

Special issue: Corporate sustainability and stakeholder management in tourism and hospitality

Dear Editor,

This special issue is focused on key theoretical underpinnings relating to strategic corporate responsibility and stakeholder management behaviors within tourism and hospitality industry contexts. Tourism organizations like destination management entities as well as businesses including tour operators, travel agents, hotels and restaurants, among others, are increasingly engaging in responsible behaviours whilst operating in a profitable manner (Camilleri, 2015; Camilleri, 2019; Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Porter & Kramer, 2006, 2011; Van Marrewijk, 2003; Vogel, 2005). Very often they do so to minimize institutional pressures from governments, whilst satisfying their legitimate stakeholders' interests (Garay & Font, 2012; Kang et al., 2010).

Various stakeholders including the businesses' employees, patrons, guests, suppliers, local communities, regulatory authorities and the community, at large, are triggering them to engage in ethical behaviours, responsible human resources management (HRM) and to invest in environmentally friendly initiatives (Camilleri, 2015). Their laudable behaviours including their engagement with stakeholders as well as their environmental management behaviours will enable them to create value to society and their business. In this light, the following contributions clarify that strategic CSR practices may result in virtuous circles with positive multiplier effects to a number of stakeholders and nearby communities.

The first paper is entitled, 'Strategic attributions of corporate social responsibility and environmental management: Doing well by doing good.' This research builds on previous literature that is focused on the CSR agenda and its related stakeholder theory. It clarifies that stakeholder attributions as well as the corporations' ethical responsibility, responsible HRM and environmental practices are significantly affecting their strategic attributions. Hence, Camilleri (2021) advances an empirical study that investigates the hospitality employees' perspectives about their employers' CSR and environmentally friendly practices.

In sum, the findings from this research suggest that it is in the businesses' interest to engage in responsible behaviours to forge closer ties with internal and external stakeholders. The author contends that tourism and hospitality enterprises are expected to provide decent employment opportunities to locals and migrant workers, adequate compensation and recognition of all employees, ongoing training and development opportunities, work-life balance, whilst promoting health and safety in their workplace environments, among other responsible practices.

The businesses' responsible human resources management (HRM) can improve their employees' morale, enhance their job satisfaction and reduce staff turnover. Their environmentally responsible practices like electricity and water conservation, investments in green

technologies and renewables, circular economy approaches, local procurement of products and waste management, among others, will enable them to reduce their negative effects on the natural environment. These corporate responsibility and sustainability initiatives could result in operational efficiencies and cost savings, higher quality, innovation and competitiveness, in the long term.

This contribution raises awareness on CSR's strategic attributions. It proved that strategic CSR practices can enhance the hospitality businesses' economic growth prospects and could increase their competitiveness, by improving their reputation, by enhancing their image among external stakeholders and by nurturing a favourable climate of trust and cooperation with stakeholders. It clearly indicated that responsible businesses 'do well by doing good.' It confirmed that the businesses' engagement with stakeholders, their ethical responsibility, responsible human resources management and environmental sustainability practices were leading to strategic outcomes for their business and to society at large.

The second article is entitled, 'Advancing community-based tourism approaches for the sustainable development of destinations.' Mtapuri et al. (2021) suggest that community-based tourism (CBT) can create commercial and social value to local businesses as well as to residents whilst addressing issues relating to the carrying capacities of destinations. They argue that tourism destinations may experience 'economic leakages' from their gross tourism earnings as they may have to allocate financial resources for the procurement of imported goods and human resources.

The researchers imply that national governments together with the private sector could invest in their local economic development (LED) and CBT initiatives to trigger business activity, to create jobs and economic growth. At the same time, they discuss on the limitations of their destinations in terms of their carrying capacities. They point out that the tourism industry may result in negative effects on the natural environment. Visitors utilize the destinations' infrastructures, including transportation facilities and utilities like water and electricity. They also consume resources and generate waste. The authors posit that both tourists as well as the tourism and hospitality service providers have a responsibility to bear to minimize their impact on the environment.

Mtapuri et al. (2021) raise awareness on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and on sustainable behaviours that are intended to add value to society, to the local economy and to their companies' bottom lines. Hence, the researchers put forward a theoretical model that clarifies how responsible CBT strategies can address issues relating to the carrying capacities and the economic development of tourist destinations. In conclusion, they identify the

managerial implications and identify future research directions to academia.

The third paper by Peña et al. (2021), entitled, 'A corporate social responsibility model for a competitive and resilient hospitality industry' uses a case-study methodology to investigate the CSR practices of eight hotels of different sizes in Santa Marta, Colombia. The authors captured interpretative data about their CSR practices and classified them as philanthropic-reactive, legal-reactive or proactive. They sought to discover the rationale behind their CSR engagement as they shed light on their companies' economic, social and environmental dimensions.

The researchers identified, diagnosed and evaluated the hospitality businesses' CSR behaviours. Afterwards, they put forward a management model for hotel industry practitioners. In conclusion, they argued that hotel companies ought to identify responsible practices that add value to their businesses and local communities. They implied that the businesses' CSR activities should be strategic in terms of their intents and purposes, in order to improve their competitiveness whilst addressing deficits in society and the environment.


The fourth contribution provides a systematic literature review on 'corporate social responsibility' and/or 'CSR,' and 'tourism,' from key theoretical and empirical contributions through Scopus and Web of Science. Arun et al. (2021) evaluated and synthesized the findings from three thematic clusters, comprising conceptual, qualitative and quantitative papers. They identified rigorous, peer-reviewed journals that have published contributions on this topic (in the last decade). Moreover, they shed light on their content and theoretical frameworks. This structured review enabled Arun et al. (2021) to identify the knowledge gaps in the extant literature and to put forward their suggested future research avenues.

The fifth paper also presents the findings from a bibliographic analysis. Sánchez-Camacho et al. (2021) rely on SciMAT software to analyse 1800 articles that are focused on CSR in tourism. These authors suggest that this area of study is composed of eight thematic areas as follows: (1) business activity–financial performance; (2) attitude and behaviour; (3) marketing perspective; (4) sustainable tourism; (5) sustainability; (6) governmental action; (7) environmental awareness and motivation; and (8) impact of major events. They provide an interpretation of the findings, discuss about future CSR trends and identify future research avenues.

Indeed, this special issue offers a comprehensive guide to academia and to practitioners on corporate responsible behaviours in tourism and hospitality. It comprises discursive papers and review articles that provide an excellent overview of the eclectic literature in this promising area of research. Moreover, it presents empirical studies that clarify how savvy hospitality enterprises are capable of embedding strategic CSR and environmental management initiatives that will ultimately add value to stakeholders and to their business.

In sum, these five contributions suggest that there is more to CSR than publicity stunts and cause-related marketing. They imply that there is scope for tourism and hospitality businesses to look after their employees, to build stronger relationships with suppliers, with local communities where they operate their business, as well as with regulatory stakeholders. This way, they will be in a better position to prove

their license to operate and to improve their legitimacy in society, whilst doing well, in economic terms. This discourse is very relevant today, now more than ever before, in the context of a resilient tourism industry that is slowly but surely emerging from an unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic situation.

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