

Book Review

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Abstract: Tourism between 2020 and 2021 had come to a grinding halt, this situation did not happen in any particular sector or region; this was a global shutdown that brought travel and tourism to a standstill. There was no other precedent in our lifetime and the last shutdown of any global travel was, most likely in 1918 when the ‘Spanish Flu’ hit the world. There are a number of issues related to tourism and development which this book considers could be useful pointers for strategists and policy makers to deliver a better quality tourism activity that is sustainable and responsible. It is really a reflective book that helps the professional reconsider tourism and travel in this new chapter after the pandemic – although we may have to live with the consequences and adapt our activity to this reality. Anyhow, this book will deliver some of the answers about restarting tomorrow’s tourism.

Keywords: reflect; redevelop; restore; stakeholders; changes in trends; monitor for sustainable tourism; challenges; bridge the gap; technology; human mobility; research; integrated approach; management of tourism.

Tourism in Development – Reflective Essays

by: Peter U.C. Dieke, Brian E.M. King and Richard A.J. Sharpley

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This publication has brought together a number of very critical points that are relevant to the management of tourism. Five sections (Tourism as a Sustainable Option; Policies and Planning for Tourism Development; Rethinking the Destination; Educational Futures in Tourism and Emerging Challenges in International Tourism) are very much in synchronisation with the three R’s of recovery; these included: Reflect, Redevelop and Restore. First of all, we need to reflect on the tourism activity over the past years, particularly the issues of sustainability, overtourism and carrying capacity; having considered the issues of tourism, we should then learn to redevelop an activity (not an industry) that makes sense from a visitor and resident/host perspective, and finally we can begin to restore tourism as that remodelled, restructured activity that is planned through an integrated approach involving the three key stakeholders (the local authority, the local businesses and the local community).

The book has managed to bring a number of tourism academics together to discuss the issues facing tourism today. Each chapter gives the cause and effect of the issues, based not simply on theory, but also on practical solutions. Each chapter reflects on those issues we have been discussing during countless seminars, workshops and meetings but which we have never managed to solve for one reason or another, primarily because the industry was looking at quantitative economic and numerical growth, instead of building

an activity that would be sustainable and responsible for a better quality of life for the host and the visitor.

Chapter 1 to Chapter 5 discuss the way in which tourism developed and these issues were summarised very eloquently. In Chapter 1, Carson Jenkins, describes an interesting reflection of tourism development over 50 years. Although it felt so familiar reading the way in which tourism grew in every country over this past half-century, yet we cannot discount the fact that there will be changes in trends, in traveller profiles, and in destinations. In Chapter 2 Richard Sharpley emphasises a point about sustainable tourism and what he terms as the ‘Theoretical Divide’ and this is indeed the re-evaluation of tourism so that sustainability is actually implemented and managed and not just included as a ‘wish-list’ in many policies; this needs to be seen as a reality when it comes to tourism and development. In Chapter 3, Larry Dwyer and Alison Gill take up that argument about managing sustainability and find the ideal algorithm for letting it work in terms of the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the UNWTO Monitor for Sustainable Tourism (MST index). I found this chapter a real eye opener for the practitioner who is serious about sustainable tourism development. In Chapter 4, Richard Butler analyses the way that our tourism policies have varied in terms of what they want to achieve – from quantitative, to qualitative, to accepting the shutdown since 2020 and wishing for a ‘reopening’ or ‘restarting’ of tourism without considering the effect of the pandemic on an industry that needs rethinking. Chapter 5, looks at the World Bank perspective of this industry – including the institutional failures, the market failures and the resource failures. In Chapter 5 there is a need, according to the World Bank, of better coordination in tourism. Indeed, we must all admit that up to March 2019, tourism was a fragmented industry that had many goals but no coordinated approach to succeed in these goals.

Chapter 6 to Chapter 10 look at how tourism suffered from periods of short-term planning rather than long-term strategies because it depended on a top-down process led by the authorities or politicians and the businesspersons. In fact, because politicians and businesspersons played key roles in these plans, they were not as holistic and integrated as they should have been. These ‘short-termists’ look at the immediate benefits from tourism based on quantitative data and results. In Chapter 6, Dieke, Ololo and Eyisi present a case study of how a tourism policy was drawn up, in Nigeria, to drive the tourism activity there towards a positive and successful result. On the other hand Baum and Mooney in Chapter 7 look at the social aspect of tourism which is so important to creating a sustainable activity for all the key stakeholders including the local community. Stephen Wanhill, in Chapter 8 looks at tourism projects and their successes and failures. How can we ensure that tourism projects have long term, continuous and consistent successes? Sienny Thio and Brian King, in Chapter 9 bring up the challenges in assessing the human capital in tourism in Indonesia. Tourism is not only an industry but a socio-cultural activity dependent on the people to people’s interaction. Finally, in Chapter 10, Joan Henderson talks about the politics and tourism in South –East Asia; the ups and downs of politics do affect the long-term strategies for tourism and are conducive to destination development.

Chapter 11 to Chapter 13 look at how and what we need to do to rethink and reconsider tourism in a post-Covid world. In Chapter 11, Terry Stevens discusses the new way of managing destinations through research and practical implementation. As he suggests, we need to bridge this gap between ‘Art and Alchemy’ if we are to achieve a consistent and continuous success here, meaning we need to find that bridge between

academia and practitioner. In Chapter 12 Louisa Yee Sum Lee and Philip Pearce look at the case study of Bangkok and consider how to create a sustainable environment for tourism in an urban area, using the ‘quadruple wheels’ presented by the authors as – the social driver, the environmental driver, the economic driver and the governance driver. Finally, in Chapter 13, Ulrike Gretzel discusses the influence of technology on tourism. The chapter shows how we can facilitate the mundane tasks but we still need to enhance the more meaningful tasks such as hospitality and service and the guest-host relationship; tourism is not simply an app on a smart phone. After this global shutdown we have all had time to think of how we could work better and effectively, using hospitality and service rather than simply looking at our efficiency and any cosmetic changes and trends in terms of technology. Each of these chapters looks at the art of managing tourism in a practical way by building in the theoretical framework and applying these to sustainable tourism practices. This is the highlight of the whole research if we really believe tourism can be developed sustainably and responsibly.

Chapter 14 to Chapter 17 look at how academia needs to rethink the concept of tourism research and study. In Chapter 14, David Airey discusses the concept of tourism as a professional discipline; this is what makes the difference between a job and a career. On the other hand, in Chapter 15, Geoffrey Hall discusses a topic – the gap between academia and the practice of tourism; we need to ensure that this gap is filled so that innovation and management of tourism can be a consistent and continuous process of change and enhancement. In Chapter 16, Hangin Qiu and Dora Dongzhi Chen describe the case study of higher education in China, showing the development of this tertiary level between 1976 and 2020; this certainly highlights those changes that were also replicated in other countries as tourism developed in terms of the market, the tourist profile and the services and experiences; while Roy Wood in Chapter 17 speaks about tourism research in difficult times. The post-Covid world will surely bring new trends and aspects for the management of tourism that will mean a closer working relationship between academia and the practitioner.

Finally, Chapters 18 to Chapter 22 reflect on the qualitative challenges that tourism will face in the coming years, based on issues such as gender and race and animals in tourism. In Chapter 18, Allan Williams looks at what tourism could be like in the future, particularly the idea of migration and human mobility from country to country. In Chapter 19 Alistair Morrison reflects on the trends and issues in global tourism. Obviously, this could be a studied reflection but the trends and issues for tourism are so volatile as we have seen over the past year. This Chapter looks at the integrated approach which is described by Morrison as the *ADVICE* model.

The last three chapters deal with the more humane and social side of tourism. In Chapter 20, Donna Chambers looks at gender and race in tourism, a topic that is so important with such a person-to-person activity where intercultural relationships are of the utmost importance. In Chapter 21, Erik Cohen looks at the question of animal rights and tourism; looking at the presentation of zoos and safari parks as attractions, an ethical issue? In Chapter 22, Richard Sharpley, Brian King and Peter Dieke put together a conclusion that reflects on a number of issues facing tourism in the coming years. We need to reflect, rethink and redevelop tourism for tomorrow and we should consider avoiding the mistakes made up to 2020 such as overtourism and unsustainability. The authors again look at the importance of bridging the gap between academia and practitioners in tourism to ensure a smoother transition in terms of innovation and enhancement of the activity.

Tourism definitely needs such reference books which tie together the theoretical framework but, more appropriately, discuss how we can improve the aspect of implementing the theory in practice. I believe that this book should go a long way in reducing the gap between the academia and the practitioner. Research needs to be a way of providing the practitioner with solutions that will enhance the management of tourism, not just through economic growth but particularly as a socio-cultural activity that is measured through qualitative factors, such as the lifestyle for the local resident or host and the host-visitor relationship.

This book will certainly be of interest to planners, strategists and key decision makers both in the wider tourism activity as well as those involved in the planning and management at the sectoral level, such as hotels, travel and guiding or interpretation. Students who have decided to follow courses leading to higher tertiary degrees at universities need to understand just what tourism can offer besides a quantitative industry that lacked proper planning, management and monitoring. Here again, this book provides the information for sustainable and responsible management of tourism.