a gap between the education delivered and subsequent practice within working environments.

With the above in mind, it is important to understand where we are within current sustainable tourism education developments. Camargo and Gretzel (2017) argue that six core elements are required to effectively deliver on a sustainable tourism curriculum, namely technical literacy, analytical literacy, ecological literacy, multicultural literacy, policy and political literacy and ethical literacy. This shows the depth of consideration needed. To deliver this, they go on to suggest the requirement for innovative teaching approaches, i.e. perhaps a change in traditional teaching delivery is needed to increase the effectiveness of this education. Sheldon, Fesenmaier and Tribe (2011) argue that the Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI) provides a framework to transform tourism education and inspire more effective global citizenship. To go one step further still, Boluk and Carnicelli (2019) draw upon Freirean philosophy on critical pedagogy to present a framework that is inclusive of critical pedagogy in tourism curriculum. Their citizenship and agency principles are argued to inspire engaged and politically active global citizens.

To go one step further, sustainable tourism pedagogy (STP) could be achieved through a progressive, experiential and collaborative approach (Jamal et al., 2011), which also embeds Camargo and Gretzel's (2017) six core elements. STP embraces practical application (like field trips) that are embedded into education programmes to deliver real-world experiences. Such an

approach can highlight an action orientation to address environmental and social issues (related primarily to the tourism industry in this application, but can stretch further) and contribute towards the development of sustainability-focused future leaders (Jamal et al., 2011; Gretzel et al., 2014; Sroufe et al., 2015). Hehir et al. (2020) provide a great modern example as youth- and education-based expedition programmes to Polar Regions provide long-term impact on pro-environmental behaviour. Such approaches can lead to converting individuals into those sustainability actioners and sustainability transformers emphasised earlier (Kemper et al., 2019). On top of this, new technologies and social media also have a part to play in achieving sustainability change (Camargo & Gretzel, 2017).

3.2. Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME)

The tourism education and sustainability nexus discussed above can now perhaps be best symbolised by the United Nations launch of the 2007 initiative, PRME, whereby the objective remains to change the curriculum, research, and learning methods of management education based on the UN Global Compact/ Corporate Sustainability approach. PRME attempts to nurture ethical values and promote sustainability awareness within education (Annan-Diab & Molinari, 2017; Parkes et al., 2017). It was created to support and advance the UN SDGs and assist in working towards a global sustainable future (United Nations Development Programme, n.d.; Annan-Diab & Molinari, 2017; Parkes et al., 2017; Rosenbloom et al., 2017). The six principles underpinning PRME are outlined in Figure 2. These align well with the aforementioned Camargo and Gretzel's (2017) six core elements for effectively delivering an effective sustainable tourism curriculum.

[INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE]

To fully integrate PRME into a curriculum, HEIs need to work with relevant sustainability stakeholders as well as reviewing and adapting curriculum design and teaching approaches (Parkes et al., 2017). Fieldwork experiences can be crucial to this adaptation as well as using relevant assessment platforms like the Sustainability Literacy test or Sulitest (Decamps et al., 2017; Gentile, 2017). In addition, Seraphin and Vo Thanh (2020) argue that PRME could happen beyond the educational basics, e.g. their research emphasises resort mini-clubs. They

also believe that PRME could be applied in other organisations outside of the education industry and work towards the achievement of SDGs.

The focus of this book chapter is centred around how PRME within its educational context potentially impacts on the tourism industry (in a global perspective) post the educational training. There are numerous aspects that could be considered and are presented here, but we will not be able to cover such granular detail. Thus, we hope our global perspective can inspire and assist in future research that focuses down much deeper into particular contexts.

4. Methodology

4.1. Foundation

The concept of destination competitiveness was introduced by Porter (1990), whose model is based on a “Competitiveness Diamond”, which compares the advantages of resources allocation available in each tourist destination to competitive advantages, defined as the resources made available by each destination to contribute to the growth and development of tourism. Ritchie and Crouch have certainly developed the broader concept through extensive research (Crouch & Ritchie, 1994, 1995, 1999; Ritchie & Crouch, 1993, 2003).

Depending on their model, the global environment (macro) and the competitive environment (micro) have a significant effect on tourist destinations, affecting their attractiveness positively or negatively. The model includes five groups of factors:

- Basic resources and attractors: are factors that constitute the main reasons why visitors choose one destination or another.
- Support factors and resources: indicate the foundations that support the development of the tourism industry (infrastructure, accessibility, services, accommodation, and so on).
- Policy, planning and destination development: are relevant to guide the directions, form and structure of tourism development.
- Destination management, undertaken by individuals and organizations as part of collective action.
- Finally, the determinants of qualification and amplification, which can play an important role in increasing or limiting the competitiveness of tourist destinations.

The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report (TTCR) is one of the most popular composite indices for measuring the competitiveness of the tourism. Since the TTCR was first published, 8 reports have been published, each resembling a monograph on current topics related to travel and tourism. Each report includes the TTCI that classifies a wide range of countries (140 in the 2019 edition) from the integration of a total of 90 indicators. These are structured into 4 sub-indices (Enabling Environment, T&T Policy and Enabling Conditions, Infrastructures and Natural and Cultural Resources), and these make up the 14 pillars of competitiveness.

4.2. Data collection

The set of data for this study is twofold:

The first set of data is from the PRME website: <https://www.unprme.org/search>. It is based on 63 countries around the world, which include 7 African states, 18 Asian countries, 2 countries from the Pacific, 27 European countries, and 8 countries from the Americas (column 1 – Appendix 1). The set of data is limited to destinations with PRME institutions. For validity, every single PRME institution from every single destination has been considered for the study (column 2 & 3 – Appendix 1), apart from the PRME institutions in the Americas. Indeed, for this part of the world, only a sample of institutions have been considered, due to the fact that for the USA and Canada there is no breakdown per state (USA) and canton (Canada). As a result, all the destinations from the Caribbean with a PRME institution have been considered, and also used as a benchmark, hence the reason why 3 destinations from the Caribbean, Central and South America are considered for the study. It is worth highlighting the fact that the Bahamas does have one PRME institution, but it was not considered for the study due to the fact that the destination is not included in the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2019 (column 4-6 – Appendix 1). Compared to other research, this study is based on a large number of destinations. Indeed, Lupoli, Morse, Bailey and Schelhas (2014), for instance, based their international study on the USA, Canada, UK, Australia, New Zealand, and Latin America. As for Chen and Chen (2015), their study is based on 30 countries from 5 continents.

The second set of data is the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index from the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2019, produced by the World Economic Forum (<https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-travel-tourism-competitiveness-report-2019>). The ‘TTCI benchmarks the T&T competitiveness of 140 economies and measures the set of factors and policies that enable the sustainable development of the Travel & Tourism (T&T) sector,

which in turn, contributes to the development and competitiveness of a country' (Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report, 2019: vii). The TTCI is made of 4 sub-indexes, and 14 pillars (figure 3). For the 63 destinations considered in this study, data (ranking) for their overall competitiveness has been provided (column 4 – Appendix 1), alongside their ranking in terms of travel and tourism policy and enabling conditions (sub-index – column 5 – Appendix 1); and environmental sustainability ranking (one of the 14 pillars – column 6 – Appendix 1). Travel and tourism policy and enabling conditions is considered because it covers policies and strategies that can impact on the performance of the tourism industry of a destination; whereas environment sustainability is all about strategies in place to promote the protection of natural resources (WEF, 2019). These indexes are in line with sustainable tourism education, sometimes delivered through the PRME framework (Hugo, 2021), which can be considered as a destination management tool (Tiwari, Kainthola & Chowdahry, 2021), but also a transformative tool (Stoyanova-Bozhkova, 2021), that can be used to tackle tourism sustainability issues (Carballo, Leon & Carballo, 2021), while contributing to destination competitiveness the same way European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS) are doing for Europe.

[INSERT FIGURE 3 HERE]

5. Results and discussion

In the panel of countries of our research, the best ranked countries according to the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness criterion, record the highest number of PRMEs. This is the case of France, Germany and Spain with respectively 39, 39 and 25 PRME academic institutions. Also, strong geographical disparities are observed in terms of the distribution of PRMEs over the panel of 62 countries considered in this study. Thus, by continent, Europe represents nearly 51.08% of PRME institutions against 28.05% for Asian countries and only 6.23% and 5.99% for Latin America and Africa respectively. These geographic disparities are also recorded for the same continent. This is particularly the case for India and China, which account for more than 64.10% of PRME academic institutions PRMEs of the Asian continent. This situation is also observable in the European continent where three countries (France, Germany and Spain) represent more than 48.35% of the total of PRME institutions of this continent. South Africa and Argentina are exceptions to the panel of countries from the African and South American

continents, with 12 and 11 PRME academic institutions, respectively. More than 30.21% of PRME academic institutions are offering tourism courses (with either Tourism/ Hospitality/ Leisure/ Events). 70 of these are located in Europe, representing 55.56% of the total. Australia (23 institutions) has the highest number of PRME academic institutions offering tourism (and related programs) courses. Overall, there is a significant relationship between the number of PRME offering tourism courses and the total number of PRME institutions (table 1). However, exceptions include India which records a single academic institution with either T/H/L/E in a total of 52 academic institutions. This is also notably in some other developed countries such as the Netherlands (with 0/10), Spain (3/25) and China (3/23). Globally, fragile states lag significantly behind developed states in terms of Tourism & Travel Competitiveness. Developed countries record the highest scores in terms of global competitiveness thanks to the development of a competitive tourist infrastructure but also to the dynamism of these tourist destinations; for example, for the “environmental sustainability” pillar, the fifteen first places are occupied by European countries. The significant imbalance in terms of the performance of tourist destinations based on the three performance indicators – global ranking, environmental sustainability and T&T Policy, and enabling conditions – is recorded in the following countries: Italy, Portugal and Cyprus in Europe; China, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Vietnam and Thailand in Asia; and, Argentina in America and South Africa in Africa. The latter have a very low score in the Pillar, i.e. Environmental Sustainability compared to the other two indices. Thus, for example, Italy, which presents a global competitiveness index which allows it to appear in eighth place on a global scale, is only in 75th place in terms of Enabled and in 64th place in terms of Environmental Sustainability.

[INSERT TABLE 1 HERE]

The results show that there was a moderate correlation between the total number of PRME institutions and “total rank of T &T competitiveness” ($r=-0.557$; $p=0.000$). However, there was no significant correlation between the total number of PRME and the two indicators: “T&T policy and enabling conditions” and “Environment Sustainability”. For the correlation between the academic institutions offering tourism courses of the PRME and the competitiveness of the tourism industry of destinations, the results shows the moderate value of the coefficient of correlation between the total number of PRME institutions offering tourism courses and the “Total rank of T &T Competitiveness” ($r=-0.534$; $p<0.001$). The findings confirm the multidimensional role and commitment of PRMEs (*provide an engagement structure for academic institutions to advance social responsibility through incorporating*

universal values into curricula and research (PRME, 2015)), as academic institutions aiming to improve the overall performance of host countries in terms of T&T.

The results obtained were not statistically significant between the PRME institutions offering tourism courses and the pillars “T&T policy and enabling conditions” and “Environment Sustainability”, suggesting that the expected positive benefits of these academic institutions on these two indicators are not demonstrated. This is perhaps supported by a call for a number of PRME institutions needing to refocus their strategies by expanding actions oriented towards sustainability by emphasizing social and environmental impact (Hervieux et al., 2017).

6. Conclusion

The PRME strategy or young adult (Gen Z) strategy analysed and discussed in this study is proving to lack wider impact in terms of tourism sustainability and enabling conditions for change. However, this strategy has proven to be a success when it comes to competitiveness for destinations, i.e. economic success. In essence, it is a mitigated success or failure depending on the perspective adopted. Importantly, Gen Z remains quite active when it comes to sustainability, with sustainability activists such as Greta Thunberg (Mkono et al, 2020). Other activists include Iris Duquesne from France who is 16, Inga Zasowska from Poland (13), Alexandria Villasenor from the USA (14), Leah Namugerwa, from Uganda (15), and Luisa Neuberger, from Germany (22) (France24, n.d. [Online]). Thus, there is still hope for change towards impact on tourism sustainability through Gen Z. However, perhaps there is a need for the tourism industry to have its own sustainability heroes. Maybe it is important for young people (including Gen Z) to have heroes that can also be compared to role models (Bricheno & Thornton, 2007). Those heroes can positively influence children’s attitudes, behaviour and perceptions, and therefore continue to drive the needed change for tourism sustainability and bridge identified gaps, e.g. between PRME and industry practice.

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