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From Over-Tourism to Sustainable Innovations

Tarja Meristö*

Laurea University of Applied Sciences, c/o Bollbölenie 386, FIN –
21610 Kirjala, Finland
E-mail: tarja.meristo@laurea.fi

* Corresponding author

Abstract: Responsible tourism requires sustainable innovations to fulfil the requirements of the future. According to Krippendorf (1986) the term responsible tourism has its roots in Switzerland late 1980's. Today, responsible tourism will cover the whole value chain and ecosystem with the shared vision of sustainable future. In this paper, we are looking for new opportunities for tourism industry in terms of sustainable innovations, i.e. innovations meeting the challenges threatening the globe and its ecosystems by various tourism activities. As a result from the co-creation process with 36 master students a wide range of new sustainable business opportunities as well as recommendations for actors in the tourism ecosystem will be presented both for business and leisure travel. Methods used are taboo analysis and mini-trend analysis and futures headlines analysis, too. This paper is connected to Motion project financed by EU Erasmus+ program 2020 – 2023.

Keywords: Over-tourism; sustainability; mini-trends; responsibility; taboos; visionary concept design

1. Problem: What specific innovation management problem does the submission focus on?

Over-tourism is a growing problem in the popular tourist areas everywhere in the world. The regions will look for new ways to attract more visitors and at the same time they want to avoid destroying natural environment and local cultural features. In this paper the focus is in the sustainable tourism and in the innovations to run the tourism business with a responsible way. Background for the paper lies in a joint project called Motion, where five European regions from five EU countries will develop themselves towards sustainable tourism instead of over-tourism. Methodologically, taboo recognition, mini-trend analysis and future headline exercise have produced visionary concepts for sustainable tourism beyond Covid 19 pandemic.

The global world creates growth opportunities for many businesses, including services related to tourism and its ecosystem. Although, the growing number of tourists will cause unintended consequences both in global and local context. Increased number of flights will escalate the climate change, whereas tourists in resorts will exploit e.g. local natural and human resources. The term responsible tourism has its roots in Switzerland late 1980's (Krippendorf 1986). It includes a fight against climate change, but also e.g. a protection for cultural heritage. In long run, all the actors in the tourism field need visionary concepts for sustainable innovations along the whole value chain. So far, the solutions are "one point innovations" concerning e.g. airplane pollution, waste management at hotels or consumer behavior in resorts. Instead of this, the tourism field needs a holistic view of the sustainable business and its practical solutions as a system.

2. Current understanding: What is known about the problem, who and how has it been tackled before?

Sustainable tourism will take into consideration economic, social and environmental impacts described in United Nations' sustainable goals (UN 2017). Many tourist organisations and individual countries will promote these principles, but there is no consensus for the sustainable tourism development more widely in the world. Also, the systemic view of the whole ecosystem and of its critical points need more attention instead of sustainable actions in the eyes of tourism industry or of an individual tourist. Instead of promoting only principles, responsible tourism needs sustainable innovations with practical advices on how to run tourism business in a responsible way towards sustainable development goals.

The value chain of tourism has been analyzed lately Rahmiati et al (2020). They point out the requirements for service business value chain instead of value chain for products. The value for the tourists is often intangible and not measurable, rather it reflects the feelings regarding not only the service itself, but also the feelings the personnel in various phases will rise up. The value chain for the (sustainable) tourism is following the service business logic by nature: the customers are looking for information before their trip, they need services concerning the logistics to the tourist place, in there and excursions during their stay, but they also need hospitality services of a wide range, including accommodation, restaurants and bar but also cultural services and other activities. Before and during services need also post-services after the trip, to keep the customer satisfied and to ensure their commitment to come once again and to recommend the destination and its services to the friends, too.

Sustainability and responsibility seem to become a more important choice criteria for customers in every business, also in tourism, and we have to integrate it as a part of the value chain in tourism in all phases, before, during and after the trip, including all the actors in the tourism ecosystem to keep the competitive position of tourism in people's life and mind.

3. Interest and Research question: What is the submission's goal?

For the innovation community it is important to find out the systemic view of the tourism value chain and its ecosystem as a whole in order to develop solutions towards the sustainable tourism, and to point out the responsible actors, who can and should develop new approaches to deal with environmental, social and economic challenges in terms of sustainable development. Especially in these days of Covid19 pandemic global innovation community has to combine its strength and really try to develop a new systemic view with practical solutions to the tourism industry and to the people's needs and preferences in it.

The aim of this paper is to figure out the new opportunities for tourism industry as a whole as well as for the different actors in the tourism ecosystem in the terms of sustainable innovations. First, what are the critical innovations needed in practise on the way towards the sustainable tourism? Second, which are the taboos restricting sustainable innovations in the tourism field? Third, who are the key actors in the tourism ecosystem, when thinking the future of tourism in the terms of sustainability?

4 Research design: How precisely and in detail was the work executed -describe the methodology/approach

This paper is a part of the Motion project financed by Erasmus+ 2020 to 2023. The aim of Motion is to raise awareness of over-tourism as well as to increase understanding about the value of sustainable tourism. Motion project has partners from five EU regions: in Germany Fehmarn, in Spain Granada, in Lithuania Klaipeda, in Finland Rovaniemi and in Poland Torun. Laurea UAS in Finland coordinates the project.

In this paper I will describe the process to produce visionary concepts for sustainable tourism as well as the results of the workshop to design those innovations. Laurea's master students in the Futures management program, altogether 36 people from different business fields, participated the process during the spring 2021.

The process consisted of two sessions: On the 14th January 2021 the principles of futures research and Motion projects have been presented to the group. They also had an exercise concerning megatrends and wild cards influencing on the future of tourism generally. On the 13th March 2021 the participants worked for to recognize taboos in the field of sustainable tourism. They also created impact wheels and analyzed mini-trends based on those wheels according to Vanston's concept (Vanston & Vanston 2010). By using futures headlines as a tool the participants finally created visionary concepts for sustainable tourism and for its different actors.

Taboos are issues and themes usually kept in silence and if discussed, no consequences can be seen in practice based on that discussion. Taboos are often the reason for the unforeseen future, i.e. the new events and issues will arise as surprises, because there is no place for them in the mindset of people. To see the future alternatives more precisely, the taboos have to be recognized and analyzed, too.

Mini-trend analysis will use as a tool the impact wheel, where the certain trend, in our case responsibility and sustainable development in tourism, will be analyzed through the lenses of impacts, both direct and indirect ones. By using impact wheel, the new insights will be discovered as a basis for the business purposes and service concepts supporting that. Impact wheel is a tool to discover the short-term opportunities not yet recognized. These opportunities lie behind megatrends, which are widely well-known and accepted almost everywhere [Vanston & Vanston, 2010].

Mini-trend analysis includes seven ways to find new business opportunities in a short term perspective, e.g. 2-3 years ahead, whereas megatrends will describe the new challenges in long run, 5-10 years ahead and even beyond. List to seek for minitrends is as follows [Vanston & Vanston, 2010]:

1. Follow the money (investors)
2. Follow the leaders (influential persons or companies)
3. Examine limits (physical, perceptual, practical)
4. Consider human nature (beliefs, motivations)
5. Take note of demographics (e.g. ageing, urbanization)
6. Analyze frustrations (troubles like long waits)
7. Search for convergences (potential interactions between trends)

Futures headlines tool will express the findings in a communicative way to reach the audience and to attract them to work further to the new service, product or business

solution, i.e. to get to the market new ways of doing things or at least to weak up the listeners to be more aware of the things which need improvements in order to achieve the sustainable goals in tourism, and mote widely in global context, too.

5 Findings: What are the main outcomes and results?

The work connected to the project Motion with the master students in futures management program has provided co-creative innovation sessions to imagine and analyze alternative concepts for the sustainable future in tourism. Especially the estimates regarding the volume of tourism in different age groups or the variation in destinations after the pandemic will bring to the table questions like Does the younger generation reduce the volume of tourism in their life or at least, do they use more virtual tourism services instead of real travelling, because of the climate change and other reasons based on sustainability requirements? At least the new applications not only serving online tourism, but also calculating and estimating in real time personal CO2 footprints before, during and after the trip to give enough information to renew the travel plans more sustainable or at least less destroyable.

The workshop participants, 36 together from different business fields had a good insight to the tourism both in business and leisure. They were working during the session in ten smaller groups focusing first on the taboo analysis and then preparing mini-trends based on the impact wheels, producing concepts for responsible and sustainable innovations in tourism.

Taboos

According to Cambridge dictionary taboos are something which people usually avoid for religious or social reasons. The participants listed taboos restricting the sustainable development in tourism, e.g. *Tourists in "all inclusive resorts" do not want to give up their privileges in spite of the poverty in the local surroundings (Bubble taravelling); Human right problems in tourist areas will kept in silence, otherwise the prices will get higher; CO2 compensation in the prices of flight tickets are in discussion, but people still are using cheap offers; Rich people prioritize travelling - will the economic sustainability always win the social sustainability? Flight shame because of the Covid19 will change consumer behavior.* These are some examples of the taboo list created by the workshop participants.

Impact wheels

Based on impact wheels, the participants recognized mini-trends arising from the trend "responsible and sustainable development" and its impacts on tourism, but also impacts based on the trend "Continuous threat of pandemic", which is closely related to tourism and needs clearly sustainable innovations to carry on tourism further into the future.

Examples of sustainable innovations in this phase of the workshop was recognized as follows: *Virtual Cultural Tours; Private local experiences with high price/low number of people; Waste management innovations recruiting local people; Circular economy principles in practice - competition for tourism industry actors worldwide; Standard of living in tourism resorts following the general level in the arrival country, not following the departure country's standards; Co-creation in producing services - tourists working for local people.*

Futures headlines

Futures headlines based on the visionary concepts will arise some examples in the eyes of responsible tourism: *Certified tourism resorts and hotels only accepted; Virtual reality is in tourism now; End of mass tourism; Bottom of pyramid -winner in global tourism growth.*

The whole ecosystem in tourism consists of leisure and business travelers, logistic actors, hotels and restaurants, special local tourist services in culture and, entertainment, in seminars and exhibitions, but also ordinary local and net-based global services in everyday life. After the pandemic the business travel will stay on a lower level than before pandemic because of the new practices and tools in virtual meetings and remote control work life. On the other hand, there will be a certain amount of a demand for tourism and travel in leisure time for various consumer groups. It is still an open question, will it realize soon after the pandemic will be, if not over, at least manageable because of the high vaccination rate widely or are people after the pandemic really more aware of the connections between their travel behavior and the environmental status.

6. Contribution and practical implications

This paper will contribute to the discussion of sustainable innovations in the field of tourism. It will debate the tensions between economic, social and environmental sustainability, having an insight to the world in and beyond pandemic Covid19. It also will apply three futures tools to find out the underlying mechanismus on the way towards the sustainable innovations, in other words by using taboos, mini-trends and futures headlines to discover the elements of inertia, too.

All the actors in the tourism ecosystem will get benefit from the results, when applying ideas and concepts in practice. Hotels, airline companies, travel agencies or even individual tourists can learn the principles of sustainable development and its impacts and make a conclusion to their own behavior. The goal to reduce the unnecessary tourism and to develop sustainable ways of doing business in this field will lead the way out from over-tourism towards the sustainable innovations and reasonable levels in tourist flows.

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