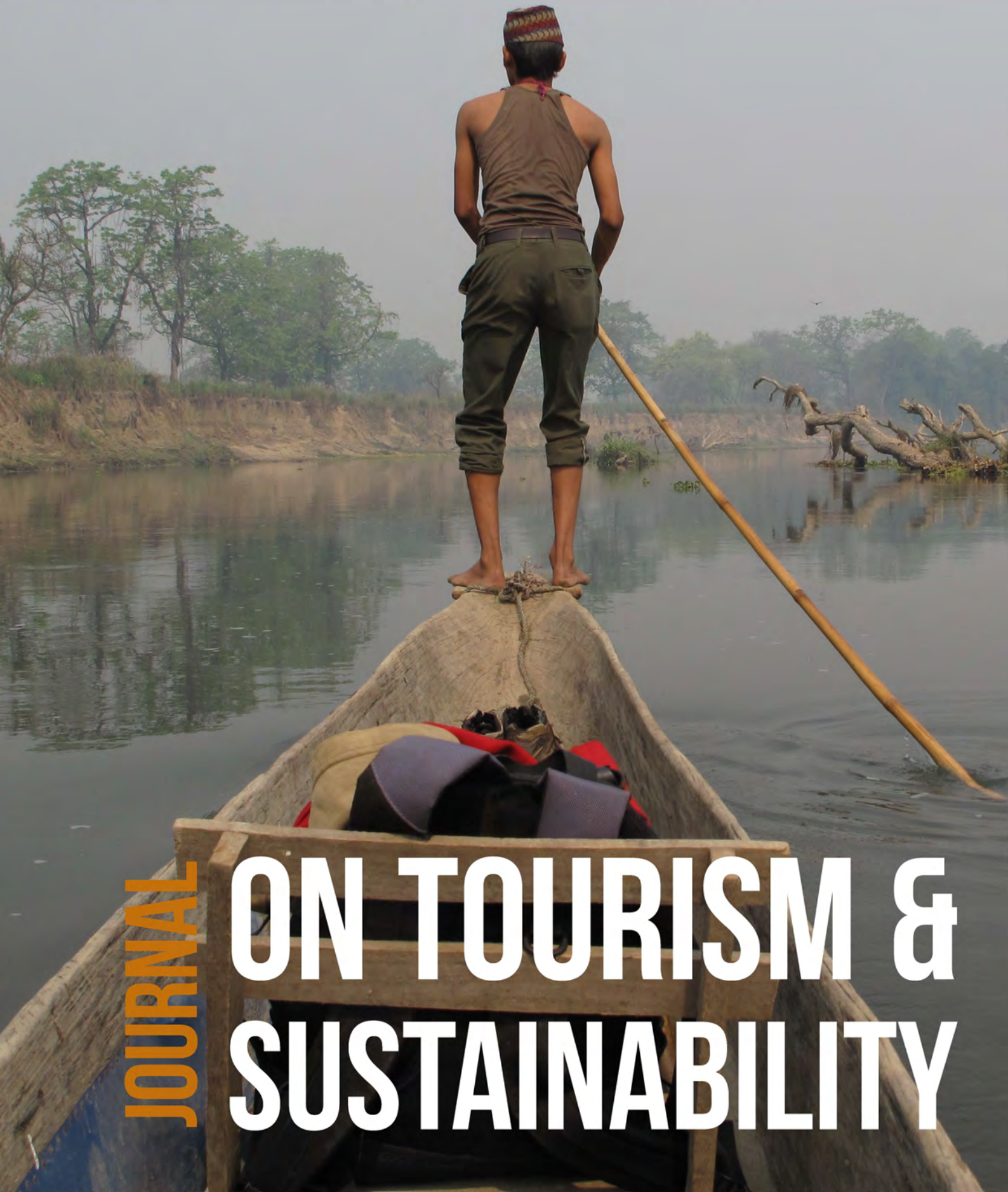


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# ON TOURISM & SUSTAINABILITY

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**TOURISM FOR PEACE: CRITICAL REFLECTIONS**  
**Vasiliki Avgeli\* Wendy Sealy\*\* Ali Bakir\*\*\* Eugenia Wickens\*\*\***  
**MBS College of Crete Greece\* University of Chichester UK\*\* OTS Oxford UK\*\*\***

**Abstract**

The peace-through-tourism discourse has been appropriated mainly by politicians and the industry to advance their own particular interests and has been viewed as a panacea to solve the entrenched socio-economic problems faced by nations globally today. The counter argument is put forward by those analysts who draw our attention to the perceived 'evils' of westernisation and modernisation brought about by globalisation where tourism is one of its principal components. As the paper argues questions of whether and how tourism as a whole contributes to world peace is more complex and problematic. Following a brief exploration of the concept of 'peace', this paper examines the tenuous relationship between 'tourism' and 'peace'. In so doing, it considers the theoretical arguments of diverse thinkers and assesses the strengths and weaknesses of their various positions. The paper goes on to present a fresh conceptual framework for understanding the role of tourism in building a culture of peace. It should be noted that the interpretation offered in this paper has been influenced by the authors' biographies, cultural reflections, and experiences. The paper concludes that not only complexities of tourism and international relations are often ignored in textual representations but the proposition that tourism fosters peace and tolerance appears to have been rather exaggerated.

**Keywords:** Peace, globalisation, fundamentalism, terrorism, Neo-colonialism, SDGs, COVID-19.

**Introduction**

Tourism for Peace – Does tourism promote peace? Can tourism contribute to achieving the SDGs? Is tourism taken for granted? This paper explores theoretical arguments concerning the social impacts of tourism for peace and cultural understanding. The central focus is on the relationship between tourism and peace and its centrality to the sustainable development. The SDGs were adopted by UN as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. It assumes that each country can achieve its full potential. Tourism is mentioned several times in the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. It is acknowledgement of the global significance of the sector. The key issue is about 'sustainability'. The term sustainability which came to prominence in the 1980s evokes lots of discussions. Although it is an imprecise concept, its utility lies in the notion of "a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland Report, 1987). Tourism in the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development implies positive impacts on environment, society and economy, a force for peace and cultural understanding, (Avgeli, V., et al., 2020). It implies a partnership in which governments, businesses, experts, and scientists cooperate in achieving the SDGs, (Anderson, E., Bakir, Ali., and Wickens, E., 2015).

Number one in the UN Agenda is alleviating poverty; 'we pledge that no one will be left behind' (UN). However, it is debatable if tourism can achieve on this promise. Several commentators point to increase of poverty and social inequality, joblessness, and precarious work. Poverty alleviation is a global challenge. Dividing lines run between rich and poor societies, between people who have the means to travel as tourists and those who do not. Tourism sector has a

responsibility to ensure that people, the environment, and climate are not negatively affected. SDGs provide guidance for the sector to play a better role in achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Goal 16 is to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. Conflict, insecurity, weak institutions, and Covid-19 remain a threat to sustainable development. Number of people escaping war and conflict exceeded 79.5 million in 2020, (UN). Covid-19 pandemic threatens to increase and exploit fragilities across the globe. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals with the 169 targets represents an ambitious vision to transform the world and to promote peace and cultural understanding. The Agenda comprises 4 sections; the first is a political declaration; the second is a set of 17 sustainable goals; the third states the means of implementation, and the final section represents the framework for follow up and review of the Agenda. It integrates the three dimensions of sustainable development i.e., economic, social, and environmental. SDGs such as ending poverty, improving health, education, gender equality, tackling climate change, economic growth are serious commitments adopted by UN member states.

The role of tourism in sustainable development is mentioned several times in the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, tourism is viewed as a vehicle for peace and cultural understanding. Does tourism promote peace? A review of pertinent studies shows that there is a tendency amongst analysts to adopt one of two opposing orientations: One claims tourism is the magic potion for solving the entrenched socio-economic problems faced by countries. The other sees tourism as an 'evil' that generates conflict e.g., fundamentalism. These orientations are best seen as the ends of a spectrum of opinion with a variety of views lying between them. The peace-through-tourism discourse has been appropriated by politicians and industry to advance their own vested interests. The counter argument is put forward by those thinkers who draw our attention to the perceived 'evils' of 'globalisation'. This paper argues how tourism as a whole contributes to world peace is much more complex and problematic. The paper starts with a conceptual clarification of the term 'peace' and then it goes on discussing the key issues surrounding the debate regarding tourism for peace. The discussion begins by setting out what has become the legacy to the social analysis of tourism and peace and tries to provide an overview of wide-ranging contributions. Themes are drawn together to assess the various dimensions of the analysis of tourism as a vehicle for peace and cultural understanding

### **The Concept of Peace**

What is Peace? The analysis of peace in several disciplines including sociology, history and psychology has created an extensive literature (Aron, Raymond, 2003; Beer, Francis, A 2001). Reading shows that peace is an intangible and elusive concept. It is difficult to quantify or measure. So how can it be studied it? Past studies suggest that it entails the absence of war, acts of terrorism and random violence. Peace is not static, but it constantly changes, and it is imperfect. It demands peaceful relationships between nations and governments. It also involves cease-fires, surrenders, and treaties. It embodies ideals such as harmony, freedom, good relations, and prosperity. In the context of tourism, it also requires peaceful relationships between host communities, individuals, and stakeholder groups (Butler, R. & Suntikul, W. 2013). At an elementary and fundamental level of analysis, peaceful relationships are characteristically manifested in social interactions. For instance, hosts interact with tourists on the beach, or at a bus stop or at a shopping centre. The absence of traits such as war and conflict are often employed in the analysis of the 'tourism for peace' proposition. Our reading shows that although there is no clear agreement as to how peace should be operationalised, there is consensus that the existence of tourism depends on peace. A key characteristic of research to date is the recognition of the important role that tourism plays in sustaining development. (Anderson, E., Bakir, Ali., and Wickens, E., (2015).

## **Tourism for Peace**

Tourism is viewed as a force and agent of peace and somewhat conceived as an apolitical phenomenon. Tourism for peace is employed as a 'tool' for world peace - promoting peace and combating conflicts. Tourism fosters stability and peace (UN). It opens people's minds and hearts. It is the 'spirit' of tourism development - creates jobs, 'promotes culture and peace' in a sustainable way and brings hope. 'Tourism and Jobs a Better Future for All' was the adopted UN slogan in 2019. World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) provides evidence that tourism in India has created 41 million jobs in the year 2017. For UN, the sector has the potential to create jobs and boost employment prospects. <https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/panorama/tourism-and-jobs-better-future-718262.html>. For proponents of tourism for peace tourism is not only the world's biggest business but also the world's biggest peace industry, (UN, 2019). A positive force that mitigates tensions by playing a central role in national and international politics and world peace. It is claimed that peace disturbed due to political hostilities between nations can be restored through tourism. The role of tourism in countering fundamental causes of conflict and violence needs to be examined. Is there any evidence? Bill Clinton praises tourism's power for peace and development. 'Travel industry is good for the earth, the children and the future. I believe that by simply expanding tourism and in ways that promote sustainability, [this] reminds people of our common humanity'. The growth of tourism in Croatia after the Balkan conflict and the dramatic rise in revenues in the decade following the Bosnian peace agreement is often cited as evidence by proponents of tourism for peace. It is interesting to note that although the idea of 'tourism for peace' is not a new phenomenon and can be traced for instance in 1929 with the marketing slogan 'Travel for peace' BTA (British Travel Association). This positive discourse is also found in slogans adopted by powerful organisations: 1967 'Tourism: Passport to Peace' (UN's International Tourism Year); 1986 'Tourism: A vital force for peace'; a conference organized by the International Institute for Peace. 'Tourism is the most effective weapon to save the world' (UN). For proponents of tourism for peace there is no doubt it does. Tourism is regarded as a vehicle for economic and social development (Butler, & Suntikul, 2013). More tourism = more jobs = more revenue = peace. Tourism is good for peace and peace is good for tourism. The connection is two-way (WTTC, 2019).

Several points of criticism have been made against this simplistic claim. Tourism is assumed to contribute to knowledge of foreign places, empathy with other people and tolerance from seeing the 'other'. Where is the evidence for such assertions? The great deal of harm that can be caused by tourism is often overlooked e.g., on the environment, culture, and identity. For instance, hosts' irritation due to tourist behaviour and dress code in Muslim countries are often ignored. Moreover, increased tourism flow is causing severe social stress to local communities. Recent studies have drawn our attention on issues regarding 'overtourism' arguing that tourism has been viewed by hosts in some European destinations as an occupation force, (Hardy, 2019). Can tourism help stability by providing jobs and promote peace and prosperity? Studies have shown that tourism has become a factor in the loss of dignity and self-respect for many in certain countries, e.g., the exploitation of women and children. Thailand and Cambodia in South-East Asia are examples of sex tourism destinations involving exploitation of women and children and human trafficking and smuggling (Sommez, and Wickens, 2008). In the Caribbean islands, tourism is a major cause of social and economic inequalities due to low wages and unequal opportunity for local workers, the high cost of local tourism investment and the exclusion of local traders and crafters from earning tourism income due to the all-inclusive resort complex. The locals of these islands view the foreign investors as being the real beneficiaries of the industry with their excessive duty-free concessions, access to tax incentives, privileges to open hotels and bring in their foreign products while rejecting local alternatives (Bhola-Paul, 2015). Furthermore, there is also evidence that tourism generates conflict. In Barbados, over the decades, there has been several conflicts and disputes over wages (resulting in industrial action), land ownership and access to beaches for locals (Pattulo, 2006). The conflict between locals and the industry are cited in several studies employing the concept of neo-colonialism and will be explored further below.

## **Tourism as Neo-Colonialism**

Neo-colonialism refers to the asymmetrical economic relationships that exists between past colonies in the Caribbean, Africa and Latin America and their former colonial exploiters (Williams, 2012). The term neo-colonialism was coined after World War II and refers to the continuing



economic exploitation of former colonies and their continued dependence on the resources of the developed world. The term proposes that the economic structures of the post-colonial period mirror the same types of economic dependency and exploitation that existed during the period of colonisation. It is claimed that developing countries do not have the resources and expertise to develop large scale tourism; so, developing countries, due to their superior entrepreneurial skills and financial resources, set the agenda for development in most post-colonial territories. In so doing they maintain control over developing countries in ways that ensures their continued dependency on the developed world (Sealy, 2018). The Caribbean consists mainly of countries recovering from post-colonial, post conflict or post -disaster histories. They are thus highly dependent on tourism through foreign investment. International hotel chains such as Marriott, Sheraton, Starwood, Sandals, Best Western, Holiday Inn, Hilton, Renaissance, Radisson, Ritz Carlton, Four Seasons, and several others have invested heavily into Caribbean tourism. Many of these establishments are based in North America or Western Europe. Foreign domination of tourism has contributed to substantial leakage of foreign exchange revenues, social polarization, social exclusion, and environmental degradation. The economic leakages incurred by these resorts are said to be anything from 37% in Jamaica to as much as 90% in the Bahamas (Pattulo, 2006). These leakages occur due to repatriated profits, payments for imported goods, salary repatriation and tax avoidance (Sealy & Mouatt, 2020). Other leakages occur through opportunity costs related to resource damage or deterioration of the natural environment, informal currency exchange transactions, and offshore savings and investment (Meyer, 2006). These leakages ensure that very few benefits from tourism reach the grassroots communities of the host destination. In many circumstances grassroots communities are deliberately excluded from enjoying any benefits that tourism may bring.

Foreign enterprise, through the vertical and horizontal integration of tour operators, travel agencies, airlines and hotels, control and own the major share of the tourism supply chain. Collectively they are responsible for the biggest leakages that occur through the all-inclusive resorts. An all-inclusive resort is a self-contained holiday complex which contains restaurants, shops, and sports facilities. Since all of these components are booked and paid for in advance, tourists do not need to leave the resort while at the destination. 75 to 80% of the vacation expenses of all-inclusive package tours are pre-paid directly to these tour operators, airlines, hotels, and other global corporations headquartered in a foreign country (Kondo, 2008) with very little, if any, of the expenditure reaching the destination. Because tourists remain inside the all-inclusive 'bubble' and rarely venture out into local communities, the per-capita spending of visitors at the destination is considerably lower since there is no need for cash transactions at the destination to buy crafts or vacation essentials. Because tourists are warned not to venture out of the resort due to the 'health and safety' threat there are very few cash transactions at a local level. In Barbados, for instance, several local independent restaurants have been forced to close since visitors now take all of their meals within the all-inclusive resorts. The all-inclusive resort is, thus, another consequence of the colonial legacy, which encourages mass tourism tied to the colonial tradition of high-volume, low value-added, mono exports (Mycoo, 2006). The result is mass visitation but a lower economic multiplier impact within the host community. The Gambia Department for Tourism and Culture, as long ago as the year 2000, banned the sale of all-inclusive hotel packages amid fears it was affecting the local economy (Travel Weekly, 2000). However, this was met by a backlash from British tour operators who threatened to stop selling the destination. These powerful travel oligopolies create 'zero-dollar' tourism economies at the destination where the destination experiences an increase in visitors but a decline in expenditure making the tourism industry unsustainable. The all-inclusive resort concept is so much regarded as an unethical form of tourism that the World Tourism Organisation and the World Committee on Tourism Ethics (WCTE) are currently advocating for the development of ethical and fair models of all-inclusive holidays (Pololikashvili, 2020).

'The legacy of slavery and the plantation society underpins much of the Caribbean's and Africa's contemporary culture, values and economic relationships despite the attainment of political independence' (Sealy, 2018). Foreign economic power plays a major role in development. It determines how tourism can be developed in a region, who benefits from tourism, how tourism

is marketed and how tourists behave (Sealy, 2014). It also contributes to the corruption of native cultures via commodification. Indigenous cultural attributes are purposely modified, objectified, commoditized, and corrupted for European and North American tourists through entertainment comprising fake performances (Wong, 2015). Many of the tour operator brochures portray the image of the Caribbean as a utopia with poor natives. This thematic framework of paradise often mimics colonial stereotypes, despite the fact that the Caribbean is socially, culturally, and environmentally different from the conjured-up images of the tourism brochure. Many hotels dress their staff in fake colonial costumes to promote a notion of black servitude while the brutal hardship and suffering endured by slaves during the colonial era are conveniently omitted from the narratives of hotel entertainment. Other assaults on culture and heritage raise their ugly heads from time to time. A recurring assault on black Caribbean women concerns some hotel managers' opposition to black female workers wearing their natural afro hair or braided or dreadlocked hairstyles calling it unprofessional and requesting that these women chemically straighten their hair. In Barbados, this form of abuse led to a female employee of a south coast hotel being dismissed for wearing a braided hairstyle (Sealy, 2015). The employee later won a case against her employer for wrongful dismissal. Almost every single ethno-cultural group that came to the Caribbean had been forced to acknowledge the superiority of the ruling culture while rejecting, destroying, or devaluing their own creole heritage (Beckles, 1990). As a result, a hegemony of American-European culture in terms of language, fashion, music, food, dress, and lifestyle pervades most of Caribbean society (Sealy & Mouatt, 2019).

Any recent evidence that power plays a major part in development? It has been reported that Facebook founder, Mark Zuckerberg has recently been described a 'Colonialist' by locals for purchasing a new chunk of Hawaii. Forcing locals to sell their land by auction has been described as 'inhumane', the 'face of Neo-Colonialism' (See The Times, 2021). Land acquisition by foreigners through all forms of bullying are not uncommon in the post-colonial or peripheral indigenous societies of the developing world. In Jamaica over 488 miles of coastline had been privatized by 1992 (Goodwin, 2008). The all-inclusive hotels argue that such measures are necessary to ensure that guests are not harassed by 'drug-pushers' and 'beach bums' who are kept 'at bay' by armed security guards (Eriksson, Noble, Pattullo and Barnett, 2009). In the Bahamas, hoteliers delineate specific areas of the beach to ensure that locals cannot utilize the facilities (Thomas, 2016). In Barbados, large tracks of land have also been acquired by foreign developers for exclusive golf courses. Many of these areas were previously places of recreation for locals (Sealy, 2009). Land acquisition by foreigners have created hostilities between hosts and guests sometimes even provoking violence towards tourists and other forms of protests over the decades in several post-colonial islands of the Caribbean.

It is evident that tourism for peace is based on the exploitation of the host destination and its people. Tourists go abroad not to see at all but only to take pictures. Hosts are asked by their guests to 'smile'; hosts have now become 'tourist' attractions. The commercialisation of tourism generates big profits for multinational corporations and the elite. In other words, it benefits just a few. Such arguments display a one-dimensional understanding of tourism (s). There are many types of tourism such as rural tourism, voluntourism, religious tourism, wine tourism, eco-tourism. They are deterministic. Several studies point to the complexities of tourism development arising from the ongoing globalisation. As Kofi Annan (former United Nations Secretary General) reminds us that 'arguing against globalisation' is like arguing against the 'Laws of Gravity'.

### **Tourism in the Context of Globalisation**

Free market economies and technological innovations have given rise to the phenomenon of the transformation of the world into 'a small village' (Butler, & Suntikul, 2013). Borders have become

more porous. Tourism involves transfer of people, portable cultures, and values. Some evidence that certain cultures reassert themselves against the 'perceived' threats of Americanization giving rise to cultural resistance, rather than peace (Bianchi, 2006). Americanization refers to the influence of American culture on other countries outside USA. Some cultures view tourism as 'evil' and counteract it by returning to their traditional religious roots, leading to conflict. Tourism pulls cultures in different, contradictory, and sometimes conflicting ways. Destinations, tragically, have become a popular target for terrorists. In the recent past some popular destinations have experienced tourist deaths due to acts of terrorism such as bombings, shootings, and hostage taking. Several countries proclaim that they are now building their industry on the principles of responsible and sustainable tourism (Duffy, 2001). Responsible tourism is the concept of attempting to make a positive impact on the environment, society, and economy. We are told that this alternative model to development promotes peace and contributes to 'cultural understanding'. Is this Pandora's Box? Tourism provides employment – For whom? It breaks down political and religious barriers – Does it? It promotes international understanding and peace – Does it?

Covid-19 has revealed the potentially deadly consequences. It has changed perceptions of a world without borders. When will the industry recover from the effects of the pandemic? Will travel ever be the same? Will Covid-19 kill global tourism? The decline in international mobility and plummeting global demand has led some to ask whether tourism as we know it may come to an end. Globalisation helped elevate the virus to a worldwide pandemic. Ironically, the virus now seems to threaten global tourism itself. A glimpse of what the future may hold is threatened by new variants of covid-19 e.g., Indian, South African, Brazilian. The scale of devastation in India has been described as a 'catastrophe' and a Covid-19 'holocaust'. There are many unknowns around the industry's recovery and its contribution to achieving the SDGs. Covid-19 vaccination programmes are offering a glimmer of hope that life as we knew it before 2020 could be back within our reach.

Against this dire backdrop, several disputes over vaccines are threatening the industry's recovery and relations between countries. How quickly the world can expect to return to some form of normality? Is the vaccine a 'magic bullet' to end the pandemic? What will post-lockdown tourism would look like? Intergovernmental disputes are threatening the industry's recovery and peace: Borders e.g., Thailand and Myanmar; Latin America countries - protests and tensions; Russia and Ukraine; China and Taiwan. Hit by pandemic, the political landscape is being transformed. It divided countries and world into 'haves' and 'have nots', and rising animosities. Clearly tourism is a vulnerable system of industries and would urgently require a paradigm shift a fundamental change in the post Covid-19 world. The pandemic has been a threat to the industry and all assumptions should be questioned and turned upon the head. Thinking of doing things different has become an urgent priority. The current crisis requires a paradigm shift as we realize that travel is a vulnerable sector. Is the pandemic an existential threat to the industry, and to the world peace? We cannot predict what will happen next but there is an urgent need for global cooperation of all stakeholders. They should be looking ahead at how to minimize the impacts of this pandemic on tourism for peace.

## **Conclusion**

The question whether and how tourism contributes to world peace is much more complex and problematic. Clearly the above analysis has demonstrated that current perspectives of tourism for peace translate into 'cookery-book knowledge'. Complexities of tourism and international relations have been ignored in textual representations. It is hard to prove any causal relationship between tourism and the development of peace. The above analysis has explored several assumptions on tourism and its role in peace and development found in past studies.

The world has been experiencing seismic changes. The recent outbreak of Covid-19 has intensified political, social, and economic inequalities that render some communities more vulnerable than others. The pandemic has created a global socio-economic emergency. Tourism's ability to play a major role in achieving the UN's ambition to transform the world by 2030 is

problematic for a number of reasons including increasing poverty, social inequality, Covid-19 pandemic, and rising global tensions. Tragic consequences will have major impacts on the UN's Agenda for sustainable development and the pledge not to leave anyone behind. Tourism has certainly a responsibility to ensure that hosts and guests are not negatively affected in the current global multidimensional crisis. Covid-19 has shown the fragility of our interconnected world and as such it should be seen as a global problem that demands global solutions. The world is still waiting.

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## **Indigenous Games: Game Changer for Indian Tourism Industry?**

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### **Abstract**

Tourism in India has primarily been associated with culture without much emphasis being assigned to other tourist motivators. Many tourist destinations across the globe have started promoting event-based tourism by repositioning their marketing strategies. India, being a blend of modernity and ancient culture, has a treasure of many indigenous, long forgotten traditional games. Considering the cultural paragon in the form of traditional Indian games, this paper is an effort to gauge the effectiveness of indigenous games as catalysts for enhancing destination competitiveness leading to enriching the tourism resources of India. A survey of 100 domestic tourists visiting Himachal Pradesh (a small North Indian hill state) was conducted by way of administering close ended questionnaire to study their profile and to gauge their opinion regarding traditional game-based events. Respondents were selected randomly. The survey led to the findings that for majority of respondents traditional game-based events appeared as one of the major pull factors for tourists.

**Keywords:** Inventory, Event, Traditional Games, Indigenous, Destination Competitiveness

### **Introduction**

Tourism in India has primarily been associated with culture without much emphasis being assigned to other tourist motivators. While it is a fact that India is extremely rich in her heritage, not much is done to explore the ethnicity, authenticity, rurality, and uniqueness of India as a tourist destination. Harboring one of the oldest civilizations of the world, the country has been a reservoir of art, architecture, handicrafts, and rich textiles since time immemorial. The quaint customs, age old traditions and culture are quite unique and peculiar to this nation. Diving into the ocean of knowledge and picking from the ancient wisdom, people of India had created their own traditional, indigenous games. These were popular not only among children but were also enjoyed in abundance by the adult population. These games were meant to break monotony of daily life of people by rejuvenating them. With the passage of time these unique, brilliant yet simple indigenous games lost their spark and were assigned to oblivion. These games have become obsolete now due to technological advancement. Computer and mobile phone games have replaced the exuberance of indigenous, traditional games.

Although 'nascent tourism' in India has become popular in recent years, the concept of 'tourism' has not been new to India. People have been travelling to this ancient land of wisdom and centre of knowledge since long. However, India has yet to make a strong mark on the global tourism scenario. A careful inventory of tourists' resources needs to be prepared for effective tourism planning and aggressive marketing. Many tourist destinations have started promoting event-based tourism by repositioning their marketing strategies. A number of destinations view the successful hosting of events as a vehicle for growth, and tourism bodies are devoting resources to attracting and supporting major events as part of a broader strategy (Glenn Van Eck, 2018). Events could prove to be catalysts for enhancing image of a destination. Events could strengthen destination attractiveness as has been proved by a number of tourist destinations. Traditional and indigenous games could become an essential constituent of a cultural event hosted by a destination. Realizing the importance of traditional game-based events, this paper is an attempt

to gauge the effectiveness of traditional/indigenous games as catalysts for enhancing destination competitiveness thereby enriching the tourism resources of a country/destination.

## **Review of Literature**

Travel and Tourism have accounted for 10% (8.9 trillion US\$) of the global GDP, 330 million jobs (one in every ten jobs), 6.8% (1.7 trillion US\$) of total global exports and 4.3% (940 billion US\$) of total investments in the year 2019 (WTTC, 2020). The dawn of 2020 has presented an unprecedented situation before the entire world. The COVID-19 outbreak has brought the world to a halt (Barua,2020).Global tourism suffered its worst year on record in 2020, with international arrivals dropping by 74% according to the latest data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Destinations worldwide welcomed 1 billion fewer international arrivals in 2020 than in the previous year, due to fall in demand and widespread travel restrictions. This compares with the 4% decline recorded during the 2009 global economic crisis(WTO, 2020). According to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, the collapse in international travel represents an estimated loss of USD 1.3 trillion in export revenues, more than 11 times the loss recorded during the 2009 global economic crisis (UNWTO, 2020). The crisis has put between 100 and 120 million direct tourism jobs at risk, many of them in small and medium-sized enterprises (WTTC, 2020). Till date international borders are sealed barring a few travel bubbles. People across the globe are constantly living under the grip and stress of COVID-19. It has been postulated by relaxation theory that plays or games are utilized by individuals to recover from stress, work-related activities and to restore energy (relaxation theory) (Levy, 1978). In these times of uncertainties, anxieties, and turmoil, specially created traditional game-based events could function as major pull factors (Getz & Page, 2016) especially in rural and remote destinations that are still considered COVID safe to some extent.

Traditional games could prove to be a bridge between culture and ethos from the ancient world and the modern contemporary world. Like culture these traditional games are very much alive and pulsating with life. These games are simple, easy to learn and are evolved with time. There are certain values inherent in indigenous games. These games may contribute towards character building, honesty, leadership, co-operation etc. These indigenous games are reflection of the leisurely lifestyle and spontaneity that community in the by gone era had enjoyed. Traditional games have been passed down from one generation to the next (Bishop& Curtis, 2001).Unfortunately, these fun games of bygone era have started to disappear from the lives of common men as other activities have gradually replaced these games. Besides providing a glimpse into the lives of people and identifying with the local culture to the extent that these become manifestations of native culture (Akbari, et al., 2009; Lavega, 2006, Dharmamulya, 2006; Sedyawati, 1999), these traditional games also portray human culture and human behaviour.

Many countries are now making a conscious effort to revive their long forgotten indigenous games. Resumption and promotion of indigenous games would gain more relevance in the wake of on-going COVID crisis. Europe has started an organized and formal effort for revival and promotion of traditional/indigenous games. European Traditional Sports and Games Association (ETSGA) has been founded for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting traditional sports and games (TSG). European Commission's Agenda in 2013 has put forward the case of TSG as an alternative to modern sports and integral part of the national, European, and global cultures (AEJEST, 2012). UNESCO addressed TSG in their resolutions as cultural phenomenon and cultural heritage, closely linked to issues related to cultural diversity (Lavega, 2006). The call for proposals launched by the European Commission in spring 2014, entitled 'Promoting European Traditional Sports and Games', recognises UNESCO's statement that 'traditional sports and games are part of the intangible heritage and a symbol of the cultural diversity of our societies. They are also an efficient means to convey values of solidarity, diversity, inclusiveness, and cultural awareness' (UNESCO, 2008).



Australia has also made earnest efforts to preserve and popularize its traditional games among the masses. Like India, Australia also has a rich and unique diversity of indigenous games and fun pastime activities. Some indigenous games have recently been documented (e.g., kee'an, tarnabai, kalq) and efforts are being made to persuade people to play and appreciate them and the indigenous culture (Dixon, 2008) by way of making these games an integral part of special events created for tourists. Events are temporary occurrences, either planned or unplanned, and they usually have a finite length which is normally fixed or publicized for planned events (Getz, 1997). Successful planning of events cannot be done without the support and active involvement of native community. Events should be matched with the aspirations, objectives, and opinions of community (Zhou, 2006) as it would enhance the spectators' experience and contribute to the location's overall attractiveness as an event tourism destination (Madrigal, 1995).

Tourism can contribute to host communities in many ways. It is important to keep governments/organizer's aims and motivation, and residents' perceptions in harmony with each other (Zhou, 2006). Tourism enriches the lives of community socially, economically and it also aids in conserving environment if planned carefully. Special events are created all across the globe for the purpose of attracting tourists and increasing their duration of stay. Creating and promoting events have been thought of as measures of economic development and destination marketing and also as means to enhance destination attractiveness amongst the visitors. The term 'event tourism' was explained by Getz in 1989. Conceptualized as encompassing festivals and events, event tourism is understood to be at the nexus of tourism and event studies (Getz 2008: 406). Janiskee (1980:97) described events as pleasurable activities and entertainment that celebrate some concept, happening or fact. These celebrations often matched the activities of the agrarian societies of yesteryears (Rolfe, 1992). Events and festivals were meant to celebrate with the entire community with a specific period set aside for the celebrations. These events and festivals have strengthened the age-old rituals and have provided a robust platform to revive and relive the long existed cultural values, knowledge, and practices by way of recreation and fun. As people in all cultures recognise the need for community creativity and celebrations (Turner, 1982), the same could be implemented in promoting traditional games as events among tourists. Tourists seek unique and authentic travel experience in terms of nature, history, events, and culture (Craik, 1995). Events are created attractions designed to successfully develop and promote a destination (Šušić & Dordević, 2011). Events could be planned and promoted as activities reflecting rich cultural heritage of destinations visited. Events could be described as special rites, rituals, presentations, performance, or celebration which is continuously planned and created in order to mark special events and/or to achieve special social, cultural, or corporate aims and targets (Bowdin et al., 2006). Events are organized around a pre-conceived, and perceived concept, which could be customized to achieve the aims and objectives of organizing that event (Jayaswal, 2008). Well planned and organized events in appealing locations and at convenient times would have the potential to emerge as rich tourist resources as more people would visit tourist destinations to enjoy these events (Bjeljac et al., 2013). Traditional games could be packaged and promoted as special events among the tourists and visitors.

It has been observed that globalization has created paradoxes. In a bid to adapt to global culture people have severed ties with their roots and have bartered complexities with the simple joys of lives. These traditional games could be promoted and marketed to augment the existing tourism products of a particular destination. This could also be used as USP (Unique selling proposition) of a tourist destination, differentiating it from the other similar tourists' destinations. Contemporary tourists seek authenticity in their travels and are also desirous of actively experiencing culture of destinations visited (Agarwal & Brunt, 2006). Traditional games are a country's cultural wealth (Sedyawati, 1999). Traditional games/indigenous games could be used as a very effective programming tool for enhancing the tourist appeal of a destination. These traditional/indigenous games could be promoted as an integral part of cultural festivals/events by the authorities and communities. These events could be categorized based on their amplitude:

a 'home-grown' festival, a 'tourist-tempter' festival and a third category of 'big-bang' festival (O'Sullivan & Jackson, 2002). 'A 'home-grown' festival is essentially small scale, bottom-up and run by one or more volunteers for the benefit of the locality. A 'tourist-tempter' festival is one that is aimed specifically at attracting visitors to stimulate local economic development. A 'big-bang' festival is essentially a marketing tool that promotes a myriad of related activities over a defined geographical area (D. O'Sullivan & M. Jackson, 2002:331). Based on the above categorization, indigenous games could be turned into a 'tourist-tempter' festival and with some more collaborative efforts of community and authorities; this could be converted into a 'big-bang' festival. Some of these indigenous games could even be promoted as hallmark events. Hallmark events are the events which are the best events of a destination and are embedded in its culture and customs. These recurring events become so much associated with the destination that they become essential part of the image and branding (Getz et al, 2012). Events could prove to be beneficial for the economy, culture, community, and tourism of the host destinations. These events have the potential to create employment avenues for the host community (Yolal, Cetinel & Uysal, 2009). If promoted in a well-planned manner these traditional games-based events could prove to be the much-desired key to attracting and holding new tourists and also could emerge as a tool to iron out the seasonality in tourists' demand (Getz, 1997; Ziakas & Costa, 2011). The same could be elucidated from the success story of Kerala's Snake Boat Race Events. Snake Boat Race of Kerala or The Nehru Trophy Boat Race or Vallam Kali (literally boat game or a form of canoe racing) is a home-grown event, which has become hugely popular among tourists and locals alike. The event is named after the hooded Cobra shape of the boats. Celebrated during the spring times on the backwaters of Alappuzha, Kerala, the event is participated by a large number of domestic and international tourists alike. To give a boost to monsoon tourism in Kerala, tourism department of Kerala planned to kick-start its Champion's Boat League (CBL) conceived on the IPL (Indian Premium League) format in the year 2019. The highlight of this event was that weekend tourists coming to Kerala during monsoons would be able to witness 'Champions' Boat Race' in any of Kerala's backwaters. CBL has been planned to cash on the popularity of Snake Boat Races of Kerala. Data has revealed that these events became immensely popular with tourists, besides providing tourists' opportunity to actively participate and experience the native culture. Such events could emerge as important tourists' pull factors in post COVID tourism scenario and also could give a much-needed push to local economy (Manju, V. 2019). From boat races to martial art of warriors, India has a lot to offer to tourists in terms of traditional games.

There is an abundance of traditional games being played in Himachal Pradesh having potential to be rich tourism resources. Every nook and corner of the State presents a cultural collage. Thoda is a martial art from Himachal Pradesh, dating back to the days of the Mahabharata. The sport tests the contestants' dexterity in archery. Players shoot arrows, with a round piece of wood fitted to the head of the arrow to reduce its wounding ability. The game is normally held on Baisakhi (month of April). The archers, separated by about 10 metres in a marked area, aim their arrows to hit an opposing team member's legs below the knee while the majority of the crowd plays martial music in the background and dance with their sword (<https://sportscafe.in/sports/articles/2015/nov/11/traditional-sports-of-india>). There is a unique stone game festival being organized close to Shimla, the capital of Himachal Pradesh. It is said that the erstwhile queen of Dhama (place close to Shimla) sacrificed herself to end the practice of human sacrifice prevalent in the area and asked people to start a fair in which people of two clans will throw stones at the sky and continue until someone is hit, and the blood of that person would be then offered to the goddess. Since then, this fair has been celebrated here for centuries. It is believed to be more than 400 years old fair. (<https://www.firstpost.com/india/centuries-old-tradition-of-stone-pelting-marked-in-himachal-pradeshs-dhama-village-on-the-day-after-diwali-5523601.html>).

## **Research Methodology**

From the review of literature, it emerged that traditional or indigenous games could contribute towards enriching the tourists' experience and could prove to be instrumental in creating awareness among tourists about native culture and lifestyle. Considering the rich cultural tourism resources of the state of Himachal (a small North Indian hill state), this paper is an attempt to find out the awareness about indigenous game-based events amongst the tourists visiting the State and also to investigate their willingness and keenness to experience such events. With these objectives the exploratory study attempts to answer the following research questions which have been framed after reviewing the existing literature.

R.Q. 1. What is the awareness level of tourists on indigenous game-based events in Himachal Pradesh?

R.Q. 2. How willing the tourists would be to experience such events in the State?

To find out the awareness level of tourists about traditional game-based events in Himachal and also to evaluate their willingness to participate in such events, a sample of 100 tourists visiting the study area i.e., Shimla (India) was selected on random basis. They were administered using a close ended questionnaire. Shimla being the capital of Himachal Pradesh was selected to collect the sample as the city tops in tourist arrival figures (both domestic and international tourists) in the State. To avoid response biases, only one person was selected randomly in each family; the participant was then asked to fill the questionnaire. Owing to the prevailing COVID-19 conditions resulting in international travel restrictions, only 100 domestic tourists could be contacted. In what follows the paper presents and discusses the study's findings.

## **Findings and Discussion**

It is evident from the demographic profile (Section A) of the respondents that 45% tourists visiting Shimla, belonged to less than 25 years of age group followed by 30% domestic tourists belonging to the age group of 25-40 years, whereas 25% belonged to above 40 years age group and majority of them were working in private set up. It was also evident from the findings that 45% tourists were from the income group of 30000-40000(5000\$ and above), whereas 36% belonged to 40000 and above income bracket. It can be deduced from the findings that tourists visiting Himachal Pradesh, generally belong to the middle-income group. For majority of travellers, the purpose of their visit had been holiday, rest, and relaxation. Majority of the tourists had no inkling about cultural diversity of the State, which may be attributed to the fact that no substantial efforts have been made to promote cultural tourism. It is apparent from the survey that people visiting Himachal Pradesh generally travel with their families (51%). This trend of travelling with families has picked up post-COVID, as revealed by tourists through interviews. For only 27% of respondents, it was their first visit to Shimla (Himachal Pradesh), whereas the rest 73% were enjoying their repeat visits to the State. It was observed that during this on-going COVID crisis, social media/ electronic media and travel websites have emerged as the major influencing factors (for 57% respondents) for travel. It has also been noticed that for majority of respondents, length of stay at Shimla, Himachal Pradesh has not been more than 3 days. This may be attributed to the fact that the State has not made any substantial efforts to increase the length of stay of tourists by planning and creating tourists'-oriented events. State has been banking upon the climate and natural beauty that it has been bestowed naturally. This is further substantiated by the fact that more than 60% tourists visiting Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, have been motivated by good climate and scenic beauty. For tourists Himachal Pradesh is synonymous with natural beauty and good climate. Tourists visiting the state of Himachal Pradesh prefer to stay in medium priced or budget accommodations. They are also willing to experiment staying in home stays. This is obvious from the findings as more than 80% respondents preferred to stay in such accommodations. Tourists appeared to be desirous of getting first-hand experience of the local

hospitality and ethnic culture by staying with the community. This is also deduced from the fact that more than 50% respondents visiting Himachal Pradesh wished to explore off beat and unexplored places situated away from popular tourists' destinations.

### Section A--Social demographic profile of domestic tourists visiting Shimla

Variables	Categories	Number	%	
Age	Below 25	45	45	
	25- 40	30	30	
	Above 40	25	25	
Occupation	Public Sector	20	20	
	Private Sector	35	35	
	Student	30	30	
	Any Other	15	15	
Monthly Income	Below 500 US\$	10000-20000	09	09
	500-1000 US\$	20000-30000	10	10
	1000-5000US\$	30000-40000	45	45
	5000 US\$ and above	40000 and above	36	36
Purpose of Visit	Business & Official		07	07
	Education		13	13
	Sports and Events		0	0
	Visiting Friends and Relatives		04	04
	Holiday/ Relaxation		64	64
	Health		0	0
	Religious		12	12
Are you travelling as	Single/Independent		22	22
	Couple		08	08
	Family		51	51
	Group		19	19
It is your	1 <sup>st</sup> Visit		27	27
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Visit		23	23
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Visit		27	27
	More than 3 <sup>rd</sup>		23	23
Who has influenced you to visit this State	Tourist Offices		03	03
	Travel Agents		05	05
	Friends & Relatives		35	35
	Travel Guides		0	0
	Websites/Social Media		45	45
	Electronic Media		12	12
Your length of stay in the State	1-3 days		64	64
	4-5 days		19	19
	6-10 days		11	11
	More than 10 days		06	06

What has motivated you to visit the State	Culture/heritage	04	04
	Good Climate/Scenic Beauty	64	64
	Adventure	02	02
	Buddhism	01	01
	Inexpensive Holiday	04	04
	Proximity/Accessibility	25	25
	Any Other (Kindly specify)	0	0
Type of accommodation preferred by you during your stay in the State	Luxury Hotels	05	05
	Medium Priced Hotels	35	35
	Budget Hotels	09	09
	Rest Houses/Guest Houses	20	20
	Friends & Relatives	04	04
	Home Stays	27	27
	Any Other (Kindly specify)	0	0
Your choice of destination	Very wellknown destination	21	21
	Moderately known destination	24	24
	Unexplored/offbeat destinations	55	55
	Any Other	0	0
Your familiarity with traditional games/ sports being played in Himachal Pradesh	Yes	24	24
	No	76	76
Your familiarity with any traditional games/ sports based events in Himachal Pradesh	Yes	15	15
	No	85	85

The state of Himachal Pradesh is culturally extremely rich but unfortunately cultural aspects of the State are very less explored. This is obvious from the findings that more than 80% of tourists visiting the State were not familiar with the concept of traditional games and were also unaware of the indigenous games being played or any events based on such games in Himachal Pradesh, this despite the fact that Himachal Pradesh boasts of plethora of cultural activities. This is also obvious from the findings that very few respondents were familiar with the cultural plenteousness of the State. The same is reflected in the traditional games that are very little explored. These games are played in abundance in every nook and corner of the State having potential to be attractive tourists' resource.

**Section B—Experience Assessment of tourists on Traditional Game Based Events**

Sr. No.	Opinion Statements	Responses		
		Agree	Disagree	Can't Say
1	Traditional Game Based Events reflect culture and lifestyle of native community. (RQ1)	86	02	12
2.	Your reasons for participating in traditional game-based event would be to know native's lifestyle and to establish a strong bond with the locals. (RQ2)	86	02	12
3.	Traditional game-based events prove beneficial for the local economy and in augmenting the local infrastructure (RQ1)	74	07	19
4	You would want to schedule tour trip to coincide with traditional game-based event (RQ2)	95	0	05
5.	You would like to visit the State again to experience traditional game-based events. (RQ2)	92	06	02
6.	You would recommend the State to others on account of indigenous game-based events. (RQ2)	95	02	03

It is evident from the experience assessment (Section B) of domestic tourists on traditional game-based events that majority of tourists visiting the State were familiar with the indigenous games as more than 85% respondents agreed that traditional game-based events reflect culture and lifestyle of native community. Tourists showed their inclination to experience this participative form of tourism, it may be deduced from the fact that majority of respondents (86%) were desirous of experiencing natives' lifestyle and culture by playing their indigenous games. Native community would be an integral constituent and the most important stake holder of traditional game-based events therefore such events could prove beneficial for the local economy and also in augmenting the local infrastructure. This is opined by 74% of the respondents visiting the State. Traditional game-based events could emerge as major attraction as 95% of domestic tourists were willing to schedule their trip to coincide with traditional game-based events. More than 90% respondents wanted to visit the state again to experience such events. Interviews with the tourists revealed that they perceived traditional game-based events as events reflecting native culture, offering fun and frolic, entertainment along with an opportunity to mingle with locals and experiencing native culture. 95% tourists were willing to recommend the State to others on account of such game-based events. It is apparent from the statements of tourists that they would be keen to experience traditional game-based events as this would give them an opportunity not only to experience natives' culture but also give them a chance to develop a strong connection with the destination visited.

### Section C Opinion Survey on General Perception on Indigenous Games Based Events

Sr. No.	Opinion Statements	Responses		
		Agree	Disagree	Can't Say
1	Indigenous game-based event has the potential to become major tourism motivator on their own	65	0	35
2	Tourist events should include indigenous games as major attraction	90	02	08
3	Such events connect tourists with the hosts more strongly	82	0	18
4	Traditional game-based events involve active participation of tourists	79	11	10
5	Participating in indigenous games provides a very unique and authentic experience	80	12	08
6	Traditional game-based events inculcate sense of pride among local people on account of guests showing interest and participating in their culture and ways of life.	73	10	17
7	Traditional games help in showcasing and preserving the local heritage	88	0	12
8	Traditional games-based events can contribute to breaking seasonality factor	71	22	07
9	Indigenous game-based events can highlight the uniqueness of a destination,	93	0	07

Tourists surveyed (65%) have agreed to the fact that traditional game-based events can prove to be significant tourists' influencer. It has emerged from the opinion survey (Section C) of tourists that traditional game-based events could emerge as the main pull factor for tourists (90%) provided these are developed and promoted in a well-planned manner. By participating in such events tourists (82%) were hoping to establish a much stronger bond with the hosts. Contemporary tourists wish to indulge in participative form of tourism rather than being passive observant of tourism activities. The fact that traditional game-based events involve active participation of tourists is understood by majority of respondents as 79% have agreed to this. Such game-based events could also provide a unique and authentic experience to tourists (80%). Majority of the respondents (73%) were of the firm belief that such events inculcate a sense of pride among local people for their cultural heritage. It is evident from the opinion survey of tourists that such game-based events help in showcasing and preserving native culture (88%), also such events could prove to be instrumental in ironing out the seasonality factor (71%). More than 90% tourists have agreed to this statement that traditional game-based events could help in distinguishing one destination from the others by way of highlighting cultural uniqueness of destinations. It has been observed that majority of tourism destinations appear to be imitations of one another and are very easily substitutable. Cultural homogenization (Ritzer, G.1993) has made it impossible for destinations to retain their uniqueness. In such a global scenario, indigenous games could prove to be a game changer for tourist industry if these are protected and promoted as part of cultural events. Interviews with tourists also revealed that celebrating such

events may infuse a new lease of life in the COVID-torn tourism industry besides proving as stress busters for tourists.

## Conclusion

If revived and promoted, traditional games could prove to be beneficial not only for children but also for society at large. These games require creativity, imagination, social skills, camaraderie, and physical strength. Indigenous games are combination of fun, frolic, and learning, knowledge, and skill along with mental and physical strength. Traditional games are called so because these have been played from time immemorial, so much so as to become part of habit or customs of native population. The soul of the traditional games is still intact and has not been diluted by modernity. A few countries/destinations have successfully integrated traditional games/sport to be part of their 'hallmark events' while some others could be assimilated with an event for boosting the existing tourism products. Literal meaning of 'hallmark' is a typical characteristic of a thing or person, or a symbol of quality or authenticity differentiating some goods from others. It is apparent from the responses of tourists that they would eagerly participate in these games and get a first-hand authentic experience of the native culture and celebrations as till date these traditional games have not lost their authentic charm, fun, energy, and innocence, portraying the true essence of culture.

Earlier, there was a "society of deficiencies" in which with one's imagination, creativity, and available resources one had to produce own playful material, conquering spaces of next surroundings, in modern world there exists the opposite, a "society of abundance" in which at every turn one is encouraged to consume (Nasser et al, 2007). These indigenous games do not require expensive gears as these have always been games of the masses. Bestowed with the qualities of bridging generations these games also lead towards building life skills through simple and basic ways. These indigenous games could prove to be the most efficient and interesting tool to pass on heritage. Native communities would be instilled with a sense of pride for their heritage and would also make efforts to preserve these indigenous games as tourists are the most likely to enjoy the events having traditional games as a part of festivities. In the light of COVID-19 impacts this might be the right time to connect to the roots and revisit our simple and stress-free past by packaging and promoting the *joie de vivre* of the era gone by. This would provide a real glimpse to tourists of our heritage and cultural treasures and also aid in preserving our culture through special events. Tourism should be exploited as a resource for community and not community as a resource for tourism (Laws et.al, 2011). Such traditional game-based events are expected to benefit community the most and community undoubtedly has to be the most important tourism stakeholder.

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**ENHANCING THE HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY' S ACTIVE COLLABORATION  
WITH SCHOOLS TO MANAGE EMPLOYEE TURNOVER RATE**

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**Abstract**

This research empirically investigates collaboration between the Hospitality and Tourism industry and schools in career orientation delivery for 1<sup>st</sup>-year students that manage to survive under the COVID-19 pandemic. This study applied the thematic analysis method to analyse qualitative data from a set of texts, such as this study's interview transcript. The findings also explore the benefits to stakeholders, including career orientation and talent attraction management, personnel staffing in the Hospitality and Tourism industry, career orientation and students' perceptions and expectations for their future occupations, career orientation, and lecturers' perception of self-study development. This research fills the literature gap among the above relationships and points out the benefits in the Hospitality and Tourism industry and school collaborations to overcome difficulties during the COVID-19 epidemic in Vietnam.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Vietnam Hospitality and Tourism, Career Orientation, Self-development, Career Perceptions and Expectations, Talent Attraction Management

**Introduction**

Before the pandemic, International Tourism growth at well-known destinations has increased other sectors' development, including education. However, it has led to the skilled labour shortage, lack of experienced teaching staff, and an unfitting curriculum (Nguyen & Chaisawat, 2011). Further, it is more challenging to recruit the right people for the right jobs and attract talents than ever for employers (Chapman et al., 2005). It seems like the war of attracting and retaining talent is never-ending (Guthridge et al., 2008). Talent management is the survival and essential issue in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry (Deery & Jago, 2015). Although a large body of research has discussed retaining and managing talents in the hospitality and tourism sector for employees, employers (Allen, Bryant, & Vardaman, 2018; Ashton & Morton, 2005; D'Annunzio-Green, 2008). However, talent attraction through education activities has not been concerned appropriately. There is some research on students' career orientation (Hodgkinson, Innes, & Hodgkinson, 2001; Zhou, Smith, & Spinelli, 1999) and some research on designing a suitable tourism curriculum (Lewis, 2009; Tribe, 2001; Tribe, 2009). However, there is less connection between Career Orientation and curriculum design for first-year students instead of mentioning graduates who performed a specific internship during the first year of their occupations, suggesting a smoother transition to the employment market (Margaryan et al., 2020). A careful consideration among career orientation and its relationship affecting stakeholders is lacking (e.g., Career Orientation and Talent Attraction Management in Hospitality and Tourism industry. Career Orientation affects students' perceptions and expectations for the future career; career Orientation role in teaching at Hospitality and Tourism school for 1st-year students.

A similar situation of recruiting the right people for the right jobs and attracting talents also occurred to respond to crises and their impact on hospitality and tourism industry employment. Thereby, we could also see fluidity, uncertainty magnify and exacerbate the industry's precarious nature from ongoing change during the COVID-19 epidemic (Baum et al., 2020). The Vietnam

Hospitality and Tourism industry has no income and has to pay for staff salaries and facility fees, which pushes the operation cost very high, causing some hotels to shut down and lay off people temporarily; some hotels are on sale and leaseback (Bui Thu, 2020). The beginning outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Vietnam was on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, and the second is on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020. During this period, the hospitality and tourism industry is almost jumpy. After the first pandemic wave, it is in the recovery period; then, the second wave has knocked it down yet again. Accordingly, thousands of people working in the hospitality and tourism industry fall into unemployment (VnExpress, 2020a). Whereas before the epidemic, Vietnam was honoured with prestigious prizes like "Asia's Best Destination," "The world's leading heritage destination in 2019," and Vietnam is on the list of countries with the highest workforce in the travel and tourism industry worldwide in 2019 (Statista.com, 2020). Nevertheless, the accommodation and catering services were most heavily impacted during the pandemic, with significantly 740,000 jobs affected. (VnExpress, 2020b). However, the hospitality and tourism majors are still among the industries attracting many students to enrol in Vietnam (T.D.V, 2020). Under this situation, this paper aims to determine:

- How do the Vietnamese hospitality and tourism industry, schools, students, and faculties deal with the Career Orientation to respond to crises they face under COVID-19?
- What are the benefits that Career Orientation delivery collaborations bring to stakeholders during COVID-19? (to industry, students, faculties)
- Would the the1st-year students in hospitality and tourism majors worry about their future occupations during the pandemic?
- Is career orientation compulsory in the curriculum due to the hospitality and tourism industry being fluidity and uncertain?

In this study, the researchers explored research data based on the stakeholders' experiences among industry representative (human resource managers, department directors), students, faculties in the delivery of "Career orientation (CO)" in the academic year 2018 – 2019 students (first-year students) at hospitality and tourism schools in Vietnam before and during COVID-19. This research undertook a qualitative analysis to identify similarities and differences in stakeholders' experiences. It also provides a theoretical framework that could find better evidence to answer the research questions above.

## **Literature Review**

The study will review the literature regarding Career Orientation and its benefits to stakeholders to understand why Career orientation could help stakeholders survive during the pandemic.

### **1. Hospitality and Tourism Industry and Schools Collaborations**

There have been many career-oriented activities for students between the hospitality and tourism industry and schools, such as internships, field trips, training programs, or job fairs. A tourism internship could help students clarify their career intentions and explicit attitudes to their future professionals (Busby, 2003).

Some students expect that internship is their probationary period (Beggs et al., 2018). Others thought the tourism agency should provide orientation and training programs for interns, professional development opportunities, and full-time jobs after the internship (Beggs, 2008). Internships create opportunities for students to acquire practical skills, workplace experience,

improve students' professional value, develop personal maturity, and learn from their life experiences (Busby & Gibson, 2010).

Students could better understand the knowledge in class during field trips (Goh & Ritchie, 2011). A field trip is also a study trip to help students with interdisciplinary understanding through participatory learning experience; therefore, students can understand and orient better for their future careers (Zhang & Xiong, 2017).

For the training programme, the collaboration between industry professionals and lecturers in delivering some subjects in the tourism curriculum will help clarify vague knowledge that learners may be unsure to understand (Cooper & Shepherd, 1997). Cuffy, Tribe, & Airey (2012) stated that it is necessary to develop a lifelong approach in tourism education and training to develop student readiness.

Employers could promote their available positions in job fairs to target students of different positions in an organization (Milman & Whitney, 2014). Hospitality and tourism students choose careers by influences employers' branding; Employers must build a solid reputation, provide remuneration policies transparently or refer the current employees to share their experiences to attract potential candidates (Lin et al., 2018).

However, the above career-oriented activities are almost designed for final year students but not yet considered a subject to help first-year students choose the proper specifications and future careers. A hospitality and tourism curriculum should include a future career orientation subject to guide students and build their future with positive thoughts and breakthrough developments. (Ring et al., 2009).

## **2. Career Orientation and Students' Perceptions and Expectations of Future Occupations**

Career orientation affects the career development of young students (Wood et al., 1985) who are growing up in a digital world with their career-oriented (Black, 2010). Career orientation affects students' GPA at different academy periods (McKenzie & Schweitzer, 2001). This paper will collect data from first-year degree students born in 2000, the last generation of Y (Eisner, 2005), also referred to as the internet. The sharpness, intellectual or technical ability, and know-how to apply technology in real life are tremendous advantages of the Y generation. Especially in the digital age, their flexibility and acumen will be further promoted (Black, 2010). The reason to choose this generation to research because they have had a whole year to communicate with hospitality and tourism industry representatives and faculties in Career Orientation activities while experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic. Thereby, they had time to consider whether their choices for this industry are proper.

Gen Y's hospitality and tourism industry's perceptions are low pay and long and unusual hours with fixed schedules (Richardson & Thomas, 2012). At the same time, Generation Y prefers to do an exciting job that can earn money and spend more time outside the office or work-life balance and autonomy at work (Szamosi, 2006). Y generation lacks an attachment to organizations and frequently switches jobs within their industry (Ayres, 2006).

Martin (2005), who calls this generation Y-ers, describes the main characteristics of Y Generation towards their careers as follows: "they are responsible for their work, seek flexibility and new experience, they are not interested in the lifelong job and frequently change careers several times during their working life. Y-ers respect managers who empower staff and are honest with

employees. They seek equality in the workplace, reasonable wages, and training opportunities (Morton, 2002). In general, Generation Y has high expectations of employers in salary policy, working environment conditions, promotion opportunities, and technology advancement (Oliver, 2013).

Gen Y students could need career advice and orientation right from the first - year to choose the right major for future occupations with such characteristics, perceptions, and expectations of works. However, very few studies have mentioned career orientation as a necessary subject for first-year degree students and its benefits while we usually hear about orientation in companies or high school training programs in Vietnam. In contrast, Employers will inevitably need to adjust to the new reality of having five generations of staffers working together and understand future staff desire, perception, and expectation are necessary (Meister, 2020).

### 3. A Connected Curriculum

A curriculum is connected if it shows a multidimensional relationship among academics, students, and the real world (Fung, 2018). The connection can be no less than twelve dimensions of connectedness (Please see table 1).

**Table 1:** A Connected Curriculum for Higher Education

<b>A Connected Curriculum for Higher Education</b>	
<b>1</b>	Between disciplines;
<b>2</b>	Between the academy and the wider world;
<b>3</b>	Between research and teaching;
<b>4</b>	Between theory and practice;
<b>5</b>	Between the student and teacher/lecturer/professor;
<b>6</b>	Between the student in her/his interior being – and in his/her being in the wider world;
<b>7</b>	Between the student and other students;
<b>8</b>	Between the student and her/his disciplines – that is, being authentically and intimately connected epistemologically and ontologically;
<b>9</b>	Between the various components of the curriculum;
<b>10</b>	Between the student's own multiple understandings of and perspectives on the world;
<b>11</b>	Between different areas – or components – of the complex organization that constitutes the university;
<b>12</b>	Between different aspects of the wider society. Especially those associated with society's learning processes.”

*Note.* (Fung, 2018)

Twelve dimensions of connectedness are detail discussed in some pieces of research. The benefits of listening to student voices in curriculum adjustments brought to school some tangible benefits such as the average score improved, the pass rate was maintained afterward, and improved interaction between students and teachers relating to curriculum development (Brooman et al., 2015).

A curriculum is called cohesion in hospitality and tourism when it raises and addressed social issues for stakeholders. For example, to design a curriculum better, social employment issues should be mentioned as objective measurements (Tribe, 2001). The society trend in hospitality and tourism is sustainable development, a hospitality and tourism curriculum concept, affecting students' perceptions (G. Busby, 2009). Globalization affects the hospitality and tourism economy

and education. The hospitality and tourism schools should meet globalization requirements in curriculum designing for learners with five steps: mission, aims, objectives, skills, knowledge, knowledge and skill matrix, course development, evaluation techniques (Smith & Cooper, 2000).

The COVID-19 impacts on tourism entrepreneurs create further stresses on tourism education. Apart from the virtualization of online delivery and learning processes, tourism students and graduates have to discuss their industry internships, future career paths. Tourism education is now facing changing its curriculum, reduce students' admissions, lack government sponsorship, and research funding (Sigala, 2020). The following section explores the questions presented above about career orientation and stakeholders' benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Methodology

The researchers divided two periods before and during the second wave COVID-19 to conduct lengthy, semi-structured interviews with industries' representatives, students, and lecturers to understand how career orientation can support stakeholders during the pandemic. We conducted data collection from March 2020 to Sep 2020, the researchers applied the traditional face-to-face and online interviews, and each interview lasted about 30–45 minutes.

The interviewees will have time to get familiar with the topic in advance. Each interview was recorded and transcribed. Recording interviews allow researchers to focus on the content of interviews and then ask questions or clarify where it is essential to avoid distraction during interviews due to researchers' notetaking ((Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Data analysis is a process of two steps: “The first step dealt with single interview transcripts; the second step is a content analysis process of themes from the research questions (Please see table 2).

**Table 2:** Sample Interview Questions for stakeholders

Sample Interview Questions FOR STAKEHOLDERS	
Groups	Questions
Industry	1. How have you responded to this challenging period in the career orientation application? 2. What have you done for your personnel staffing with 1st-year students?
	1. What are the benefits achieved when applying career orientation to cope with obstacles?
Lecturers	(1) What are the benefits of delivering career orientation for first-year students during this challenging period? (2) What do you want to accomplish better?
Students	(1) What is your perception of a future career during the pandemic? (2) What is your most desirable company?

### 1. Participants

This study explored the stakeholders' experiences in the mutual collaboration of delivery career orientation for the academic year 2018 to 2019 for first-year students at hospitality and tourism schools in Vietnam. Hays (1982) suggested 10 – 30 participants or Belle (2008) suggested that 12 participants are enough for interviews.

However, this research will conduct qualitative research via interviews with no predetermined number of participants. The interviews will be stopped when the collected interview data is saturated, which means no new information or themes appear in the interview. The saturation progress usually occurred within the first twelve interviews, and essential elements for meta themes were performed as early as six interviews (Guest et al., 2006).

## 2. Data collection and analysis

Qualitative techniques allow researchers to constitute and analyze qualitative databases. There are some techniques such as analysis of interview transcripts (Burnatd, 1991), photographs (MacKay & Couldwell, 2004), multimedia (Viken, 2006), or internet websites (Davidson & Yu, 2008). This research includes open-ended questions to explain the phenomenon under study, and the data comes from interview transcripts. Focus group interviews were chosen to collect data due to their benefits on the rich source of information (McLafferty, 2004).

The interviewer number was over 56 people from industry representatives, faculties, and students who have the same background and collaborated in joint career-oriented cooperation programs. However, during the interview, the data collection was saturated at 14 students, 10 Industry professionals, and 12 lecturers. All interviewees were categorized to their occupation titles as 12 lecturers (LR) are LR1- LR12; 14 students (ST) are ST1 - ST14; 10 Industry professionals (PR) are PR1 - PR10 (Please see table 3)

**Table 3:** Demographic profile of interviewees for qualitative interview

<b>Table 3: Demographic profile of interviewees for qualitative interview</b>			
<b>Interviewee categories</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Interviewee features</b>	<b>No of interviewee</b>
<b>PR 1 - PR 10</b>	Industry professionals	Travel agency	10
<b>LR 1 - LR 12</b>	Lecturer	Travel and tourism school	12
<b>ST 1 - ST 14</b>	Students	Travel and tourism school	14

The researchers used the Thematic analysis method to analyse qualitative data, which is usually utilized in a set of texts, e.g., interview transcripts, to identify, analyse, and interpret patterns of meaning or "themes" within qualitative data. Three-step applied to conduct the thematic analysis in this study, including "Familiarization," is the first step by getting a thorough overview of all the data collected, reading through the text, and taking initial notes before analysing individual items. The second step is "Coding," which means highlighting text sections, usually phrases, or sentences, and coming up with stenography labels or "codes" to describe their content. The third step is "Generating themes" by looking over the codes created, identifying patterns among them, and coming up with themes. The fourth step is "Reviewing themes," which is needed to ensure all themes are valuable and accurate representations of the data. If the researcher encounters themes, they could be split up, combined, discarded, or created new ones: whatever makes them more valuable and accurate (Braun & Clarke, 2012) (please see table 4).



**Table 4:** Results of thematic analysis

<b>Results of thematic analysis</b>		
<b>Stakeholders Main themes</b>	<b>Coding</b>	<b>Coding transcript</b>
<b>Industry</b>		
<b>Personnel Staffing</b>	Employment-based adjustment (flexible)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The way of thinking about hiring experienced personnel has changed. We also have the responsibility to train potential personnel we are seeking for future hiring, and 1st-year students are the potential ones that we would like to train for future recruitment after the pandemic ended.</li> <li>• We work with the school to share experiences, support hospitality, and travel skill training and nurture talent for the post-COVID-19 period.</li> <li>• We assigned 1st-year students to practice their skills alternately at our company. We both have low-season employees on duty while reducing our payroll and insurance costs.</li> <li>• The hotel business is in a challenging period. Some key personnel also think of switching positions and apply to other firms. Working with schools in CO will create opportunities to interact with a young and passionate team. We assist schools in training at the site to help 1st-students improve their skills. They can become part-time employees. Key personnel who join in this collaboration can have additional income from schools. Such collaboration will help firms to reduce the operating costs, retain key staff during the epidemic season.</li> <li>• We have closed our hotel temporarily. Some employees themselves also want to quit their jobs. We need to find a new potential team that does not need to work right now but may be available when needed.</li> </ul>
	Ensuring Readiness in recruitment and staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have worked with several prestigious hospitality and tourism schools on the job training to facilitate future recruitment and staffing.</li> <li>• We have students' personal and contact information records.</li> <li>• We work with faculties to better understand student ethics and character.</li> </ul>
	Simple HR Management system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple HR Management system.</li> <li>• The young and dynamic team brings a fresh atmosphere to the hotel during the offseason.</li> </ul>

	Operational costs reduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We always have school access to active, enthusiastic personnel sources, which are available in large quantities.</li> <li>• Minimizes operating costs during the epidemic.</li> <li>• Instead of paying labour costs every month, we now deal with casual, part-time wages or only shift meals to cope with the difficulties. Besides, there are certain risks because the youth team will not be mature enough to handle every challenging situation during the season.</li> </ul>
<b>Talent Attraction Management</b>	Grab and Retain Quality Talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "We showed our desire to attract some talent students; we prepared a talent recruitment plan and have counteroffer ready (e.g., about some policy to attract talent students)"</li> <li>• "We delivered in class and treated our candidates as customers."</li> <li>• "We keep up the communication on social media and market ourselves as friends."</li> </ul>
	Earn the trust of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "We offered our trust first, then listened effectively and asked what is most important to students' job expectation, job turnover, their birthday, keep connections, and learn how to improve potential candidate retention."</li> </ul>
	Build stronger connections with students and improve communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students feel challenged and motivated in their future jobs."</li> <li>• "When they are closer to industry representatives, they are typically satisfied with their expectation and perception."</li> <li>• "Having a good relationship with firms' staff also provides positive motivation for students."</li> </ul>
<b>Self-development</b>	Self-development during COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "During the pandemic, hotels, travel agencies can improve their quality service, SOP, and infrastructure."</li> <li>• "We speed up and shorten construction time and are ready to open up to welcome guests as soon as the pandemic ended."</li> <li>• "We try to retain the key labour force and wait for the COVID-19 pandemic pass. By the way, we do open some short-term training courses to improve employee professional skills and encourage them to learn more foreign language proficiency with monthly allowance amounts."</li> </ul>
<b>Realistic of challenging labour market</b>	Future occupations without a degree and proper specialization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "If someone is looking for a job at this time, it is not easy because the competition rate is high, and the hotels are almost closed."</li> <li>• "We worried that if the pandemic lasts, the skilled and professional personnel will find</li> </ul>

		<p>other stable industries (even in times of crisis) to work (even us)."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once we have joined this program, we can have an amount of money coming in from school.</li> <li>• "We want to keep in contact and the talented students list for future recruitment."</li> <li>• "We are happy to get the talent list from schools during CO delivery. However, we are sorry to say that we cannot promise anything."</li> <li>• "We need to prepare the mental stability for students in the pandemic."</li> <li>• "A lack of a communicated plan for education and career orientation could lead to more students entering the labour market (without a degree or certificates)."</li> </ul>
<b>Students</b>		
<b>Career Perceptions and Expectations</b>	Worry and confusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I do not know how long the coronavirus pandemic will last. If it still lasted until graduation, then I might not find a job".</li> <li>• "I am perplexed and need someone to talk about this."</li> <li>• "I am worrying too. However, if the pandemic would end, tourism will flourish again, at least the domestic market."</li> <li>• "I am confused that if the pandemic affects my future career job."</li> <li>• "I did not know if my specification choice is right."</li> <li>• "During this crisis, I wonder when tourism will recover."</li> <li>• "I need some talk shows from school, teachers."</li> <li>• "I love to work in tourism and hospitality, but I do not see the light for this job shortly."</li> <li>• "I am thinking about changing other majors."</li> </ul>
	Career planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Tour operators, hotel coordinators are the better choice than a tour guide."</li> <li>• "I have already noted some skills that are required to reach that position."</li> <li>• "I am preparing my CV to send to the HR department; they would like me to join them as part-time staff."</li> <li>• "I have some potential listing of companies that I want to work with and their contacts."</li> <li>• "I suppose that I prefer sales &amp; marketing to tour guides because I have good communication skills."</li> </ul>
	Exploring strengths and weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "During the process of CO learning, HRM &amp; Department Director asked me about my strengths and weaknesses, it was a difficult</li> </ul>

		<p>question, and I do not know what my personality strengths and weaknesses are.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “After learning about human personality, I was happy to know that my personality type is expressive, its strength is good at communication and enthusiastic, but its weakness is talking too much. Sales &amp; Marketing is a suitable job for this type of personality”.</li> <li>• “I might be an HR coordinator in the future because my personality type is gracious; I will always be patient and diplomatic.”</li> </ul>
	Right major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I think the epidemic is only a temporary dilemma. After that, tourism will recover, at least domestic tourism.”</li> <li>• “I feel worried too, but I trust in my chosen major, and I want to become a sales and marketing coordinator.”</li> <li>• “I will work as a receptionist in a hotel because a tour guide is a hard-working job.”</li> <li>• “I think that the hotel coordinator is more suitable for me.”</li> </ul>
<b>Self-development</b>	Connect them to professionals and advisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I like my advisor; she is kind and closed with us.”</li> <li>• “The HR manager treated us so well; he is frank and shared with us his personal information, and we can contact him on social media.”</li> <li>• “I am not confident in communication, but now I feel much better because of the sincerity of advisor and industry representatives.”</li> <li>• “We are bolder in asking questions because we know we will get their sincere answers.”</li> </ul>
	Utilizing the available opportunities to learn and communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I met enthusiastic staff who dedicated and answered my questions.”</li> <li>• “I asked them about their position, they introduced it and instructed us to prepare the appropriate knowledge for that position (All students)”</li> <li>• “I have the opportunity to meet experienced tour guides.”</li> </ul>
	Understand how to employ relevant skills and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I have learned how to organize in the classroom or teambuilding.”</li> <li>• “I studied with a positive attitude because I found myself quite fit with this career.”</li> <li>• “I learned to communicate through the ways that managers communicated with us.”</li> <li>• We should work in a team to train our speaking skills, problem-solving.”</li> <li>• “We should work independently on writing about decision making.”</li> </ul>

	Know the job market requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I need to take time to test my English skill certificate because it is essential to apply for the international license for a tour guide.”</li> <li>• “The labour market requests Korea and Chinese guides.”</li> <li>• “I should study Korea to work as an international tour guide for Korean visitors.”</li> </ul>
<b>Faculties</b>		
	<b>Changes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We have to update suitable knowledge to meet with what students need during the pandemic.”</li> <li>• “CO course aim is to help students with future career orientations. Therefore, we need to steer students’ original choices clear. Besides, it is possible to suggest other alternative jobs for students if the pandemic situation still poses the greatest threat in the coming years.”</li> <li>• “Lecturers need to update official news from the government and indicate students’ directions during the epidemic.”</li> <li>• “Hospitality studying does not mean working in a restaurant, hotel, or travel agency. All fields are required to learn and be aware of the word “hospitality.” Therefore, they could know and have flexible applications while for their future careers.”</li> <li>• “I realized that the teaching situation is different in this duration. I sometimes feel like I am an emotional robot which is smart enough to detect all issues” (smile)</li> <li>• “I receive many questions regarding students’ future careers and try to indicate them appropriately.”</li> <li>• “I have learned from students in different situations and tried to find the best solutions for them.”</li> </ul>
<b>Self-development</b>	Updating practical knowledge and Self-study training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I want to arrange my time to renew the specification knowledge from the industry. However, I have spent most of the time in the session deliveries at school.”</li> <li>• “I should plan for the industrial activities to test my knowledge in the summer holidays.”</li> <li>• “I think that CO encourages any lecturer to experience lifelong teaching and learning from the real world.”</li> </ul>
	Promote program to the broader world, benefits to school enrolment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a good impression for first-year students is the best word of mouth marketing for school recruitment.</li> <li>• Some students have shared admission information on their social networks like Facebook, Zalo, and Instagram.</li> </ul>

	Improve teaching quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a subject that is combining theory and practice from industry. Thus, we can learn more from industry representatives and fill in the gaps in our knowledge.</li> <li>• Students are excited about attending class with industry representatives.</li> </ul>
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*Note. Analysis by author, 2020*

An unstructured interview usually highlights an in-depth understanding, and it allowed working within interpretive research and maximum flexibility to explore themes and obtain rich data (Auditors, 2011). Interviewees were advised to be flexible and did not need to follow the order of questions, but they need to share their views according to the questions' contents.

## Findings

With the thematic analysis, as mentioned in the methodology, this article's findings indicate that hospitality and tourism firms, students, and schools are mixed symbiosis with mutually beneficial relationships from the stakeholders' perspective. We can perceive this connection through two theoretical models Fig 1 and Fig 2 below.

### 1. Hospitality and Tourism industry and School Collaborations

According to the industry perspective, the management of tourism personnel under COVID-19 is no longer hiring experienced people but about flexible recruitment, minimizing and simplifying the personnel operation system. Join-in-hand with hospitality and tourism schools in education and training is a must. It would be challenging if a person were looking for a job due to the high competition rate, and the hotels are almost closed. Besides, if the pandemic lasts, the skilled and professional personnel would quit this career to find others, much more stable ones. Faced with this situation, firms choose the solution to join hands with the school to train the younger and ambitious 1<sup>st</sup>-year students for future recruitment because they were unsure about the pandemic situation and the tourism recovery in the future so that preparation for available team to recruit shortly is a must. Firms also confirmed that they could not have enough budget to recruit experienced staff due to high salaries or train newcomers. For example, some industry representatives stated that: *"We work with the school to share experiences, support hospitality, and travel skill training, and nurture talent for the post-COVID-19 period. We assigned 1<sup>st</sup>-year students to practice their skills alternately at our company. We both have low-season employees on duty while reducing our payroll and insurance costs."* Some worried about future qualification recruitment due to: *"a lack of a communicated plan for education and career orientation could lead to more students entering the labour market (without a degree or certificates)."*

Besides that, the employees who joined the collaboration can have incomes that could support their lives through a difficult time. In schools where industry exposure is a longer extension, students and industry representatives will know each other better, the level of active interaction will increase rather than depending on the one side of schools. For example, some students said they know clearly about the human resource staff that they can contact together for any questions: *"The human resource manager treated us so well; he is frank and shared with us his personal information, and we can contact on social media."* Thus, in this challenging period, human resource management in the hospitality and tourism industry keywords are **"flexible"** and **"training and nurturing."**

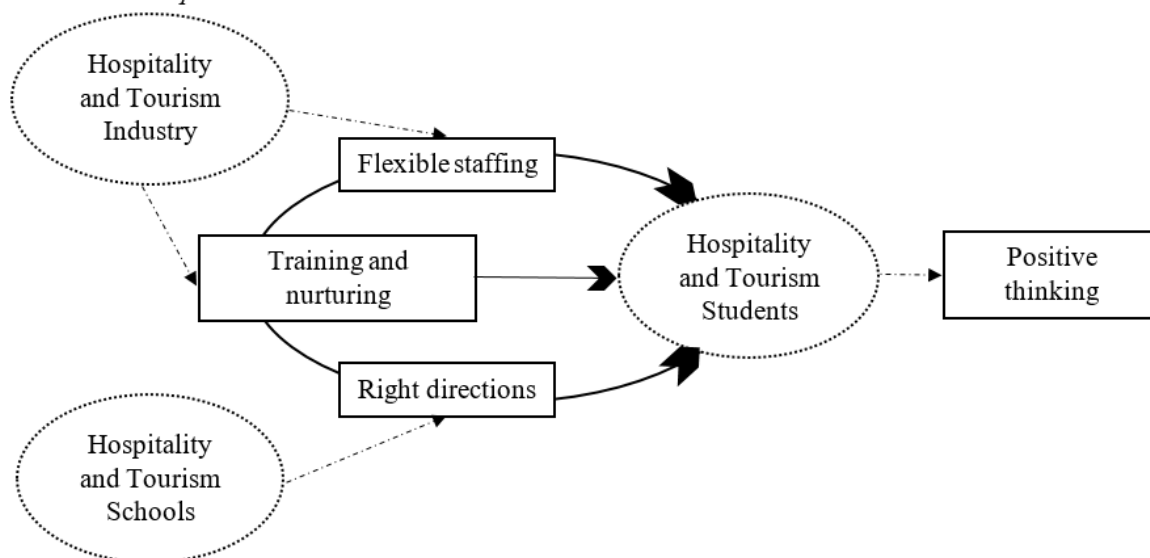
## 2. Career Orientation and Student Perception and Expectation of Future Occupations

From the hospitality and tourism students' perspective, some students have concerned about the unpredictable pandemic situation. They need someone to address what they should do. Some are worried about their future career if the epidemic remains until graduation. Several students wish to change to other study fields. However, most interviewed students with positive thinking argue that the tourism industry will recover soon, at least domestic tourism. Hence, among their perceptions, the hospitality and tourism personnel management keyword is "**positive thinking**."

In faculties' opinions, career orientation supports students steering clear and keeping the choices they originally made for their future careers. Besides, faculties should learn what students worry about or suggest alternative jobs if the pandemic is still severe and complicated in the coming years. Also, faculty members should continually update official news and equip themselves with the knowledge to assist students as soon as possible. Accompanying students with mental issues during this challenging period is the lecturers' duty. Therefore, among their views, the hospitality and tourism personnel management's keyword is "**right direction**" from schools (please see figure 1).

**Figure 1**

*Proposed theoretical framework – Understanding stakeholder's response to the challenging COVID-19 period*



*Note.* From data collection and designed by the author

The collaboration between the hospitality and tourism industry and schools in giving the right direction and nurturing talents will create more dynamic and confident students with more positive thoughts on their chosen career path.

## 3. A connected curriculum

Besides the above activities, some hospitality and tourism organizations have taken this time to speed up, shorten construction, and ready to re-open up for guests welcome as soon as the pandemic over. For example, "*they persist and do some short-term training courses to improve employee professional skills and learn more foreign language proficiency.*" (PR3.5.8.10)

Nevertheless, not all hospitality and tourism organizations can do that. Training a young, healthy, skilled, ready team is necessary for recruiting or replacing activities. The participation between

industry and schools in delivering career orientation is such an opportunity. Some industry representatives commented: *"We would like to keep in contact with the talented student list for future recruitment; We are happy to get the talent list from school during career orientation delivery. However, we are sorry to say that we cannot promise anything"; "During the pandemic, students' mental stability is important for themselves and future hospitality and tourism business"* (PR2.3.5.6.10.11)

Students are confused when they enter online classes because they are worried about future careers and may make unwise decisions at various times. Some human resource managers stated that *"A lack of communicated plans among stakeholders in delivery career orientation could lead to more students entering the labour market (without a degree or certificates)."* (LR3,4,9,10)

#### **4. Career Orientation and its Benefits to Stakeholders**

*- Career Orientation subject is necessary and beneficial from the industry's viewpoint:*

Career Orientation subject supports hotel and travel agencies in grabbing and retaining quality talents. Collaboration with hospitality and tourism schools can save expenses in sourcing and training new human resources. Some interviewees shared that:

*"We desire to attract some talent students, we prepared a talent recruitment plan and have counteroffer ready (e.g., about some policy to attract students in talent list"* (PR1,4,5,7).

*"We deliver in class and treat our candidates like customers"* (PR10,7,8,3).

*"We keep up the communication on social media and market ourselves as friends"* (All PRs).

During one year of interacting with students, the industry representatives have their talent lists that work and promote them as brand ambassadors.

Career orientation subject delivery is an opportunity for hospitality and tourism organizations to build relationships with students and potential markets in class and on sites. Besides, available teams for recruitment in the future when needed is necessary. To get students' trust, some employers offer respect to students such as *"we offered our sincere first then listened effectively and asked what is most important to students' job expectation, job turnover, their birthday, keep a connection and learn how to improve potential candidate retention"* (All PRs).

Career orientation delivery is an opportunity for building stronger connections with students and improve communication. Some interviewees shared that *"students feel challenged and motivated by their future jobs when they know us clearly"* (PR7,4,9). *"When they are closer with us, they are typically satisfied with their expectation and perception"* (PR1,4,5,6,7,8). *"Having a good relationship with us also provides positive motivation for students"* (PR2.3.6,10).

Career Orientation is an opportunity for industry representatives to learn labour market needs and improve their human resource management policy accordingly (All PRs).

Career Orientation is essential and beneficial for industry and talent attraction activities, which are challenging in human resource management from the industry's viewpoints.

*- Career Orientation is Necessary and Beneficial from the Students' Viewpoint*

Career orientation affects students' perceptions and expectations of career planning and the decision-making process in implementing career choice. It provides the right direction to their life in achieving long-term career goals and career objectives. It helps students make the right decision in their study choice, what jobs to do, and explore their interests. Some interviewees mentioned:



*"Tour operator, hotel coordinators are the better choice than tour guide" (ST12,14,7,2,15).*

*"I have already noted some skills that are required to reach that position" (ST3,4,5).*

*"I am preparing my CV to send to the HR department, they would like me to join them as a part-time staff" (ST5,11,13,) or "I have some potential list of companies that I want to work with and their contacts" (ST1,4,6,8,10,12) or "I think I prefer sales & marketing to tour guides because I have good communication skill" (ST7,5,1,4).*

Career Orientation helps students explore their strengths and weaknesses, identify their skills and interests. Some interviewees expressed:

*"During the process of CO learning, HRM & Department Director asked me about my strengths and weaknesses; It was a difficult question because I am not sure about my personality, strengths, and weaknesses." (ST3,7,8,4,9,13,1,12).*

*"After learning more about personality type, I am happy to know that I am expressive. Its strength is good at communication and enthusiasm. However, spending too much time talking is the weakness that sales & marketing could be suitable with" (ST4, 5)*

Other interviewees felt that *" They were born to be an HR coordinator because their personality type is amiable. They will always be patient and diplomatic" (ST6,14).*

When students realize their personalities, it is also essential to help them choose the right job. Career orientation directs students to choose the right majors and future occupations under experienced mentors' supports.

For example, two interviewees expressed that *"I feel that hotel coordinator is more suitable for me than travel & tourism majors" (ST2,15) or "Female interviewees felt tremendous pressure with tour guide job because the market is lacking labour and they have to work very hard" (ST1,14,13).*

Some interviewees would like to switch to other fields such as *"I have thought that a tour guide is the one could travel everywhere, but after studying career orientation, I realized that It is not the suitable one for me, I think I need to discuss with my parents about switching other faculties." (ST7).*

Career orientation tied stakeholders together in a mutually reinforcing relationship with their reputation closely interdependent with each other. Students built their good relations with industry representatives, lecturers, and confidence in communication for one year. Some interviewees shared:

*"I like my advisor; she is kind and close with us" (ST2,14,15,9)*

*"The HR manager treated us so well, he is frank and shares us his contact and connect us on social media" (ST11,5,3,7):*

*"I am not confident in communicating with others, but there was warmth in advisors and industry representatives' greeting and their handshakes that make me optimistic." (ST6,4);*

*" They will almost always be willing to answer our questions even though we keep asking questions from time to time." (ST12,13,4,6,8).*

Career Orientation helps students utilize opportunities to make field trips and observations at sites. *"I met enthusiastic staff who dedicated me and answered my questions" (ST4,11,6).*

*"I make some questions of their job positions, they shared and instructed how we can prepare for these positions" (All students).*

*"I have the opportunity to meet experienced tour guides" (ST13,12,1,4,6).*

Career Orientation teaches students how to employ jobs' skills and knowledge, such as attitude, communication, teamwork, self-management, problem-solving, and decision-making. Some interviewees shared:

*"I have learned how to organize in the classroom or a teambuilding" (ST,8,9).*

*"I studied with a positive attitude because I found myself quite fit with this position" (ST10,1,4,3). "I learned to communicate through the ways that managers communicate with us" (ST9,5,14,13). "We should work in a team to train our speaking skills, problem-solving" (ST11).*

*"We should work independently on writing about decision making" (ST13,10).*

Career orientation subject helps students to acquire the job market requirements. Some interviewees discussed that:

*"We learned about the job market which is a shortage for tour guide" (ST3,5,4,8);*

*"The labour market requests tour guides who can speak Korean and Chinese " (ST13,9);*

*"I should study Korean to work as an international tour guide" (ST1,15);*

*"I need to take time to test English skill because it is essential to apply for the international license" (ST14,6,10)*

Career orientation helps some students think about switching to other majors. Some interviewees said that:

*"I have registered to switch to hospitality majors for the next semester" (ST15).*

*"I may choose to study hospitality because the tour guide is a hard-working type" (ST2)*

*"I think that the hotel coordinator position is for me" (ST7).*

These findings show that career orientation is essential and beneficial for first-year students in all situations.

- Career Orientation is necessary and beneficial from the hospitality and tourism school's viewpoints.

Career orientation delivery is an opportunity to update practical knowledge and self-study training to faculties. Career orientation supports them in interacting better with students and industry and update useful knowledge. Some shared that *"I want to arrange my time to renew the practical knowledge from the industry. However, I have spent most of the time in the session deliveries at school"*; (LR1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9,12,14,15)

*"I should plan for the industrial activities to test my knowledge in the summer holidays"* (LR1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9,12,14,15)

*"I think that career orientation encourages any lecturer to experience lifelong teaching and learning from the real world " (LR2,5,6).*

Career Orientation encourages hospitality and tourism schools to promote their program to a broader world, which relates to lecturers' interaction with first-year students to create positive first impressions and thinking. Some interviewees told us that *"Creating a good impression for 1st-year students is the best word of mouth marketing in school enrolment activities"* (LR6,14,1). *"Some students have shared admission information on their social networks like Facebook, Zalo, and Instagram"* (LR2,5,9,11).

Some lecturers shared that *"Career Orientation is necessary for 1st-year students in the curriculum. It brings benefits that the program developers have not thought of before. In the process of working with hospitality and tourism organizations, we found the gap in our knowledge, which was needed to implement a change accordingly to improve teaching quality"* (LR12,9,8,7,3,5). *"Besides, when students interact with hospitality and tourism organizations for one year, they will hold the opportunities to receive internships for the last year without going through an interview"* (LR1,2,3,4,5,6,11).

Some lectures shared that "*The subject is combining theory and application from industry*"; "*Students are excited attending class with industry representatives*" (LR6,3,1,7).

These comments highlight that CO helped lecturers in self-development, and it is an excellent opportunity to attract new enrolments and market the school brand name.

The findings highlight the viewpoints of three stakeholders involved in stakeholders' collaboration in career orientation delivery. Most beneficiaries are the hospitality and tourism industry, students. Surprisingly, there are some commonalities in their viewpoints. For example, all stakeholders appreciate Career Orientation as an opportunity for them to develop and implement their potential plans.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

This paper's theoretical implications provide three significant categories of necessary and beneficial career orientation, as Figure 2 illustrates (Please see figure 2). Trommsdorff (1983) introduced the career orientation theory, and Nurmi (1993), who contributed to the concept of positive career orientation in the future and showed that it is associated with a series of positive results in young people. This study contributes to the body of the literature in three primary ways as follows.

### **1. Career Orientation and student perception and expectation of future occupations**

- Career orientation is a necessity for first-year students' perceptions and expectations. Students should learn more about employment opportunities before starting their learning program to minimize the gap between expectations and perception (Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000).
- Career orientation affects and changes the first-year students' awareness of the hospitality and tourism career and helps students make the right choice. Students usually choose the university depending on the university-related factors and the student-related ones (Petruzzellis & Romanazzi, 2010).
- Students can also plan a career path to motivate themselves towards a better future throughout their academic years. (Pratten & O'Leary, 2007)
- Students could explore their characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses within career orientation learning. Besides, career orientation brings students communication opportunities with faculty and industry representatives from face-to-face to social networks. Therefore, students can take advantage of these opportunities to develop their professional communication skills better.
- The number of students is saturated at 14, which is higher than in other research.

### **2. Hospitality and Tourism industry and schools collaboration**

- **To Industry**
  - ✓ Career orientation supports the industry in sourcing and managing talents. Organizations should identify and invest in outstanding candidates (Berger & Berger, 2011). Students have their own unique, which need to be identified and helped to release them.
  - ✓ Career orientation collaboration is an opportunity for organizations to grab and retain quality talents from schools. Besides, the interaction with students offers a process for defining employment policy problems that any organization could be facing (E. Martin, 2011).

- ✓ During interaction and communication in career orientation delivery, the industry can earn trust and build stronger connections with students through social networks, one of the most critical internal marketing (Wong et al., 2017).
- **To School**
  - ✓ Career orientation helps schools and lecturers in self-development. During CO activities, hospitality and tourism lecturers can improve their teaching quality. The university should ensure education quality accreditation by designing curriculum and outcomes assessment with the current education growth (Massy, 1997).
  - ✓ Lecturers will have opportunities to renew valuable knowledge and self-study during career orientation interaction. The mutual collaboration among stakeholders could promote learning programs, build prestigious brands, and market reputation to the broader world. The university's reputation influences students' decision to enroll (Russell, 2005).
  - ✓ Career orientation should be compulsory for the first-year students in the curriculum at school. However, we found that very rare Vietnamese universities consider career orientation a subject within the curriculum during the interview.

### ***3. A connected Curriculum***

Career orientation has studied in several previous as a determinant in choosing careers (Suutari, 2003), or career orientation in women's career choices (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987) or career orientation of men in non-traditional occupations (Simpson, 2005) or the development of a protean career orientation (Sargent & Domberger, 2007). However, they have not considered it compulsory to connect the hospitality and tourism industry, students, and schools for a long-term relationship. Suppose the universities rearrange the curriculum with career orientation as a compulsory subject so the engagement between the industry and school will be permanent than activities. Under a subject for 1st-year students, the industry can be active in relationships with students without dependence on school connecting in field trips, job fairs, or short training courses. The relationships could help them not to be passive dependent on the schools. Interaction and engagement will be longer in the following academic years and lead to flexible, proactive hiring. Students are also more active in the job search process, and the schools are also less strenuous in organizing job fairs over the continual years.

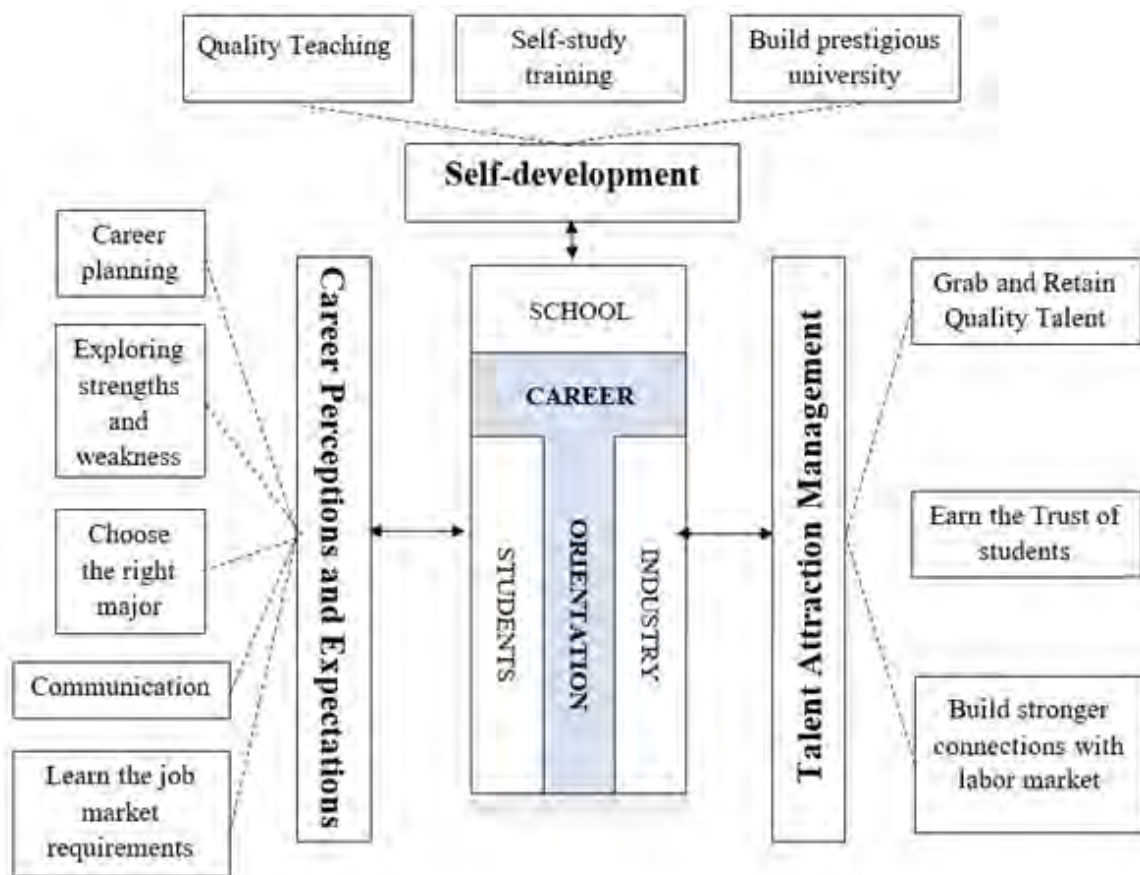
The research paper seeks to fill the literature gap by examining how industry, students, and schools deal with career orientation to overcome obstacles during the epidemic. Hospitality and tourism schools in Vietnam should add career orientation into the curriculum as compulsory due to its benefits.

### **Limitation and Future Research**

This research contributes to an empirical and practical approach in collaboration among stakeholders to deal with difficulties during COVID-19 in Vietnam. Students do not have enough information on the labour market; lecturers lack practical experience, valuable knowledge of students' future careers, and industry challenges in personnel staffing during the pandemic. The research approach still has some limitations, such as the sample of industry professionals within hospitality and tourism collected in the center of cities where hospitality and tourism business are rapidly developing and affected quickly by COVID-19. Other researchers can collect data outside the city center for future research or choose broader representatives and conduct quantitative surveys to recognize the differentiates among groups when the pandemic is over.

**Figure 2**

The proposed theoretical framework of necessary and beneficial CO to stakeholders



**Note: From author’s collected data and design research frameworks**

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**GEOTOURISM AS A TOOL FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN SRI LANKA:  
AN EXPLORATION**

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**Abstract**

Geotourism is a tourism activity witnessing ABC attributes, abiotic, biotic, and culture focusing on abiotic properties of the natural setting. This investigation explores whether Geotourism could be a lucrative tool for sustainable tourism development. An interpretive exploratory approach was entrusted for the study given its applicability to trace deeper feelings, thought, and attitudes of individuals. Twenty in-depth interviews from tourism stakeholders including tourists, the local community, and government officers at two different geologically significant sites were conducted over 04 months. Transcriptions were thematically analysed by coding and axial coding. The study revealed that lack of awareness towards Geotourism concept causes Geotourism in Sri Lanka in its infancy, though Sri Lanka is having an abundant marketable opportunity for its diversified tourist locations to initiate Geotourism developments. Geotourism can be used as a lucrative tool for tourism development by addressing certain issues like improper place management, lack of promotion by examining two excellent heritage sites.

**Keywords:** Geotourism, Geotourists, Geoheritage sites, Tourism development, Ussangoda National Park, Mahapelessa hot spring

**Introduction**

Tourism has become a key industry with a positive contribution towards the economy in the contemporary era been the third-largest foreign exchange earner in 2017, till present in the Sri Lankan economy (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, 2017). Sri Lanka can be portrayed as a tourism paradise with its uniqueness, natural beauty, authentic culture, and warm hospitality, enriched with the natural and cultural phenomenon that even belong to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage list. Although challenges caused by recent blooming in South and Eastern Asian tourism and the latest terrorist attack on Easter Sunday, setback Sri Lankan tourism, to sustain and gain a competitive edge over rival world markets, Sri Lanka has to offer a variety of niche tourism products and services to meet the expectations of the tourists.

Geo tourism tends to be such a marketable opportunity for tourism development in Sri Lanka since it is an astonishing destination rich in geoarchaeological, geomorphological, and geological significances. But the utilization of the approaches is limited and rare in the Sri Lankan tourism scale (Ranasinghe & Cheng, 2020). The deterioration of mass tourism, the consciousness towards the climatic changes, and environmental impacts can be evaluated as favourable platforms for new forms of sustainable tourism as Geotourism in its adaptation process toward tourism development in the country parallel to other destinations in the world.

Geotourism is defined as a concept that was introduced in a 2003 report by the Travel Industry Association of America and National Geographic and successively adopted by Hose as "tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place, its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents". Geotourism, conservation, geoparks are relatively new terms that promote tourism to geosites and the conservation of geo-diversity, and

an understanding of earth sciences through appreciation and learning. (Dowling and Newsome, 2010). According to International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), geoconservation refers to the recognizing, protecting, and managing sites and landscapes identified as important geological or geomorphologic features. Geotourists can be defined as 'tourists who visit geoparks, geosites or other geological heritage resources realizing its intrinsic values i.e. Aesthetic, cultural, recreational and scientific values' (Ehsan, Leman, and Ara Begum, 2012).

Although Geotourism will be a positive approach as an emerging trend in the globe, the concept is relatively new in Sri Lanka. There is only a very low rate of Geotourists visiting the country. But Geological Survey and Mines Bureau has published the 'Geotourists map' which pinpointed 201 Geotourists locations in Sri Lanka (Ranasinghe, 2002). But still, there have not been enough promotional activities towards the Geo tourist locations. Also, there are no current statistics or information in the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) regarding Geotourists and Geotourism. Hence Sri Lanka has outstanding geology and geomorphology, Geotourism has to be adapted as a lucrative tourism development tool in the country, also identifying the empirical and knowledge gaps, attaining the core objectives of the Study.

## **Literature Review**

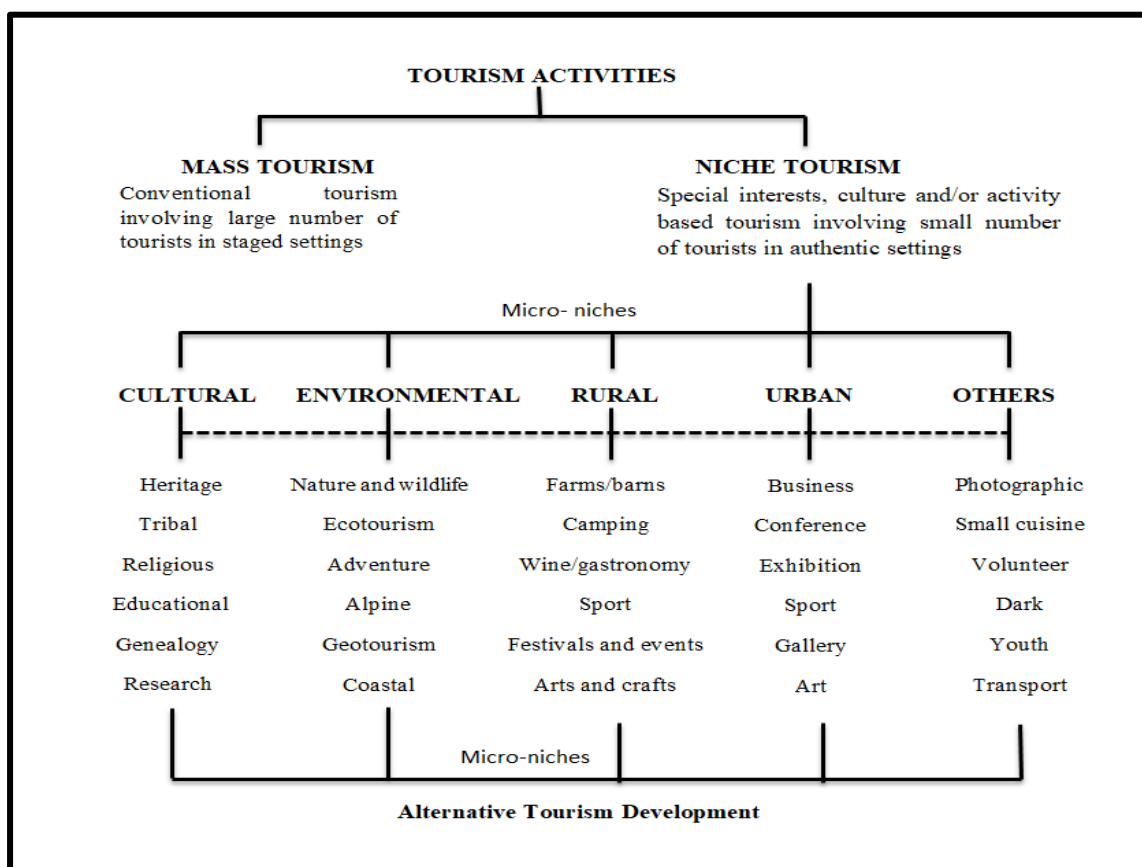
### **Tourism**

Tourism is considered a major social and economic phenomenon that narrates to the largest peaceful movement of people across the world (Sharpley, 2014; Haile, 2017). Many of the natural, cultural, and historical assets that are unique to several developing countries provide a comparative advantage within the global tourism industry and are a source of potential revenue for emerging economies (UNWTO, 2016). This provisional advantage becomes probable development assets for Least Developed Countries like Sri Lanka to flourish their economies that guide sustainable tourism-based markets.

Sustainable tourism is a concept that was developed by the UNWTO and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), which defines tourism development as "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, and environment and host communities" (Nations and Programme, 2005). Geotourism is a good platform to interact with the local community more with conserving culture, heritage, geology, and environment while aiding in the overall livelihood of the community. Also, it is a good opportunity for cultural sustainability, opportunities for greater employment in the region, and a decrease in emigration (Farsani, Coelho, and Costa, 2011).

The term “Geotourism” was primitively used in literature by Thomas Hose in 1995. Geotourism is emerging as a new global phenomenon (Dowling and Newsome, 2010). Geotourism is sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing the earth’s geological features in a way that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation, and is locally beneficial. (Dowling and Newsome, 2010). “Geotourism is a form of natural area tourism that specifically focuses on geology and landscape. It promotes tourism to geosites and the conservation of geo-diversity and an understanding of earth sciences through appreciation and learning. This is achieved through independent visits to geological features, use of geo-trails and viewpoints, guided tours, geo activities and patronage of geosites visitor centers” (Dowling and Newsome, 2010). As Geotourism is a new concept and a form of alternative tourism, it is difficult to define. Dowling and Newsome, (2010) characterize Geotourism as a sustainable way of experiencing and appreciating the Earth’s geology.

**Figure 1:** Niche tourism: contemporary issues, trends, and cases (Novelli, 2005).



Geotourism gives a space to experience geology, increase the knowledge of earth sciences, and conserve to sustain the utilization of resources effectively (Ranasinghe, 2018). It is geologically based and focuses on sustainability, conservation, benefiting the community, appreciation of cultural and geoheritage value through education and interpretation, and tourist satisfaction (Dowling and Newsome, 2006). The scope and nature of Geotourism can be drawn by the integration of three elements: form, process, and tourism. (Dowling and Newsome, 2010). Forms refer to the way that geological resources can be employed for the consumption of tourism like quartz formation, volcanic rock formations, caves, dunes, etc. Process pertains to the dynamic activity of the Earth such as weathering, erosion, hydrothermal process and etc. Tourism refers to the activity or practice of touring, especially for pleasure (accommodation, attractiveness, activities, amenities). The elementary explanation of Geotourism is tourism which focuses on

geology and the landscapes of the area and also provides more scrutiny on abiotic features of the environment. (Risteski and Kocevski, 2016).

### **Geotourists**

Geotourists can be defined as 'tourists who visit geoparks, geosites or other geological heritage resources realizing its intrinsic values e.g. aesthetic, cultural, recreational and scientific value (Ehsan, Leman and Ara Begum, 2012)). The 'dedicated geo tourists and casual geo tourists' were classified as two typologies by Hose (2007). The main desire for dedicated Geotourist is personal educational and intellectual gain and enjoyment and for casual tourists is a pleasure (Hose, 2011). According to travel motivation, there are five categories of geo tourists namely purposeful, intentional, serendipitous, accidental, and incidental (Allan, Dowling and Sanders, 2015). To grab the attention of potential geo tourists and promote the outcrops with dazzling patterns there should be a proper interpretation by guides, brochures, special signs, online resources, etc. According to Mikhailenko *et al.*, (2007) "aesthetics first, geology second" approach can facilitate the necessary tourist flows to geo sites and geo parks.

### **Geoconservation**

The steps of safeguarding geo sites and geo composites from damage, degradation through the application of management and protection are called Geoconservation and it is considered as a prerequisite for the Geotourism industry (Hose, 2011). Different geo heritage sites need to be protected and managed in different ways. The geo conservation concept also includes the development of mechanisms and measures that will enable the preservation of Geodiversity for future generations. This primarily includes the inventory and interpretation of geological diversity, creating tourist trails and pathways, publishing various publications, both scientific and those intended for the general audience, maintaining geo sites in good condition, and of course adequate presentation at visitor centers or museums (Boškov *et al.*, 2015). Enhancing public awareness of the value of geo heritage sites (scientific, aesthetic, and economic) through Geotourism is a productive method for Geoconservation. Some countries like Iceland, indicate that the number of planning and management efforts to promote the development of sustainable tourism industry by integrating Geotourism. (Newsome, Dowling, and Leung, 2012).

### **Geology of Sri Lanka**

There is wide geomorphological variation like rugged mountain ranges, valleys, flat plains, isolated hills, etc. can be seen in Sri Lanka. There are three morphological regions namely Coastal lowlands from about 0-270 meters, Uplands from about 270-1060 meters, and Highlands from about 1060-2240 meters (Ranasinghe, 2002).

### **Geo sites and Geo heritage**

Geosites is a site or an area, with geological and scientific significances and geo heritage means the sites or areas of geologic features with significant scientific, educational, cultural, or aesthetic value. The Geological Survey and mines bureau identified 201 geo tourist locations around Sri Lanka in these subdivisions.

- **Geo-archaeological locations**
- **Geomorphologically important locations**
- **Geologically important locations**
- **Geotechnically important locations**
- **Mineral Deposits**
- **Mineral Based Industries**

### **Ussangoda National Park**

Ussangoda National Park is the 21<sup>st</sup> National Park which was established on 6 May 2010 area with 3.49km<sup>2</sup>. It is the only coastal area consisting of Serpentine soil at National Park in Sri Lanka. The Ussangoda serpentine outcrop is located (coordinates 6°06'00"N 80°59'22"E) in the southern coastal end of the HC-VC boundary. (Rajakaruna and Bohm, 2002).

The uniqueness of the Ussangoda National park is the visitors can experience the dark red soil, small rocks and see sporadic vegetation due to the high amount of Ni and Cr in the soil by the weathering of the serpentine rock. 29 species of flowering plants, which included trees, shrubs, vines, and prostate plants growing within the Ussangoda serpentine site were identified (Weerasinghe and Iqbal, 2011). *Cassia kleinii* was identified as a Ni hyper-accumulator. According to IUCN Ussangoda National Park is categorized in type 2 in their segmentation. Also, it was proposed to designate as a Geo-park because of its historical, cultural, and archaeological value (National *et al.*, 2018)

### **Mahapelessa (Madunagala) Hot springs**

Geothermal springs are the natural springs that contain hot water. Generally, three important components control the formation of hot springs, including heat sources, groundwater, and reservoir rocks. (Premasiri *et al.*, 2006). Hot springs have become popular tourist destinations because of the healing powers that hot springs have, especially the combination of the temperature of the water with a high content of minerals like calcium, lithium, etc. Mahapelessa (Madunagala) springs belong to the semi-arid zones and are located in the southern lower flat plains. The annual rainfall for the Madunagala area receives 950- 1500 mm. The origin of this spring is related to the boundary of the Highland and Vijayan complex (Ranasinghe, 2002). Mahapelessa (Madunagala) hot spring is 11582ft deep with its water running at a speed of about 645ml per second and has 44.9°C outflow temperature (Premasiri *et al.*, 2006).

### **Methodology**

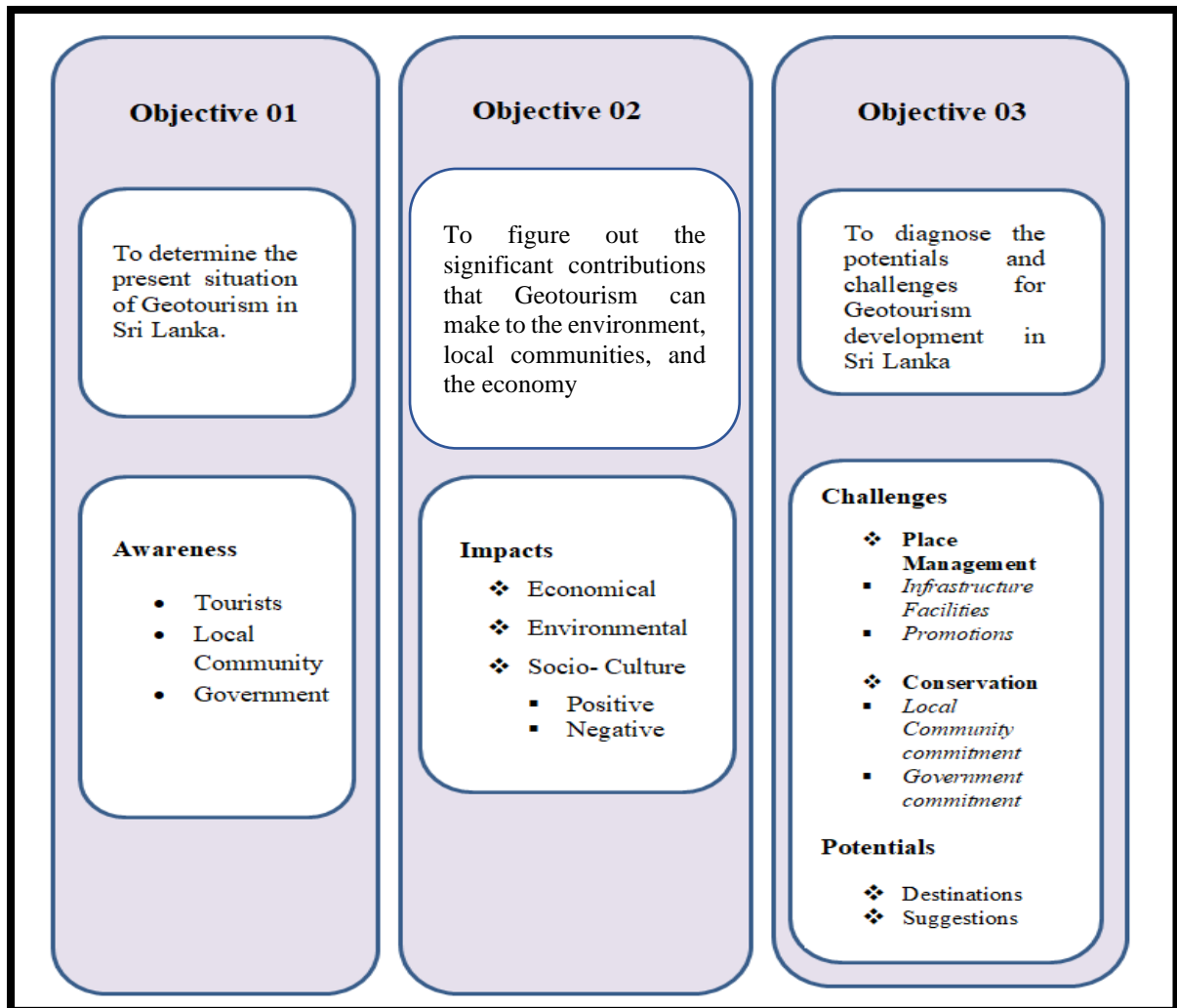
Ussangoda National park and Mahapelessa (Madunagala) hot springs are located in the Hambantota district in Southern province in Sri Lanka are selected as research areas. The population represents tourism stakeholders in Sri Lanka. The sample size consists of 20 stakeholders, disperse between Visitors (foreign and domestic), the local community, and representatives from government institutes (Department of Wildlife Conservation, Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, Geological Survey, and Mines Bureau, Ruhunu Tourism Bureau). A purposive sampling technique is used, which is selected based on the characteristics of populations and objectives of the research. The researcher utilized in-depth interviews and field observations to gather data. Secondary data were gathered through newspapers, research articles, books, journals, the internet and Geological Survey and Mines Bureau (GSMB), Department of Wildlife Conservation., UNESCO, and Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) annual reports. Under a phenomenological research design, thematic analysis is used in identifying themes in the data set, in which the developed theme is summarized and finalized as a whole.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Respondents and Themes**

In approaching the purpose of the study, the results are depicted in the manner that, total respondents of twenty stakeholders scatter as 40% were tourists. The local community including business owners represented 40%. The rest of the respondents 20% were the envoys representing government institutes. Out of this 40%, tourists' respondents' and 40% local communities' respondents (50%) were from Ussangoda, and the rest (50%) were from Mahapelessa (Madunagala) site.

The data gathered guided to development of the main 04 parent themes as basic categories that developed according to research objectives. They are awareness, impacts, challenges, and potentials. The researcher has further divided the main themes into sub-themes and further into other sub-nodes. All these themes are extracted from the information given by the respondents.



**Figure 2:** Theme Visualization (Source: Developed by the Researcher)

**Objective 01: To determine the present situation of Geotourism in Sri Lanka**

**Theme 01: Awareness**

Awareness can be defined as a concern about and well-informed interest in a particular situation or development. The researcher has identified the different awareness levels that respondents mentioned during the interviews.



**Table 1: Awareness of Interviewees**

Type of Stakeholder	The number of respondents who participated in the study	Number of respondents who are aware of the Geotourism concept
Tourists	40%	30%
Local Community	40%	0%
Government Envoys	20%	15%
Total	100%	45%

(Source: Personal Interviews 2019)

### **Tourists Perception**

Since researchers identified more younger and educated tourists at the site, most state their awareness of geo-tourism due to their involvement in updated technology, Curiosity, creativity, and better perception of geo-tourism compares to other generations. (*"I heard this concept in my visit to Italy. I think it's a good concept which we can market our unique landscape and environmental conditions sustainably"*, Participant 02: Personal interview, 2019), (*"Yes, I read an article I think it more focuses on geological values in sites. It is a sustainable approach."* Participant 03: Personal interview, 2019), (*"It is a good concept which we can promote our unique landscape in our country"*, Participant 05: Personal interview, 2019).

### **Local Communities' Perception**

Local communities' response was unsatisfactory with zero awareness on geo-tourism since most seem uneducated and lack language usage although interaction with tourists makes them knowledgeable. (*"I have no idea about the concept."*, Participant 13: Personal interview, 2019). Also, the unavailability of information materials on geo-tourism within mainstream information sources in Sri Lanka makes locals reach awareness on these new concepts at the sites. (*"Geotourism, no we don't know. We guess it is something that relates to geography"*, Participant 09: Personal interview, 2019).

### **Governments' Perception**

Although more government envoys awareness is at a good standard, there is the proper mechanism and regulatory framework to initiate the concept. (*"Geotourism is a vast subject in the world. We think about Geo-tourism, to give much awareness, knowledge about the geologic values to the general public. There are lots of places that have geological significance. People are only seeing these things like rocks or soil. It is new to Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka is having a good advantage with diversified significances in small are that tourist can access very easily"*, Participant 19: Personal interview, 2019). Yet Sri Lank endorse diversified tourist locations, attention has declined to relate to new and nature-based tourism concepts as geo-tourism. Overall results predict 45% of the awareness towards the Geotourism satisfactory. It is essential to step on this emerging sustainable approach for tourism development in Sri Lanka. (*"There are no declared geo-sites. There are no laws relating to the protection of geo-sites. In wildlife laws, it covers the*

*vegetation and animals only. The legal framework is too poor that it is difficult to control the sites with existing laws.*" Participant 19: Personal interview, 2019).

## **Objective 02: To figure out the significant contributions that Geotourism can make to the environment, local communities, and the economy.**

### **Theme 02: Impacts**

The study categorized impacts relate to the third objective with three aspects of sustainable approach identified as economic, environmental, and socio-cultural impacts.

The stakeholder response predicts economic impacts are higher and favourable due to geo-tourism at the site since, it generates varied job opportunities, modern living standards, access to small and medium scale businesses, infrastructure development, while creating more alternative income paths to the host community. The depicted results generated through stakeholder views emphasize the similar idea of (Farsani, Coelho, and Costa, 2011), proving that that geo-tourism inspire opportunities for the community.

The findings reveal more women gain a favourable yield through tourism-based activities at Madunagala and Ussangoda sites, proving that the Host community's attitude towards tourism is more favourable if the economic benefits are higher. The researcher identified host communities in Ussangoda and Madunagala expect more at their sites since it benefits their economic sustainability. (*"Mostly we depend on this site. We can sell our products and they enjoy our local drinks like belimal as well. We have good business with the locals. Women are running this small business and it helps us a lot. With the income derived from this, we can manage our lives"*, Participant 09: Personal interview, 2019).

Environmental impacts seem to overpower the negative side due to increasing pollution at the sites, specifically at Ussangoda geo-site although it is declared as a National Park since 2010 as the first proposed geo-park of Sri Lanka. Even though tourists showed consciousness about environmental protection at sites, none of the implementations of the regulatory framework, environmental rules and regulations are practiced at the site. (*"Foreign tourists are conscious of the environmental protection. They follow the normal practices. Our local visitors do not adhere to any practice. They throw the garbage here and there. The lack of garbage collection bins is another problem."*, Participant 10: Personal interview, 2019). Researchers identify it is necessary to enforce environmental conservation of this geo-site especially for locals since it results in the degradation of valuable inherited plants and creepers and animals' lives of Sri Lankan biodiversity. In contrast, Madunagala geo sites perform better with a responsible authority of Ruhunu Tourism bureau (RTB) who collaborates with locals to protect the natural setting of the geo sites, implementing restrictions to preserve its geo heritage and to manage over usage of its resources (hot springs), by tourists.

Socio-cultural impacts determine both positive and negative observations at both Madunagala and Ussangoda geo sites. Local communities derive a higher quality of life, Local Pride due to income and tourist interaction derived through their tourist business that has led these communities to acquire a standard education to their children, community's knowledge on different countries, cultures, and perspectives that sharpen their lives. (*"We earn our living by the business we do on this site. It helps us to raise our living standards"*, Participant 10: Personal interview, 2019).

But on the other hand, alcoholism, and illegal drug usage, indecent behavioural patterns, and costumes reserved through tourists, badly influence young children that collapse their own identity enacted by demonstration effect of western tourists. Although the literature predicted through (Dowling and Newsome, 2010) reveals the involvement of geo-tourism only generates positive cultural and local benefits, relatively, the above study finds both positive as well as

negative impacts in which negative influences outweigh the local benefits in the prevailing scenario of geo-tourism. Upon analysis, of all types of economic, environmental, and socio-cultural can be adopted positively to develop tourism in Sri Lanka, *“Some young tourists do not behave properly. That badly influences the young ones here. Also, drug addicts and alcohol conscious people also come here. The behaviours of young couples are disgusting”*, Participant 09: Personal interview, 2019).

### **Objective 03: To diagnose the potentials and challenges for Geotourism development in Sri Lanka.**

#### **Theme 03: Challenges**

As the third objective of the study the researcher has identified the potentials and challenges for geo-tourism development in Sri Lanka. Place management and conservation are the major challenges identified in this study. The absence of basic infrastructure and facilities and lack of effective promotions to the foreign tourists' market was identified as the issues in place management. The development of touristic infrastructure helps to elaborate on the territorial management plan. Based on the findings the researcher wants to emphasize the good quality infrastructure facilities and promotions are important to ensure economic growth as well as the inclusive growth of these areas. *“Roads leading to the Madunagala area should be improved. Overall rural development should take place”*, Participant 10: Personal interview, 2019). Inclusive growth will help to reduce the income inequality in these geo sites. Infrastructure and promotions will contribute to increasing functional development as well as destination competitiveness. Another challenge was the lack of knowledge of geo conservation. Even though the community commitment to preserving these geo sites is appreciable, the lack of government commitment to conservation is also a major challenge. Lack of integration between the government institutes, lack of funding, lack of enthusiasm to conserve the geo sites as it belongs to the abiotic environment are identified as some challenges for conservation of these geo sites. Initiating strategies will help to overcome these challenges. *“Land exploitation is one of the major challenges, no infrastructure facilities are available”*, Participant 20: Personal interview, 2019).

#### **Theme 04: Potentials**

There are some destinations like Madunagala hermitage which have the potential to develop as a geo tourists' location that consists of geo-archaeological values. According to the responses of local communities and relevant government officials, there are so many locations in Madunagala areas that can draw the attention of tourists as follows, Karadulena Buddhist monastery, Ridiyagama Safari Park, etc.

Ussangoda is having good potential on turtle hatcheries and Ussangoda beach is a dazzling place where tourists can cherish *“Yes, the place should be improved with new activities to attract tourists. If there is a chance to engage in other activities like nature trails it will be better”*, Participant 5: Personal interview, 2019). To overcome some issues, the researcher illustrates some suggestions based on the responses of the tourism stakeholders. Such as using modern technology for interpretations as well as for geo-conservation, creating geo-tourism products and services will be a good platform for experience hunters, rural development without harming the local values. Also considering the potentials based on suggestions and destinations will be used to Geotourism development in Sri Lanka in a sustainable manner

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The findings of this investigation amplify that the Introduction of the Geo-tourism concept can foster economic, environmental, socio-cult sustainable development of tourism in Sri Lanka done within a structured framework. Based on the first initiative, it can be concluded that, although the

awareness of the local community at attraction seems low, the impression of tourist and government are at a higher range than make a favourable scale to promote this emerging concept, since Geotourism is a good platform where visitors can enjoy their journey while appreciating nature and geo heritage of the land.

Reference to the second attainment of the study proves Geotourism can make significant contributions to the economy, environment, and socio-culture in a country. Specifically, It accelerates alternative income generation paths as a poverty alleviation tool to the host community, Also, it is a conservation tool for Environmental protection. But the study depicts the importance of geo conservation strategies since prevailing geo sites are addicted to over usage of natural resources and environmental pollution. As an example, lack of implementations of the available regulatory framework created freedom in Ussangoda National Park has led to polluting the environment such as losing valuable inherited plants and creepers and some animal lives. In the same manner, it fosters life standards, pride, and peace of the local community that guides social consistency in the sites.

The third objective illustrates as follows. The proper place management with quality infrastructure facilities and good promotions are contributing factors to the functional development and competitiveness among destinations. Ussangoda National Park needs to be rehabilitated from the start. Whereas Mahapelessa geo-site needs only upgrading present facilities. Conservation is another challenge observed through the responses. The commitment of the community to preserve these geo sites is appreciating. The Government's commitment towards the development of these geo sites is in a very poor status. Geotourism development does not require big investments as it is a type of niche tourism. It can generate large income with small investments. The government needs to commit more towards the conservation of this geo heritage. The researcher demand that there should be more consideration on environmental conservation of the Ussangoda National Park geo-site as it is the first proposed geo-park of Sri Lanka. Considering the potentials, the researcher identified it under two categories. Destinations to Madunagala and Ussangoda areas will help to develop tourism especially the places that have geo archaeological values. Suggestions like the use of new technology, the introduction of new geo-tourists' products and services will be useful in Geotourism development.

Based on the findings of this investigation it can be concluded as these geo sites, Ussangoda National Park and Mahapelessa (Madunagala) hot springs are in the exploration stage of the Geotourism destination life cycle. So, it is necessary to modernize the road signs, create geo-tourism products and services, and provide quality geo-interpretations, etc., to develop these destinations to increase the arrival of tourists. Although this analysis is on the two geo sites selected by the researcher the principles followed here could be used for any geo sites in Sri Lanka which will fulfil the requirements. When all the findings are analysed, it could be emphasized that Geotourism can be used as a lucrative tool for tourism development in Sri Lanka.

## **Recommendations**

The study predicts Sri Lanka occupies a marketable opportunity to develop Geotourism with astonishing destinations rich in geological, geoarchaeological, geomorphological, significances. Therefore, the researcher suggests the following recommendations to use Geo-tourism as a lucrative tool for tourism development in Sri Lanka.

### **1. Effective Promotions on Geotourism**

Promotional work on Geotourism has to be increased if we are to attract foreign clientele. The geo tourists map should be updated and promoted in a manner that could attract more tourists to these destinations.

## **2. Propagating awareness programs**

Good awareness of the Geotourism concept should be created in society. So that our geo heritages and their values are popularized among people. Steps can be taken to get people who are interested in this field so that they realize and admire the importance and values of our geo heritages.

## **3. Provide Quality Geo interpretations**

To deliver the geological information effectively staff and tour guides have to be trained specially in the less attractive geo sites.

## **4. Declaration of Geo sites**

Geosites will be more popularized if they are declared by the government with relevant maps.

## **5. Improve proper Place Management.**

Place management in geo sites may be undertaken by private, public, or voluntary organizations to provide better facilities to the tourists. It should ensure that both tourists and the place are well protected and secured in the process.

## **6. Adaptation of Geoconservation**

Geosites should be well maintained and protected for future generations. There are numerous ways of preserving and conserving these geo heritages, for instance, the establishment of geo parks. Though a proposal has been made in this regard no action has been taken yet in Sri Lanka. Serious thought should be given to this geo conservation concept to protect the geo heritage and geodiversity.

## **7. The Government Institutes Should Have More Integration**

To protect the geo heritage sites all over Sri Lanka, the relevant government institutes should get integrated. That will be the proper way to preserve the resources. So that Government institutes can focus on Geo-tourism as a novel strategy for the development of tourism in Sri Lanka.

## **8. Introduction of Geo-ethics**

The early transmission of skills and knowledge on geodiversity, biodiversity, and culture to children will contribute to making a critical person. Providing awareness, knowledge about geology using geo ethics can help to make a responsible future generation.

## **9. Provide Incentives for Researchers to Promote Research on Geotourism**

Providing incentives would be a good strategy to increase the research on Geotourism. The researchers would not choose this geo-tourism field as it is more focused on the abiotic environment. If the government could provide the incentives to carry out the research on the geo-tourism field, it will lead to motivate the research.

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**A CRITICAL LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE INTERRELATEDNESS BETWEEN  
THE FRAMEWORKS OF CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY AND INDIGENOUS IDENTITIES  
IN TOURISM**

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**Abstract**

The holistic success of Indigenous peoples engaged in tourism stems from focusing on strengthening identities in different contexts, such as political, cultural, economic, or macro, meso, micro, and individual levels. The term 'cultural sustainability' highlights cultural integrity, ecological diversity, and socio-economic progress and advocates that the political discourse of local communities should be a positive framework to strengthen Indigenous identities in tourism. The special political and cultural nature of Indigenous identities should, in turn, give impetus to culturally sustainable developments in tourism. Theoretically, using cultural sustainability as a tourism framework to guide Indigenous peoples should bring positive outcomes to tourism enterprises. However, academic tourism research still lacks focus on the interrelatedness between cultural sustainability as a framework and Indigenous identity in tourism. Therefore, this study aims to review this issue critically. Accordingly, an overview of the representations of cultural sustainability as a framework in tourism and the different natures of Indigenous identities are made, and the interrelatedness between cultural sustainability as a framework and Indigenous identities in tourism is discussed. This paper contributes to tourism knowledge by providing critical insights into this interrelatedness and cultivating the positive role of the interrelatedness in tourism practices.

**Keywords:** Cultural sustainability, Indigenous identities, Indigenous tourism, Empowerment

**Introduction**

Indigenous tourism was formed in the early 20th century and is based on travellers' curiosity and interest in the exotic cultures of Indigenous peoples (Hinch & Butler, 2007). In the second half of the 20th century, indigenous tourism was construed as a positive strategy for developing local communities (Hall & Tucker, 2004). The possibility of indigenous tourism attracting investment and creating jobs for socio-economic growth has also led to a growing number of Indigenous communities worldwide engaging with tourism (Warnholtz & Barkin, 2018). However, many authors have described the negative impacts of indigenous tourism, such as cultural appropriation, inauthenticity, and feelings of inferiority caused by Indigenous peoples' disadvantaged and marginalised positions in tourism (Yang & Wall, 2008; d'Hautesserre, 2010; PATA, 2015). Since indigenous tourism is primarily cultural, integrity is very significant for its sustainability. Therefore, to deal with the issues above and promote holistic success for Indigenous peoples in tourism, strengthening Indigenous identities in cultural, economic, and especially political contexts in tourism is proposed as a critical solution in many studies (d'Hautesserre, 2010; Larrakia Declaration, 2012; PATA, 2015).

According to Soini and Birkeland (2014), 'cultural sustainability' highlights the cultural integrity, ecological diversity, socio-economic growth, and political discourse of local communities. The term 'cultural sustainability' should be a holistic framework for strengthening Indigenous identities in tourism. Meanwhile, the special political and cultural nature of Indigenous identities should also promote culturally sustainable development in tourism (Scherrer, 2020). Therefore, the concept of cultural sustainability as a tourism framework should bring positive outcomes to



benefit tourism enterprises and strengthen Indigenous identities. In tourism studies, research on cultural sustainability focused mainly on cultural heritage and intellectual property rights protection or codes of conduct for visitors and accurate site interpretation (GSTC, 2016; Thimm, 2019). The interrelatedness between cultural sustainability as a framework and Indigenous identities in tourism has not received much attention in tourism research. Therefore, this study aims to discuss this issue critically. To achieve this aim, we will first review cultural sustainability and the representations of cultural sustainability as a framework for tourism. We will then analyse the different natures of Indigenous identities and their roles in tourism. Finally, we will discuss the interrelatedness between cultural sustainability as a framework and Indigenous identities in tourism. Consequently, we propose suggestions to complement cultural sustainability as a tourism framework to strengthen Indigenous identities holistically.

## Methodology

This paper uses a critical literature review method to review studies related to cultural sustainability, Indigenous peoples, and indigenous tourism. A traditional literature review is a written appraisal of the existing knowledge on a topic without a prescribed methodology (Jesson *et al.*, 2011). Jesson and Lacey (2006) posited that to transform existing knowledge into new theories and foster a deeper understanding, literature reviews should take a critical approach. A critical literature review involves analysing positive and negative features, which means thinking critically about the strengths and weaknesses of previous research (Jesson *et al.*, 2011). For example, in a discussion about innovation in sustainable tourism research, a critical analysis called for an unrelenting examination of any form of knowledge and underlying dogmas that have significant implications for developing knowledge and theories (Bramwell & Lane, 2011). Accordingly, the subjectivity of this method is inevitably criticised. However, Montero (2005) explained that there could not be an object without a subject or a subject without an object. For example, an objective world and the subject defining it, conceptualising, denying, or affirming it are both real (Montero, 2005). The method of this article comprises three steps based on the guidance of Jesson (2011): first, consultation with a qualified librarian to identify relevant electronic databases to search; second, selecting a dataset of studies by applying appropriate criteria; and third, critically coding and analysing the studies.

In this study, searches were performed on the Scopus and Elsevier databases and supplemented with the 'Google Scholar' search tool. The keywords used were related to the topic of this article, such as the tourism framework of cultural sustainability, Indigenous peoples, Indigenous identity, and indigenous tourism. The selected procedure included a three-step exclusion procedure based on the filtering criteria. In the first step, studies where the terms related to 'cultural sustainability', 'Indigenous identity,' and 'indigenous tourism' did not appear in the title, keywords, or subtitle section were excluded. In the second step, abstracts were read in detail, and studies that did not focus on 'cultural sustainability' and 'Indigenous identity' but instead mainly discussed cultural policies, socio-economic development, or tourists' experiences were excluded. In the third step, full texts were read, and studies that described a very similar perspective to a companion article were then excluded. As a result, a final set of 46 relevant studies including journal papers, books, book chapters, conference papers, and doctoral theses were critically coded after the three-step procedure of exclusions. These studies were published between 1998 and 2021. The time range is consistent with a longitudinal perspective that facilitates a critical understanding of what has or has not changed the specific study over time by recognising previous studies (Carduff *et al.*, 2015). We also acknowledge that some relevant publications exist that were not included in this review. This is a limitation of the study that it may not have included all relevant literature, and it does not include, for instance, other types of literature beyond English language articles identifiable in the above databases. However, these limitations are consistent with the methodology chosen, which is a value-free selection of a selected epistemological entity.

## Cultural Sustainability as a Framework in Tourism

Sustainable development refers to development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations (WCED, 1987, quoted in Soini & Birkeland, 2014, p. 213). It is primarily considered an economic, ecological, and social condition, representing three so-called pillars (Soini & Birkeland, 2014). Culture is often mentioned as an aspect of social sustainability, and whether to include it as a fourth pillar is an ongoing debate (Axelsson *et al.*, 2013). Cultural sustainability was first mentioned in 1995 and defined as 'inter-and intra-generational access to cultural resources by the World Commission on Culture and Development (WCCD, 1995 quoted in Axelsson *et al.*, 2013, p. 217). Subsequently, Soini and Dessein (2016) specifically analysed three different representations of culture in sustainable development, from the micro, meso, and macro levels (see Table 1): the first considers culture as a *capital* in sustainability and sees cultural sustainability as a *micro paradigm* and parallel to ecological, social, and economic sustainability; the second representation refers to culture as a *mediating instrument* for achieving economic, social, and ecological sustainability at a meso level; and the third considers culture as a *holistic macro paradigm* of sustainability that broadly incorporates cultural, ecological, social, and economic sustainability. All three representations can be seen as interlinked, both theoretically and practically.

The political dimension is ignored in these three representations. According to Swanson and DeVereaux (2017), empowerment and self-governance are rooted in a culturally sustainable framework. In this framework, decisions are made concerning culture, while culture is embodied in the local peoples' habits, norms, traditions, and beliefs (Swanson & DeVereaux, 2017). This means how all individuals in a community can direct decision-making. Hawkes (2001) also specifically pointed out that political advocacy has important implications for cultural sustainability. To achieve community cohesion and maintain cultural identification, communities should have the right and responsibility to engage with the decision-making process (Hawkes, 2001, p. 16). The third representation of cultural sustainability as a *holistic macro paradigm* can easily incorporate this political dimension. Combined with the political dimension, cultural sustainability would be a good holistic macro framework to empower marginalised people such as Indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities from cultural, ecological, social, economic, and political contexts (Soini & Dessein, 2016; Hawkes, 2001; Dyer *et al.*, 2003).

In tourism research, cultural sustainability as a tourism framework also focuses on three different representations (see Table 1) and is generally related to community-based tourism (Farsani *et al.*, 2012; Soini & Birkeland, 2014; Johnston, 2006; Thimm, 2019; PATA, 2015). In community-based tourism practices, cultural sustainability is a micro tourism framework that focuses on utilising cultural forms such as traditional arts and cultural heritage as cultural capital to attract global markets (Throsby, 2016). The tourism framework of cultural sustainability aims to underline the importance of reviving cultural heritage and maintaining cultural integrity and diversity through tourism (Farsani *et al.*, 2012; Soini & Birkeland, 2014).

Cultural sustainability as a meso-tourism framework refers to the role of cultural mediation in tourism. This is manifested in the ability to utilise cultural values and intellectual properties to achieve socio-economic and ecological sustainability in tourism (Dyer *et al.*, 2003). This ability is also related to the intrinsic values of local culture and local education. For example, a Maori worldview can be seen as a cultural mediation that provides positive tourism planning approaches in response to the influence of COVID-19 (Carr, 2020). However, these two representations of tourism frameworks do not only have positive effects but might also have a negative influence on local communities and local people. For example, the demise of the local language, vanishing local customs, and traditional ways of life are caused by inevitable tourism marketing and unjust power relationships in tourism (Farsani *et al.*, 2012; d'Hautesserre, 2010; Dyer *et al.*, 2003).

**Table 1: Three representations of cultural sustainability**

	Micro levels	Meso levels	Macro levels
Cultural sustainability	Culture as capital in sustainability	Culture as a mediating instrument for sustainability	Culture as sustainability
Cultural sustainability as a tourism framework	Cultural forms used as cultural capital to attract tourists and thus revive culture in tourism	The ability to utilise cultural value as a mediating instrument to achieve socio-economic, and ecological sustainability in tourism	A holistic framework to empower local people in tourism from different contexts and levels

The third representation of cultural sustainability is a macro tourism framework that focuses on promoting holistic success for local people and communities in tourism (Al-Hagla, 2005; PATA, 2015; Thimm, 2019). As an earlier scholar who researched cultural sustainability in tourism, Al-Hagla (2005) stated that cultural sustainability could be seen as a conceptual framework to resolve the conflict between empowering local communities and pursuing economic growth in tourism. Furthermore, the report of indigenous tourism and human rights in Asia and the Pacific region further complemented many different elements of the tourism framework of cultural sustainability, such as respect, protection, empowerment, consultation, business, and community to guide tourism stakeholders to empower Indigenous peoples (PATA, 2015). The tourism framework of cultural sustainability in these sources focused on imploring developers of indigenous tourism to include and empower the local community in their planning. However, insufficient attention has been paid to the interrelatedness between cultural sustainability as a framework and Indigenous identities' self-empowerment in tourism. Thimm (2019) created criteria and indicators of culturally sustainable tourism aspects that apply to the self-empowerment of Indigenous peoples, which features good self-governance, human rights, control of the land, and control of tourism products. However, Thimm (2019) mainly focused on strengthening Indigenous identities in tourism. This was done from a macro-level perspective of human rights to a meso-level of land and self-determination rights, and finally to a micro-level of controlling tourism products. How Indigenous peoples exercise these powers from the individual level in tourism has not been discussed in detail.

### **Indigenous Identities and Specific Rights**

Many terms are used interchangeably to refer to Indigenous peoples according to geo-historical contexts, such as *Aboriginal* in Australia and Canada and *Ethnic Minority* in China (Dyer *et al.*, 2003; Yang & Wall, 2008). 'Indigenous' is from the Latin word '*indigenous*' and refers to being born or produced naturally in a land or region; it is primarily used to describe indigenous inhabitants or natural products (Waldron, 2003). 'Indigenous people' refer to descendants of the original inhabitants of specific land who have not migrated after the entrance of invaders (Waldron, 2003). However, Kingsbury (1998) first pointed out that the requirements for being Indigenous people are cultural identification and close connection with ancestral land, rather than being associated with the land or territory for countless generations. Additionally, there is a disagreement about whether having a 'European colonial history' is a necessary condition for 'being' Indigenous peoples. Since there are descendants of the original inhabitants of a land, such as the Naxi people in China and the Maasai in Tanzania (Yang & Wall, 2008; Melubo and Carr, 2019), while there is no substantial European colonial history in these regions. When discussing the rights of Indigenous people, there are also discrepancies between theoretical and practical rights. Theoretically, Indigenous people should have general human rights and specific Indigenous rights, such as the right to land (PATA, 2015). However, in practice, many governments worldwide only recognise a fraction of land as formally or legally belonging to

Indigenous peoples (The World Bank, 2020). This section discusses Indigenous identities in general and their role in the tourism field to address these inconsistencies.

'Indigeneity' generally as a characteristic attribute of Indigenous peoples, has two meanings (Merlan, 2009). The first meaning is used to describe the global identity of 'First People' or 'People of the Land', while the second meaning refers to a strong sense of belonging and close local connections (Merlan, 2009). As a holistic representation of Indigenous identities, this characteristic provides a theoretical foundation for Indigenous peoples' specific political rights, cultural identification, and Indigenous knowledge. Specifically, the characteristic of 'indigeneity' lies in Indigenous peoples' close connections with their land, language, and ceremonial life (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005). Therefore, Indigenous peoples should have the right to land and self-determination. This is because priority to land rights is specifically granted to those whose ancestors have occupied the land (Fresa, 2000), and the right to self-determination is based on land rights (Cambou, 2019). As mentioned before, these specific Indigenous rights are political issues that rely heavily on government recognition (The World Bank, 2020).

Some regions intentionally use different terms to refer to Indigenous peoples to avoid political challenges. For example, the Naxi people in China are called an ethnic minority (Yang & Wall, 2008), and for the Maasai in Tanzania, the term 'pastoralists' replaced 'indigenous' (Melubo and Carr, 2019). These terms both cloud the special relationship between Indigenous identities and land. The strong cultural identification of Indigenous peoples stems from their valuable Indigenous knowledge that, in turn, can enhance Indigenous peoples' political discourse. As Mercer (2010) pointed out, Indigenous knowledge is an outcome of diachronic observation accumulated over generations of detailed observation and interactions with local ecosystems. It has great value in preserving ecological integrity, biodiversity, and environmental health and can act as a cultural capital for self-empowerment (The World Bank, 2020). For example, Guna, a Latin American Indigenous community, created Guna Tourism as an indigenous tourism mode. They have a thorough knowledge of the region's environmental capacity according to their diachronic observation. Therefore, they can respond to growing visitor numbers and ultimately decide on providing accommodation, activities, and retail development. In this example, Indigenous knowledge contributed to the Guna people, leading to the planning and monitoring of the visitor sector and being in a dominant position in tourism (Pereiro, 2016).

According to Hinch and Butler (2007), Indigenous people are engaged in tourism either as the controller of tourism resources or as the essence of the attraction. In tourism, when Indigenous identity is merely an attraction without control rights, cultural appropriation and feelings of inferiority can occur. This is the case of the Kayan 'long neck' people, who are refugees from Myanmar in Thailand and lack capital control; instead, they are being marketed as exhibits in a 'human zoo' in which much of their cultural dignity is lost (PATA, 2015). Moreover, Indigenous people can also play the role of managers in tourism businesses. This will break the anti-growth stereotype of Indigenous peoples and provide them with a positive economic image in the global market (Bunten, 2010). Thereby, there is a viewpoint that indigenous tourism enterprises are considered successful if Indigenous communities can control tourism (Ruhanen & Whitford, 2019). However, this viewpoint is questioned by the ongoing failure of tourism programs. For example, in New Caledonia, Kanak people control cultural resources to indigenise tourism productions with the support of local governments. However, it is still difficult for Kanak to make a positive connection between Indigenous value systems and tourism businesses (d'Hautesserre, 2010). According to Warnholtz and Barkin (2018), the failures of these cases are caused by the neoliberal economic policy of governments, which puts the sustainability of tourism businesses above the sustainability of communities' cultures. Consequently, for indigenous tourism to be sustainable, Indigenous peoples should control tourism enterprises' management at the micro-level and tourism policies at the macro and meso levels (Ruhanen & Whitford, 2019). Scherrer (2020) demonstrated that Indigenous identities, which carry special political power and cultural

identification in tourism, can facilitate culturally appropriate business models in indigenous tourism contexts.

### **Interrelatedness of Cultural Sustainability and Indigenous identities in Tourism**

If the goal is to strengthen Indigenous identities for holistic success in tourism, then a holistic tourism framework that includes all contexts of culture, socio-economy, ecology, and politics is necessary. When cultural sustainability functions as a holistic framework to guide indigenous tourism, Indigenous peoples should be the ultimate decision-makers and beneficiaries of tourism development. Indigenous peoples can be a driving force in tourism and bring positive outcomes to tourism enterprises (UNWTO, 2019). However, at times, this may result in hindering tourism development. Therefore, we focus on discussing the interrelatedness between cultural sustainability and Indigenous identities in tourism practices. Consequently, we present suggestions to complement the current cultural sustainability framework to strengthen Indigenous identities in tourism.

Cultural sustainability is difficult to define and measure (Throsby 2016). It can be seen as a fluid, and evolutionary term. This means that the representation of cultural heritage is not in a fixed form for perpetuity, but rather a constant change by intertwining past and new values (Suntikul, 2018). Cultural authenticity is also difficult to determine because it can be understood from many different standards, such as objectivity, subjectivity, existentialism, negotiation, authentication, and compromise (De Bernardi, 2020). The current tourism framework of cultural sustainability has set two criteria for determining cultural authenticity: Indigenous communities decide on marketable cultural assets, and only community-approved tourism products are on the market (Thimm, 2019). These two criteria are subjective, making it challenging to correct current tourism products that may lead to culturally unsustainable practices. For example, the local people in Cheung Chau Island, Hong Kong, self-determined to use plastic buns to replace edible steamed buns (made of flour) used in the past. Subsequently, they market plastic buns as talismans and traditional trademark images of the Bun Festival (Chew, 2009). This replacement should not be criticised as inauthentic, whether this was done from the tourism framework of cultural sustainability or an environmentally friendly and hygienic perspective. However, this is eclipsing a heritage (past) dimension that threatens the cultural sustainability of tourism in the future.

In modern society, some Indigenous peoples embrace neoliberal discourses, claiming that success is mainly driven by economic growth (Jamal *et al.*, 2010). Some Indigenous peoples would prioritise economic development over cultural preservation and trust that the economic benefits would help them self-gentrify their identities in tourism (Ranasinghe & Cheng, 2018). In this social context, cultural sustainability in tourism practices can be alienated to primarily consider economic aspects, where culture is seen as an asset for economic development (Soini & Birkeland, 2014). Indigenous peoples are, in this sense, willing to pursue commercialisation and commodification in tourism that may hurt cultural authenticity. This may even alienate the direction of cultural sustainability to another economic extreme, such as the money-driven tourism model in the Vedda community in Sri Lanka (Ranasinghe & Cheng, 2018). However, the profits resulting from commercialisation may flow largely to local entrepreneurs and people.

According to the political advocacy of cultural sustainability, local communities can self-determine who is qualified to participate in the local tourism business (Thimm, 2019). The political dimension of Indigenous identities, which is related to colonial history and ancestral land, also brings challenges for sustainable tourism development and Indigenous rights. Indigenous tourism is generally more attractive to international tourists than domestic travellers (Vermeersch, *et al.*, 2016). This may be because some non-Indigenous domestic travellers prefer to remain ignorant of Indigenous cultures in their home country, allowing them to cope with feelings of shame or guilt about their colonial history (Travesi, 2018) and increases the likelihood of developing culturally sustainable tourism. For example, many indigenous tourism enterprises

are becoming victims of the COVID-19 pandemic, as their main international markets have effectively been shut down by border restrictions. One specific case, Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park— a foundation product in Australia preserving Indigenous culture and educating people to be proud of their identities—is reported to be closing its doors for good (Cluff & Rigby, 2021). Moreover, Indigenous peoples' special relationship with the land seems to imply that the state's sovereignty is now superseded or at least questioned (Hathaway, 2016). This is also why many governments worldwide recognise only a fraction of Indigenous rights or use other terms to name Indigenous peoples (The World Bank, 2020; Melubo and Carr, 2019; Yang & Wall, 2008).

There seem to be forces outside the Indigenous peoples' control, such as the immeasurability of cultural sustainability, the neoliberal ideology in society, or the sensitive political dimension of Indigenous identities. However, this does not mean that Indigenous people cannot face these forces positively, based on the tourism framework. The critical factor is to develop Indigenous peoples' capabilities at an individual level. This issue has not been discussed in detail in the current tourism framework of cultural sustainability.

For Indigenous people, education is increasingly becoming a critical tool for developing personal and community capabilities. In this process, the representation of education embedded by Western norms and values is criticised and contested (May & Aikman, 2003). Indigenous education proponents argue that Western standards of knowledge are devaluating, denying, or misunderstanding Indigenous knowledge (Wotherspoon, 2015). However, inclusive education systems embracing both formal and informal learning respect Indigenous heritage and Indigenous peoples' self-education (May & Aikman, 2003). This can contribute to a sense of self-worth, confidence, and other essential bases of individual and cultural identities by cultivating mentorship and related social and communication skills (Wotherspoon, 2015). In Indigenous communities, informal education enables youths in Indigenous groups to learn from their elders (Scherrer, 2020; Kunasekaran *et al.*, 2017). This enhances the authority of elders as cultural advisers and teachers and facilitates intergenerational culture transfer. Consequently, Indigenous people can interact culturally and educationally with tourists (Sharma, 2015). These cultural interactions contribute to intimate encounters and deepening non-Indigenous guests' understanding of Indigenous practices (Travesi, 2018). This contribution is significant since there can be no reconciliation except based on a deeper understanding of colonial history and the Indigenous lived experiences (Smallwood, 2015).

Moreover, formal learning has dominated the experiences of childhood and youth in contemporary societies (Wotherspoon, 2015). Integrating formal and informal education carries significant promise for strengthening Indigenous identities and promoting tourism sustainability (Sharma, 2015). Indigenous entrepreneurship as a holistic outcome of an integrated education system respects ecological and cultural integrity, embraces economic wealth, and advances political identification (Swanson & DeVereaux, 2017; Peredo *et al.*, 2004). From the analysis, a good educational experience is an important factor for Indigenous individuals to harness their political rights in tourism effectively. As in the case of the Dambeemangaddee peoples mentioned above, their cultural and political identification enables them to exercise their rights well in tourism, making tourism serve the community and aligns with the state's interests and matters of sovereignty (Scherrer, 2020).

Sustainable tourism is a subset of ethical tourism with its core value (Tribe, 2002). The ethical value of cultural sustainability in indigenous tourism aims to develop tourism as a powerful tool to further enhance Indigenous peoples' self-empowerment (Thimm, 2019). However, for Aristotle, a man could not attain moral excellence if he merely thought noble thoughts and did not put them into practice (Ackrill, 1973 quoted in Tribe, 2002, p. 313). In other words, ethics are embedded in the action itself (Tribe, 2002). Hence, making ethical principles for guiding action is significant in indigenous tourism. The report of indigenous tourism and human rights in Asia and the Pacific region has proposed ethics principles for guiding tourism stakeholders (PATA, 2015).

All stakeholders must respect and protect traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions, and cultural heritage in tourism. Indigenous people are suggested to develop their management capacities through opportunities for tourism training and related vocational training. The opinions of Indigenous peoples should be fully consulted when making tourism policies. Moreover, establishing representative organisation has proven effective for Indigenous peoples to enhance economic development and exercise political rights (UNWTO, 2019).

## Conclusion and Implications

In this study, we first considered how cultural sustainability as a framework guided tourism. We then queried the role of Indigenous identities in promoting the sustainable development of tourism. Finally, we critically discussed how cultural sustainability as a framework and Indigenous identities in tourism practices interrelate.

The concept of cultural sustainability can be a holistic framework to empower marginalised people from cultural, ecological, social, economic, and political contexts. The special nature of Indigenous identities constituted in history, land, culture, and politics can make Indigenous peoples a driving force in tourism, facilitating culturally sustainable development. Theoretically, it should produce positive outcomes for tourism and Indigenous peoples in the interrelatedness between cultural sustainability as a framework and Indigenous identities in tourism. However, by critically reviewing the interrelatedness, we found in tourism practices, some Indigenous people may not always exercise these special powers well to self-empower and to facilitate tourism's cultural sustainability. The development of Indigenous individuals' capacities should be considered in the tourism framework of cultural sustainability to better guide Indigenous peoples in tourism. This would make the framework more holistic, not only in different contexts but also at different levels. Specifically, accepting inclusive education and compliance with ethical principles complement the framework at the individual level.

This paper contributes to tourism knowledge concerning the interrelatedness between cultural sustainability as a framework and Indigenous identity in tourism from an epistemological perspective. By critically reviewing this interrelatedness, our paper also complements some operable suggestions at the individual level by promoting a holistic application of cultural sustainability as a framework to strengthen Indigenous identities in tourism. This stems from cultivating the positive role of interrelatedness, which could resolve issues like cultural appropriation and inauthenticity in tourism practices and contribute to a more holistic success for Indigenous people engaged in tourism.

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