

Children in Sustainable and Responsible Tourism



EDITED BY
HUGUES SÉRAPHIN

Children in Sustainable and Responsible Tourism

Dr Hugues Séraphin has provided to the readers an updated and must-read book with an international perspective on children in sustainable and responsible tourism. This book includes wide-ranging chapters that investigate current trends and prospects for the future on children in sustainable and responsible tourism and are presented in a comprehensive yet accessible way.

Manuel Alector Ribeiro, University of Surrey, United Kingdom

This new edited book by Hugues Séraphin contains 13 fascinating chapters authored by well-established academics who are investigating thoroughly the role of children as agents of change in tourism. In a nutshell, this edited book successfully connects children with responsible tourism. This book is all the more important considering the difficult times we are currently facing. Big problems need big solutions and of course, this editorial project leads the way.

Maximiliano E. Korstanje, University of Palermo, Argentina

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HUGUES SÉRAPHIN

University of Winchester Business School, UK



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Introduction

Hugues Séraphin

Overview

Because ‘Sustainability is possibly the most important issue facing the tourism industry in the 21st century’ (Edgell & Swanson, 2018, p. 45) and also because ‘children are the tourists of the future’ (Cullingford, 1995, p. 126), this study is arguing that research on sustainable tourism and responsible tourism initiatives should engage with children. At the moment, they are invisible and undermined as community members (Dowse, Powell, & Weed, 2018). In order to address the dearth of academic research connecting children and responsible tourism, the objective of this edited book is to evidence that with the right strategy, children can play a significant role in the sustainability of the industry. As a result, the research question of this edited book is as follow: How to empower children to become sustainability thinkers, actioners and transformers? This research question is important because empowerment in the tourism industry happens through competency enhancement of individuals or groups as the result of a learning process (Joo, Woosnam, Strzelecka, & Boley, 2020). From a structural point of view, this introduction starts with a discussion around the role of resort mini-clubs and resort representatives play in the empowerment of children, followed by the role and place of children (sustainable) tourism. Finally, the introduction sheds light on the different strategies put forward by the 13 chapters of the book.

Children and Resort Mini-Clubs

The current purpose of resort mini-clubs (baby clubs; mini-clubs; junior clubs and teenager clubs) is to provide entertainment to children when on holidays. It is a service offered by most holiday resort operators. When this service was first offered, it was a competitive advantage for resort operators. In order to be considered as a competitive service again, resort mini-clubs should contribute to the education of children while on holidays by: giving mini-clubs local names; delivering activities that are built around local cultures; adopting an ambidextrous management that would consist in offering both edutainment and advertisement fun plays (Seraphin & Yallop, 2019a, 2019b).

Children Representatives and the Education of the Future Tourists

The strategy suggested is placing resort mini-clubs within the tourism ecosystem/market (Seraphin & Yallop, 2019a, 2019b). This strategy would not only benefit resorts but also destinations as a whole, as this management approach would contribute to enhance customers' (children and carers) experience (Seraphin & Yallop, 2019a, 2019b). So doing, this strategy is calling for a Children Representative (CR) job crafting. This practice consists of changing task boundaries (Yen, Tsaur, & Tsai, 2018), enabling employees to 'understand the job's objective and shape their work identify and roles' (Yen et al., 2018, p. 53). Unlocking changes to achieve sustainability can be achieved through stakeholders' engagements; corporate social responsibility and integrated value (Visser, 2015). This study is arguing that CR job crafting could contribute to a sustainable change in the hospitality sector (and tourism industry as a whole).

Methodology and Results

'Content analysis generally refers to a systematic attempt to identify the frequency with which certain words, functions or concepts occur within text' (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 34). In this study, content analysis of advertised CR jobs is carried out. Using a variety of sources (CR jobs advertised by a variety of resort operators, as well as descriptors from career adviser organisations), appendix 1 provides a compiled job description and person specification for CR. The purpose of a job description is to provide candidates a realistic preview of the organisation and nature of the job, that is to say: purpose, task, duties, responsibilities, performance, objectives, reporting relationships, terms and conditions, remuneration and working hours (Nickson, 2013). As for the person specification, it provides a profile (personal skills and characteristics required to fill the position) of the ideal person for the job (Nickson, 2013).

It appears that the role of the CR is quite central to the performance of a resort (appendix 1: job description). Despite the importance of the role, there is no consistency regarding the level of education and experience of the ideal candidate (appendix 1: person specification). Additionally, it also appears that the current requirements (job description and person specification) to be a CR are not matching what their job should be, with regards to the role that resort mini-clubs should play, and how they should be managed (for the sustainability of the hospitality and tourism industry).

The main duties and responsibilities of CR should be to:

- Educate children to sustainability using different types of fun activities
- Delivering an exciting and creative childcare programme of fun-filled and inspirational activities that involved the consumption of local products and services, as well as the involvement of local suppliers and/or contractors.
- Organising a varied programme of activities (balancing edutainment and advertainment) throughout the day, keeping children happy; safe and also fostering family bonding, and encounters with locals.

As for their education, CR should hold a qualification in tourism, on top of any first aid, and childcare qualifications. As for their knowledge, they must provide evidence of a strong understanding of sustainability. As a result, resort operators should assess applicants' awareness of sustainability issues. So doing, success to the SULITEST should be made compulsory. The SULITEST is an open online tool. The questions asked cover four dimensions: 'sustainable humanity and ecosystems on planet Earth, global and local human-constructed systems to answer people's needs, transitions toward sustainability, roles to play to create and maintain individual and system changes' (Decamps, Barbat, Carteron, Hands, & Parkes, 2017, p. 142). Finally, skills and ability should also include ability to lead project gathering a variety of stakeholders.

The changes suggested here are part of the changing nature of skills in the twenty-first century for workers in the hospitality and tourism industries (Martin & McCabe, 2007). As educators, CRs need to be: (1) sustainability transformers, in other words educators wanting to induce a worldview shift in the children (2) sustainability thinkers, that is to say educators who encourage critical thinking and a questioning attitude (3) and finally sustainability actioners, by getting children involved in sustainability projects or activities (Kemper, Ballantine, & Hall, 2019).

Discussion

Holidays have a strong potential to educate children. Indeed, 'travel to other destinations help children make sense of the cultural differences in the world' (Cullingford, 1995, p. 124). Additionally, when on holidays, children want to participate in activities that are new, unique, challenging and fun (Gaines, Hubbard, Witte, & O'Neill, 2004). Because of that, this study is arguing that resort mini-clubs and their animation programmes, developed to entertain children while parents are enjoying themselves (Gaines et al., 2004), are suitable places and tools to educate children about sustainability in a fun way while on holidays. The programme to be developed is therefore calling for a sustainability transformer, thinker and actioner CR with: a strong understanding of children; education tools and techniques; understanding of sustainability issue in the tourism industry and equally importantly, able to develop activities to address issues related to sustainability. CR roles and mini-clubs are therefore very important. This is further supported by Hertzman, Anderson, and Rowley (2008) who argued that edutainment contributes to create and provide a structured, high in entertainment value and a memorable, novel, significant, meaningful and informative experience to customers. Edutainment is all the more important, knowing that 'emotionally charged experiences are powerful motivators of consumers' ethical choice' (Malone, McCabe, & Smith, 2014, p. 241). CR job crafting should be a priority for resort operators as the tourism and hospitality would particularly benefit from educating children because 'children are the tourists of the future' (Cullingford, 1995, p. 126), and as such, it is important to groom them toward this role (Cullingford, 1995). Implementing the suggested changes should

not be too difficult, as the hospitality sector understands the value of sustainability for their business (Ali, Murphy, & Nadkarni, 2017). Resort managers should review not only the concept, role and management of resort mini-clubs but also the profile of CRs. The strategy suggested in this study could have benefits (customer satisfaction and repeat visits) at micro level (resorts) but also at macro level (destinations). Resort mini-clubs have an opportunity to place themselves within the tourism ecosystem and play a major role. They could, to some extent, be associated with a *Madeleine de Proust*.

A Common Ground: The Madeleine de Proust Theory

Marcel Proust is a French novelist whose name is mainly associated with *Madeleine* and research on memories (Sabre, 2017). In France, ‘*Madeleine de Proust*’ is even a phrase (Sabre, 2017), which refers to any smell, taste, sound or visual sensation that can transport an individual back to a past and forgotten intense and emotional childhood memories (Ernst, 2015). Other existing and complementary research explains that any sense that can stir and/or trigger (strong collective, individual, visual and verbalisable, but equally important distant and long-dormant) memories of lived experiences involuntarily, alongside triggering a particular reaction or cultural performance, such as re-enacting some habitus could be associated to a *Madeleine de Proust* (Bray, 2013; Lukajic, 2020; Meguro, 2015; Troscianko, 2013; Vries & Elferen, 2010). These emerging memories (past) are complementary to the moment they came up (present), rather than altering them (Vries & Elferen, 2010); and also a mixture of truth and lie, what make them non-innocent (Doubrovsky & Bové, 1975). However, for the mnemonic working of a factor to be strong, it needs to have a great performative power, that is to say, a connection between subjective and collective experiences; individual and shared emotions and memories (Vries & Elferen, 2010). Social and cultural identities are therefore closely related to *Madeleine de Proust Theory* (MPT) (Vries & Elferen, 2010). That’s why religious experience has such a mnemonic potential (Tukey, 1969). Indeed, in addition to the senses that can trigger involuntary memories (Meguro, 2015), among the strongest association of memories with the past, are those related to the mystic; in other words, religious experiences have also part to play with individuals’ memories. These memories according to Tukey (1969) are either (1) ineffable, that is, it defies expression, as no word can really report on this experience. This type of experience can’t be transferred to someone else; in other words, it has to be experienced directly (2) noetic, meaning they can be compared with illuminations; revelations and they carry with them a sense of authority for after-time (3) transient, as easily memorable and contribute to continuing development, and also to an inner richness and importance (4) passivity, the features of religious memories or experience are held by a superior power. The purpose of involuntary mystic memory ‘is union of the individual with the divine; the result is a changed life, a life exhibiting greater goodness, enlightenment and purity’ (Tukey, 1969, p. 402). This point, related to religion, highlights a certain disagreement regarding

which sense is the most powerful sense in terms of triggering memories. It is the gustative sense; for [Perchec \(1999\)](#), it is the olfactory sense; for [Merguro \(2015\)](#), it is anything related to the mystic, etc. These involuntary memories of the past that are triggered involuntarily are also opposing the concept of self and groups, as even if many individuals at the same place are doing the same thing, the interpretation and triggering effect of what is happening can be different for each individual ([Hayes, 1995](#)). Individuals associate voluntarily and involuntarily repeatable experiences with something mental or sensory in their mind ([Brotsky, 1987](#)). In other words, even if the experience is collective, individuals can find themselves singled out momentarily in their immediate memory ([Weiner, 1980](#)). In that sense, Proust is also opposing the group and the individual. Equally important, [Weiner \(1980\)](#) explains that this close connection and impacts of the partially hidden past and the present that MPT represents have played a significant role in the creativity and rise of some artists in opera, music, etc. The preceded literature on MPT shows that it is a combination of opposites or paradox. This view is further supported by [Troscianko \(2013\)](#) who is arguing that MPT is a combination of voluntary and involuntary memories being triggered, and instead of splitting those two types of memories, MPT should embrace them both. The association of paradoxes in ambidextrous management is associated with terms such as improvement of performance and sustainability ([Vo-Thanh, Séraphin, Okumus, & Koseoglu, 2020](#)).

Children's Experience and Memories of Sustainability Initiatives

Children are not very often considered in tourism research. As a matter of fact, there is a dearth of research in this area ([Canosa, Graham, & Wilson, 2018](#); [Cullingford, 1995](#); [Khoo-Lattimore, 2015](#); [Poris, 2006](#)). As for responsible tourism, [Canosa, Graham, and Wilson \(2020\)](#) and [Séraphin, Yallop, Seyfi, and Hall \(2020\)](#) agree on the fact that when empowered, children can be involved in responsible tourism initiatives such as beach clean-ups; participations in rallies and anti-development protests, which correspond with the stage 2 of [Séraphin et al. \(2020\)](#) model, namely, 'sustainability actioner'. These initiatives could be considered as sustainability *lieu de mémoire*. Others include: schools; resort mini-clubs; after-school clubs ([Séraphin et al., 2020](#)); family settings such as home ([Schill, Godefroit-Winkel, & Hogg, 2020](#)); school trips to forests ([Camargo & Gretzel, 2017](#)); etc. Overall, the involvement of children in responsible tourism is limited and not well-documented ([Canosa et al., 2020](#); [Séraphin et al., 2020](#)). There is therefore a need to change the current situation, through the development of empowering responsible fun activities that can take place pretty much anywhere and at any time ([Séraphin et al., 2020](#)). There is also a need for the identification and promotion of sustainability heroes, such as Greta Thunberg ([Mkono, Hughes, & Echantille, 2020](#)). Indeed, heroes are viewed as accomplishing inspiring and virtuous missions ([Mkono et al., 2020](#)). Heroes promote moral elevation, heal psychic wounds, inspire psychological growth and exude charisma ([Allison & Goethals, 2015](#)). There are different types of heroes who actually meet those

criteria, among these are the ‘*Quest*’ defined by an endeavour toward a high goal, involving contests, tests, etc., before a final attainment; ‘*the clever hero*’, who is smaller and weaker than his opponent, and his victory is the triumph of the brain over brawn; ‘*the defender*’ or ‘*deliverer*’, comes to rescue an individual or a group of individuals from danger or distress; ‘*hero stories*’, is often an everyman who is summoned on a journey (Allison & Goethals, 2015; Klaap, 1949). In sustainability, and more specifically, in responsible tourism, it is important to have children heroes or role models, as the latter have the potential to boost the moral, motivation and achievement of those who look up at them (Brichero & Thornton, 2007; Carr & Weigand, 2001). To achieve this goal, initiatives by all stakeholders need to be developed alongside development of public policies (Autio, Heiskanen, & Heinonen, 2009). As emblematic individuals can be considered as *lieu de mémoire*, sustainability children heroes could be considered as *lieu de mémoire*.

The empowering strategies put in place for children can be evaluated through a set of criteria (such as development of interdisciplinary skills; development of expertise in a specific area; ability to respond to a demand from the industry and benefits each stakeholder). However, Camargo and Gretzel (2017) have highlighted the fact that sustainability empowerment strategies totally transformed some individuals in terms of consumption and production, while it only affects others on a very short term. Schill et al. (2020) explain this discrepancy by their level of concern for sustainability (knowledge); the family environment (encouragement and spatial organisation) and past experiences. This study is presenting the MPT and more specifically, the *Lieu de mémoire* concept as the missing dimension for a more homogenous (positive) impact of strategies. The following section is therefore going to suggest an evaluation grid that could serve as an assessment tool but also guideline for the implementation of sustainable strategies. So doing, the literature used up to that point is going to be gathered to come up with this evaluation grid.

Structure of the Book

Ernst and Burcak (2019) are suggesting nature play as a tool to develop children’s sense of sustainability. Their view is also shared by Barbieri, Stevenson, and Knollenberg (2018) who have evidenced the potential of agritourism as a tool for sustainability education of children and their families. Similarly, Hehir, Stewart, Maher, and Ribeiro (2020) are discussing field trips in the Polar regions as examples to empower children to sustainability issues. This edited book is structured around two main sections: First, all the chapters with a strategy which is nature-based. Second, all the chapters developing non-nature based strategies.

Section 1: Nature Based Strategy: Children as Sustainability Thinkers, Actioners and Transformers

In Chapter 1, wildlife tourism is presented as a way to introduce children to the natural world and the different animals that are found throughout the world.

Paradoxically, wildlife tourism is also presented as having the potential to encourage exploitation and unethical behaviour as a result of the many poorly managed and operated wildlife tourist attractions around the world. In Chapter 2, it is explained how nature holidays serve as good motivators for children to engage in environmentally responsible behaviour. The chapter evidences that children are significantly concerned about nature, and they mostly perceived their best holidays in the natural environment. Chapter 3 is in the same line of thoughts, as it evidences that fact that school trips to outdoor residential centres can represent a significant and formative childhood tourism experience that can also potentially influence adult tourism and leisure choices. Through bringing together environmental education and psychology with tourism management literature, the chapter identifies the imperative for further research to enable nature connections through outdoor residential centre experiences. As for Chapter 4, taking the Canary Islands as an example provides evidence that living in an eco-friendly destination impacts positively on children environment sensibility. Finally, Chapter 5, which is in the same line of thoughts as the preceded chapter, shows that the hospitality sector also believes that eco-friendly and nature based activities can positively contribute to the environment education and empowerment of children. Indeed, resort mini-clubs are more and more offering sustainability-related activities to children when on holidays.

Section 2: Non-nature Based Strategy: Children as Sustainability Thinkers, Actioners and Transformers

Despite the fact Chapter 6 suggests field trips and school excursions as a way to educate children, this chapter is also suggesting that other types of field trips can do the same. Amongst these are excursion activities and destinations such as museum exhibits. Indeed, they have the opportunity to shape identities through access to objects, information and knowledge. Chapter 7 supports the fact that children's reflexivity can be strengthened through a process of education for sustainable development while allowing them to occupy the space and place necessary for their empowerment with regard to ecology and tourism. Chapter 8 is theoretically based as suggesting a conceptual framework for the study of education for sustainable tourism in middle schools. Chapter 9 is also theoretically based as it examines the importance of protective, participatory and provisional rights of children in tourism sector in African context. Chapter 10 is also based on children's rights. They are potentially at the greatest risk from the climate crisis, and any lack of effort to address this can be interpreted as a failure to recognise children's rights. As for Chapter 11, it could be considered as a response to Chapter 10 as it provides a practical example of organisation involving children in sustainability initiatives. Indeed, the chapter seeks to demonstrate that children in Mauritius occupy a leading position in civic actions and sustainability activities organised by the African Network for Policy Research and Advocacy for Sustainability (ANPRAS). Chapter 12 highlights the potential of children to trigger changes within their local communities and/or surrounding environment. Chapter 12 also acknowledges existing strategies to empower children to be sustainability agents of

change, while giving them a variety of opportunities to utilise their skills and creativity to reach a wide and diverse audience. This edited book ends with a transition between children and young adults (Generation Z). Indeed, Chapter 13 investigates how Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), through the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), could potentially shape young adults into future sustainability tourism leaders. The chapter identifies significant gaps between PRME delivery and achieving tourism sustainability globally but generally highlights economic success where PRME uptake is strong. It also appears that PRME is not yet transitioning into industry practice.

Generation Z

As education can play a significant role in sustainability (Shaw & Allison, 1999), the United Nations developed the PRME in 2007, as an attempt to transform management education (curriculum, research, learning methods, management education), ensuring that future leaders are trained to be responsible (Bradley, 2019) with ethical values and sustainability awareness (Annan-Diab & Molinari, 2017). On top of shaping future leaders, the purpose of PRME is also to contribute to the reduction of poverty (Rosenbloom, Gudic, Parkes, & Kronbach, 2017). It is also worth mentioning the fact that PRME is based on six principles (PRME [Online], 2019): develop future leaders with sustainable values (Principle 1); incorporate into teaching practices social responsibility (Principle 2); put in place a suitable learning environment for future responsible leaders (Principle 3); engage in research that enable a better understanding of what is needed for a more sustainable environment (Principle 4); interaction with managers to share knowledge and good practices to achieve the challenge of sustainability (Principle 5); facilitating exchanges amongst all stakeholders of the ecosystem (Principle 6). Parkes, Buono, and Howaidy (2017) reiterate the fact that for PRME to fulfil all its objectives, it is very important for all stakeholders of an ecosystem to be fully involved.

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